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PROFS Statement on the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Regulation of Federal Grants

In late May of this year, the Trump White House issued draft regulations that would give political appointees at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) final say over which grants would be approved. To give you a hint why the White House believes political appointees should decide which grants to approve, the background section of the draft regulations complains about a “‘woke’ policy agenda that deliberately favor[s] certain identity groups over others.”

The proposed rules would give political appointees the power to override the recommendations on research proposals at agencies like the National Institutes of Health, the NSF, the USDA and others, reviews that are based on scientific principles and the expertise of the reviewers. Those appointees would be able to determine what kind of federally-funded research – the kind of primary research that has taken place at American universities for over eighty years, research that has produced innovative medical advances and cures for disease, new technologies in computing and engineering, advances in space exploration, and the scientific basis for our clean water, clean air, and food safety – does or doesn’t meet the government’s ideological or political aims. This sounds remarkably similar to the political manipulation and censorship of science that took place in the Soviet Union in the 1930s that resulted in famine, suppression of groundbreaking work, and a failure of innovation.

Included in the proposed regulations are severe limitations on international research collaboration, restrictions on the recuperation of costs for attendance at conferences, and the favoring of grants from institutions with lower indirect cost rates.

Jules Barbati-Dajches, a member of the Center for Science and Democracy at the Union of Concerned Scientists wrote that the proposed rule “is an escalation of the administration’s relentless attacks on independent science,” and we agree. The centralization of grant approval at OMB is one more front in the administration’s attack on science, higher education, and expertise more generally, and will continue to have erosive effects on the advancement of science in the US and across the globe.

Public comments on the proposed regulations are open until July 14, 2026. We urge those concerned about the proposal to [register your comments](#) and to contact your congressional representative and let them know why this proposal is detrimental to American science.

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