Subject: Priority Request: Restore federal science funding, protect medical training, and invest in women in STEM

Dear [Senator / Representative Last Name],

My name is [Your Name], and I am a [student / parent / teacher / scientist / health care worker / concerned constituent] from [City, State / ZIP]. [Optional: one sentence on your connection, e.g., "I study biomedical engineering at Georgia Tech" or "My daughter wants to be a doctor."] I am writing to urge you to use the new Congress to restore and expand federal funding for scientific research and to undo the damage the OBBB's loan caps are doing to medical and scientific training.

Research grant freezes and funding drops (with NSF awards down about 25% and NIH competitive grants down about $2 billion) have had severe downstream effects, including cuts of roughly 15–20% to PhD cohorts at some major universities. At the same time, the OBBB's elimination of Grad PLUS loans and its strict lifetime caps leave many future physicians facing funding gaps of roughly $100,000 to more than $200,000 at typical medical school costs, which risks making research and medicine accessible only to those who can afford them.

These setbacks do not fall evenly, and women in STEM are bearing a disproportionate share. A March 2026 study in PNAS of the roughly 2,300 NIH grants terminated in 2025 found that women led over 60% of the terminated projects among assistant professors and made up over 60% of affected doctoral candidates, because women hold a larger share of the training and early-career awards that were cut. Those are the stages where the pipeline is most fragile and where one lost grant can end a research career. The OBBB adds a second barrier at the next stage: policy analysts at the Education Trust and the Institute for Women's Policy Research warn that eliminating Grad PLUS and capping graduate borrowing will hit women especially hard, since women borrow more and rely more heavily on federal loans, and would be pushed toward costlier private loans. Together, cuts at the front end of the pipeline and loan caps at the back end risk shrinking the number of women who start, finish, and stay in science, engineering, and medicine.

Simply preventing further cuts in the future is not enough. I respectfully ask that you:

1. Demand full restoration of NIH and NSF funding, expanding appropriations to recover lost ground from cancelled grants and frozen awards.

2. Pass strict appropriations oversight requiring agencies to obligate allocated research funds on schedule and barring arbitrary grant terminations.

3. Reinvest heavily in early-career training support, including NIH T32 and F31 awards and NSF graduate fellowships.

4. Repeal or adjust the OBBB's graduate and professional loan caps for medical, MD/PhD, and STEM graduate students so high-level training remains open to all.

5. Create dedicated grant allocations for initiatives that support women in STEM, from mentorship and fellowships to childcare and retention support for early-career researchers.

6. Fund and encourage updates to STEM curricula that integrate the discoveries of pioneering women, such as Rosalind Franklin, Lise Meitner, and Chien-Shiung Wu, into standard coursework.

Financial backing alone cannot dismantle long-standing systemic barriers. A truly equitable scientific community requires funding future innovation while ensuring every upcoming researcher learns a complete and accurate history of scientific achievement.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to protecting American innovation and health care.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
[Your Role / Program, Institution, if applicable]
[City, State / ZIP]