

National Science Foundation and the Psychological Sciences



Juliane Baron
Executive Director

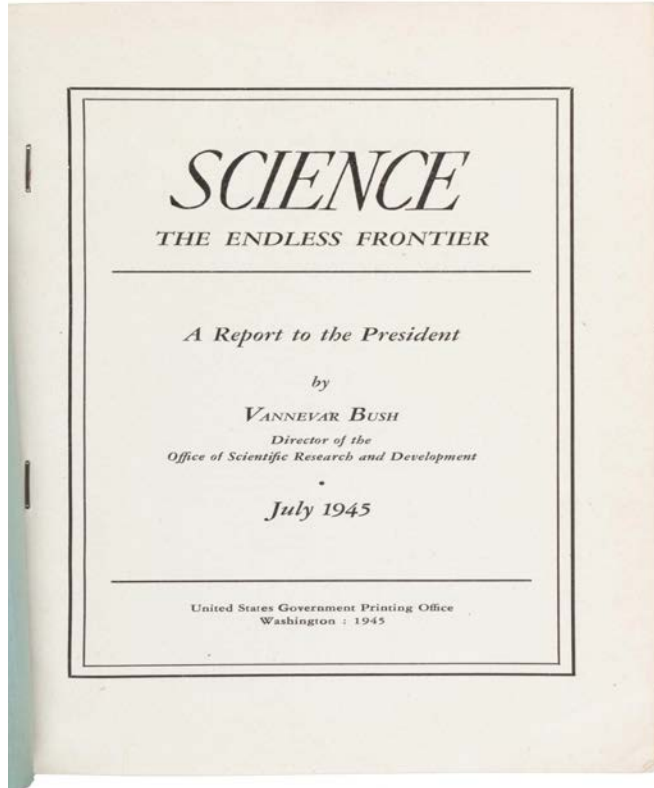
Federation of Associations in the Behavioral and Brain Sciences



Presentation Outline

- A Brief History of the National Science Foundation (NSF)
- The Importance of NSF Funding for the Psychological Sciences
- NSF during the Current Trump Administration
- FABBS Advocacy and Education Efforts
- Opportunities to Engage

Establishing the Foundation of American Science



1945

Vannevar Bush's landmark report, *Science: The Endless Frontier*, makes the case for federal investment in basic research.

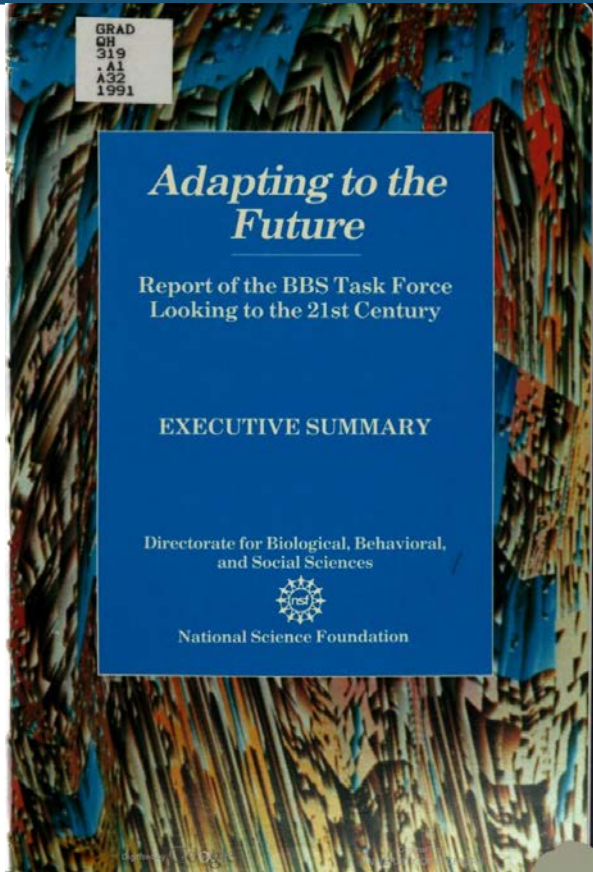
1950

Congress establishes the National Science Foundation (NSF) to support fundamental science and engineering research and education.

Mission:

- **Promote** the progress of science.
- **Advance** the national health, prosperity and welfare.
- **Secure** the national defense.

1991: The SBE Directorate



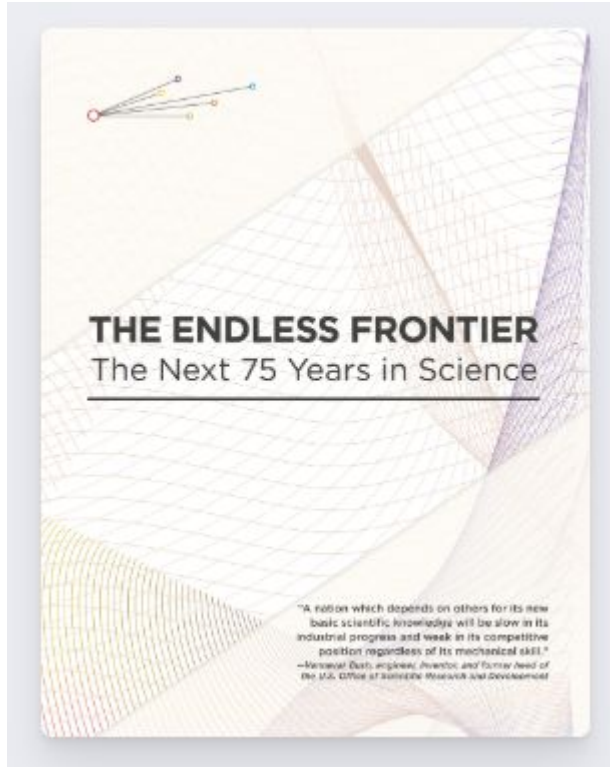
1991

The Biological, Behavioral & Social Sciences (BBS) Task Force convened to assess the future of these fields at NSF.

1991

The Social, Behavioral & Economic Sciences (SBE) Directorate is formally established.

The Next 75 Years in Science



2020

- National Academies.
- Emphasizes the importance of understanding the human mind and behavior.
- Recognized dedicated fields for cognitive, behavioral, and social sciences.

The TIP Directorate 2022



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Why NSF Matters to Psychological Science

NSF is the primary federal funder of non-health behavioral and social science research

NIH funds health-related research — the vast majority of foundational psychology research lives at NSF

NSF-funded research underpins advances in education, human-computer interaction, national security, and public health

Without NSF's SBE Directorate, there is no comparable federal home for this research

Third Party Validators

- [Letter](#) from non-SBE science organizations, led by the Computing Research Association, to appropriators urging maintain support for SBE
- [Letter](#) from private-sector company executives, startup founders, chamber of commerce presidents and venture capitalists in support of sustained NSF funding
- [“Another red alert for American science”](#) by Holden Thorp in *Science*
 - “...curtailing research into the social determinants of health threatens to leave large swaths of university researchers with no prospects of getting a grant. This comes on top of the elimination of the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences Directorate at the National Science Foundation. Higher education and its associations need to firmly oppose these changes, which would create a massive morale and financial problem in addition to curtailing important research.”

Basic Research Today → Applied Science Tomorrow

NSF funds the foundational science that mission driven agencies build on:



National Institutes
of Health



Institute of
Education Sciences



Training the next generation

NSF-funded training, including the **Graduate Research Fellowship Program** (GRFP) and **Research Experiences for Undergraduates** (REU), prepare a skilled workforce in behavioral and data sciences.



APA and FABBS Colleagues Who Have Served at NSF



Felice Levine



Laura Namy



Amber Storey



Steve Breckler

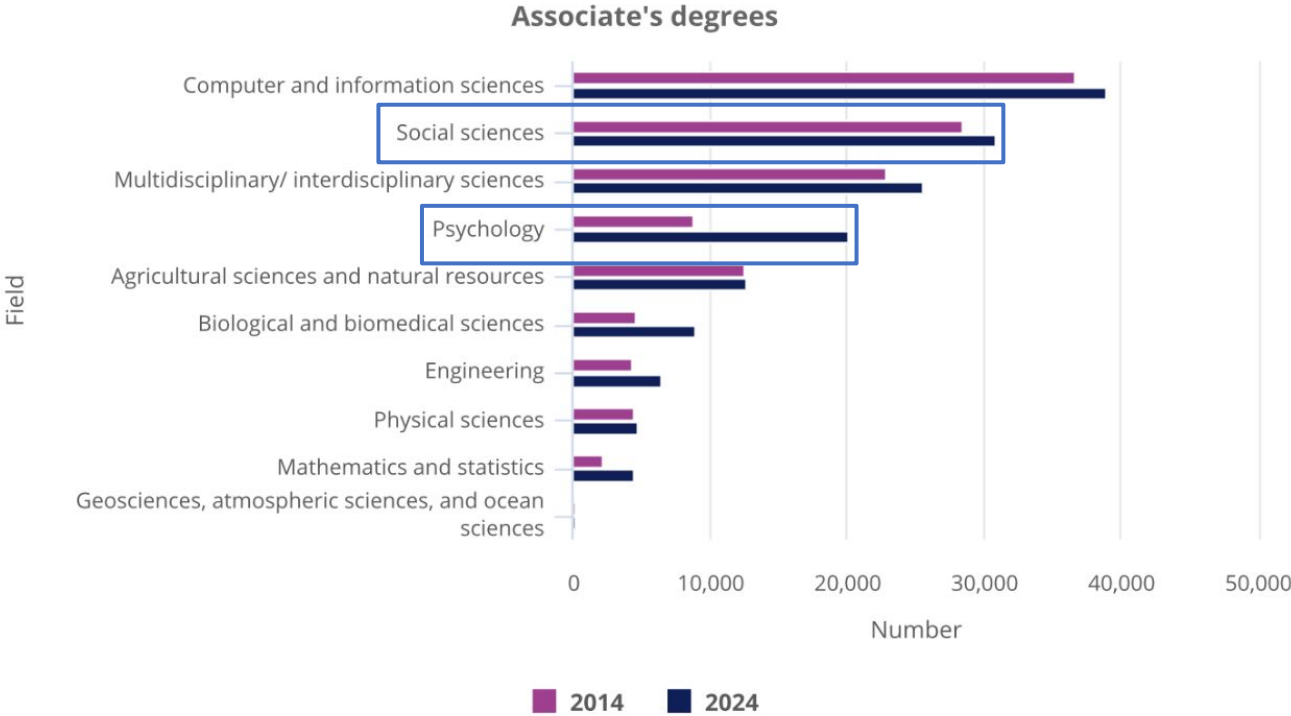


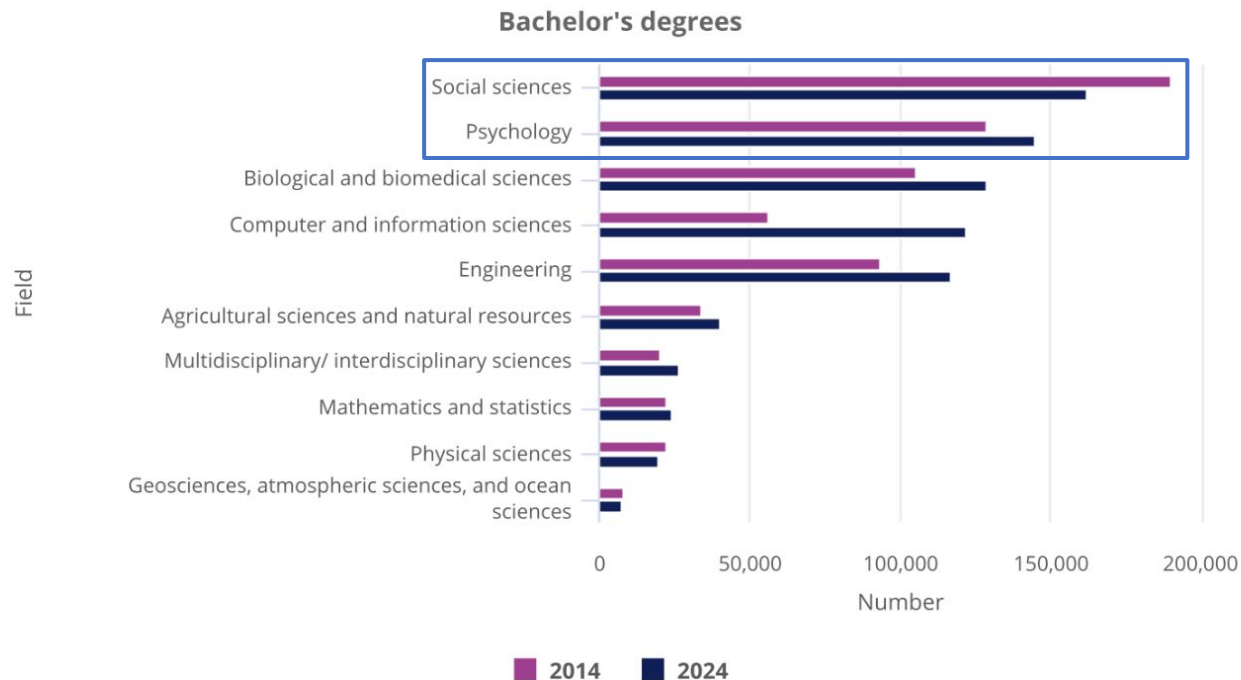
Philip Rubin



Wanda Ward

Figure 12. S&E undergraduate degrees awarded, by field: 2014 and 2024





Note(s):

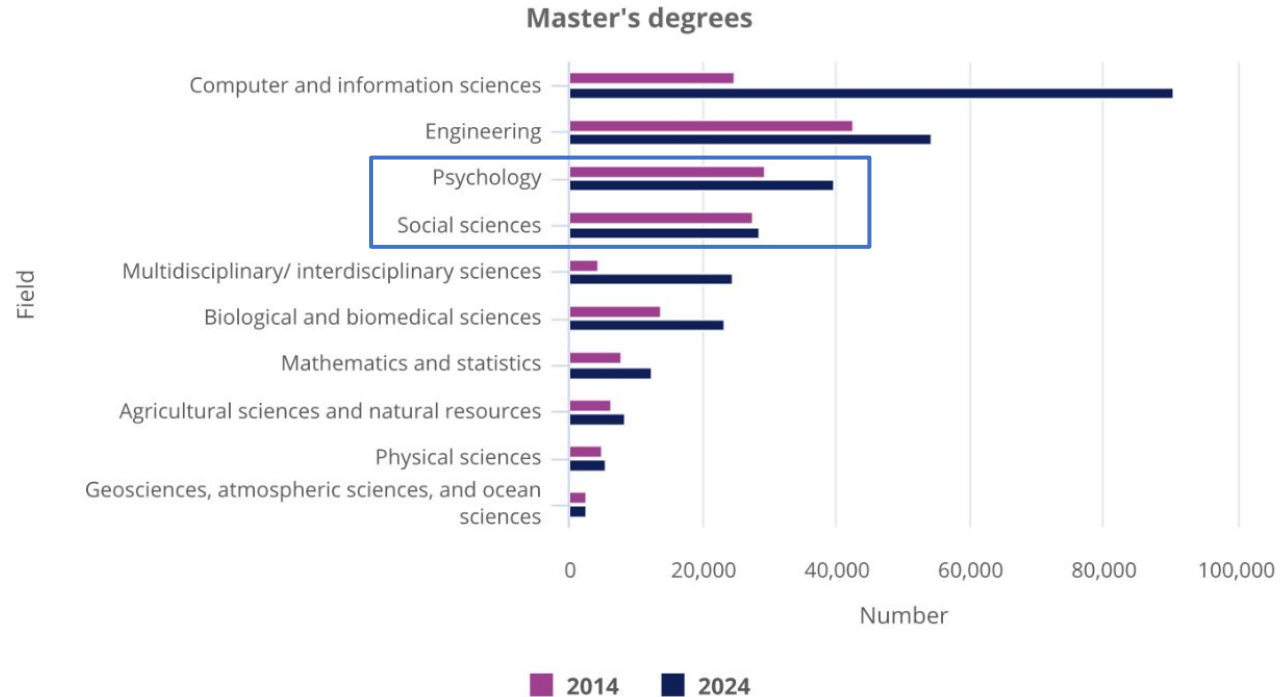
Associate's-level and bachelor's-level data are based on institutions eligible to participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs.

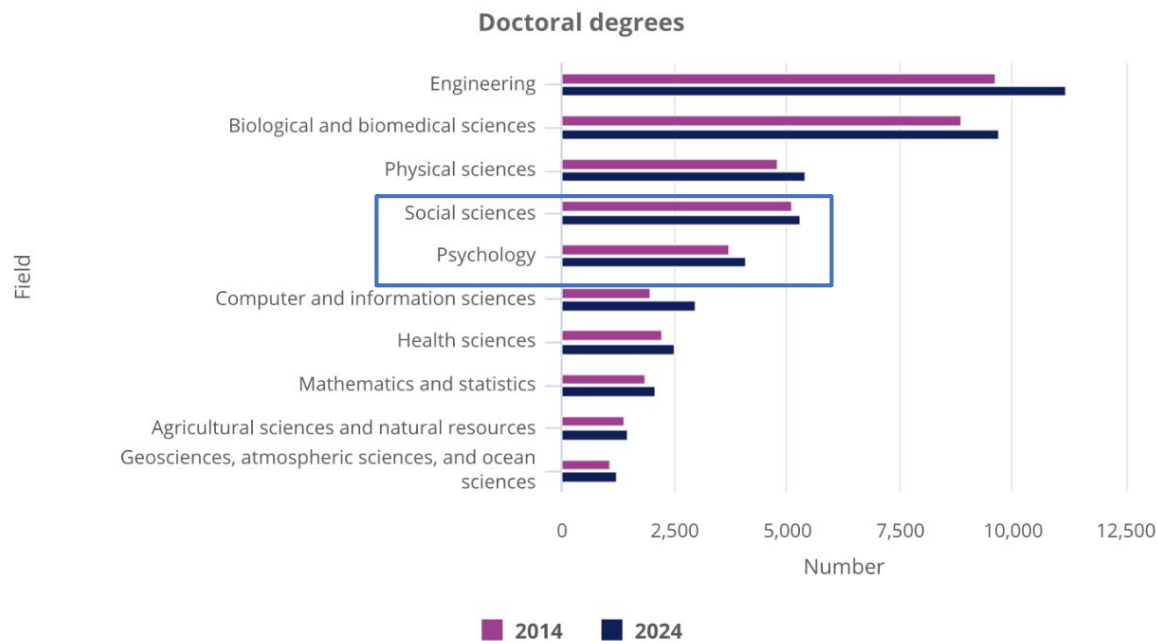
Source(s):

NCSES, special tabulations (2026) of NCES, IPEDS Completions Survey, provisional release data.

Indicators 2026: State of U.S. S&E

Figure 13. S&E graduate degrees awarded, by field: 2014 and 2024





Note(s):

Master's-level data are based on institutions eligible to participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Doctoral-level data correspond to research doctorates as collected in the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED); the SED data collection for field of study changed in 2021, which may affect the data comparability across years.

Source(s):

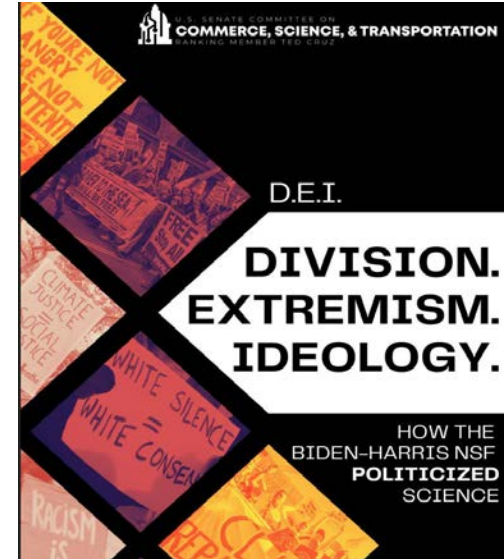
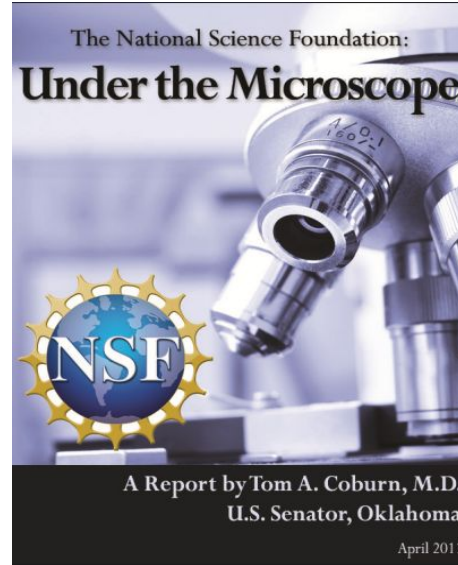
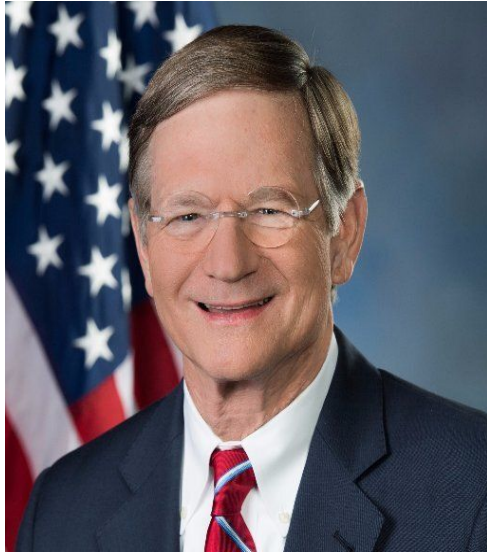
NCSES, special tabulations (2026) of NCES, IPEDS Completions Survey, provisional release data, and NCSES, SED, 2024.

Indicators 2026: State of U.S. S&E

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SBE Has Always Been a Political Target



At First, NSF Appeared to Be Flying Under the Radar



Early 2025

NSF Director Dr. Panchanathan remained in post — initial signal that NSF would be protected



Staff Departures

Some personnel left voluntarily — early attrition but no mass terminations initially



DOGE

NSF appeared to be spared the worst of the Department of Government Efficiency cuts — at first

Departure of Dr. Panchanathan — April 2025



Dr. Sethuraman Panchanathan

- Nomination announced by Trump in December 2019
- Confirmed unanimously by the Senate in June 2020
- Directors usually serve six-year terms
- Announced his resignation on April 24, 2025

NSF Grant Terminations by the Numbers

1,378

Grants Terminated

48

U.S. States Affected
(plus DC, PR, VI)

\$1B+

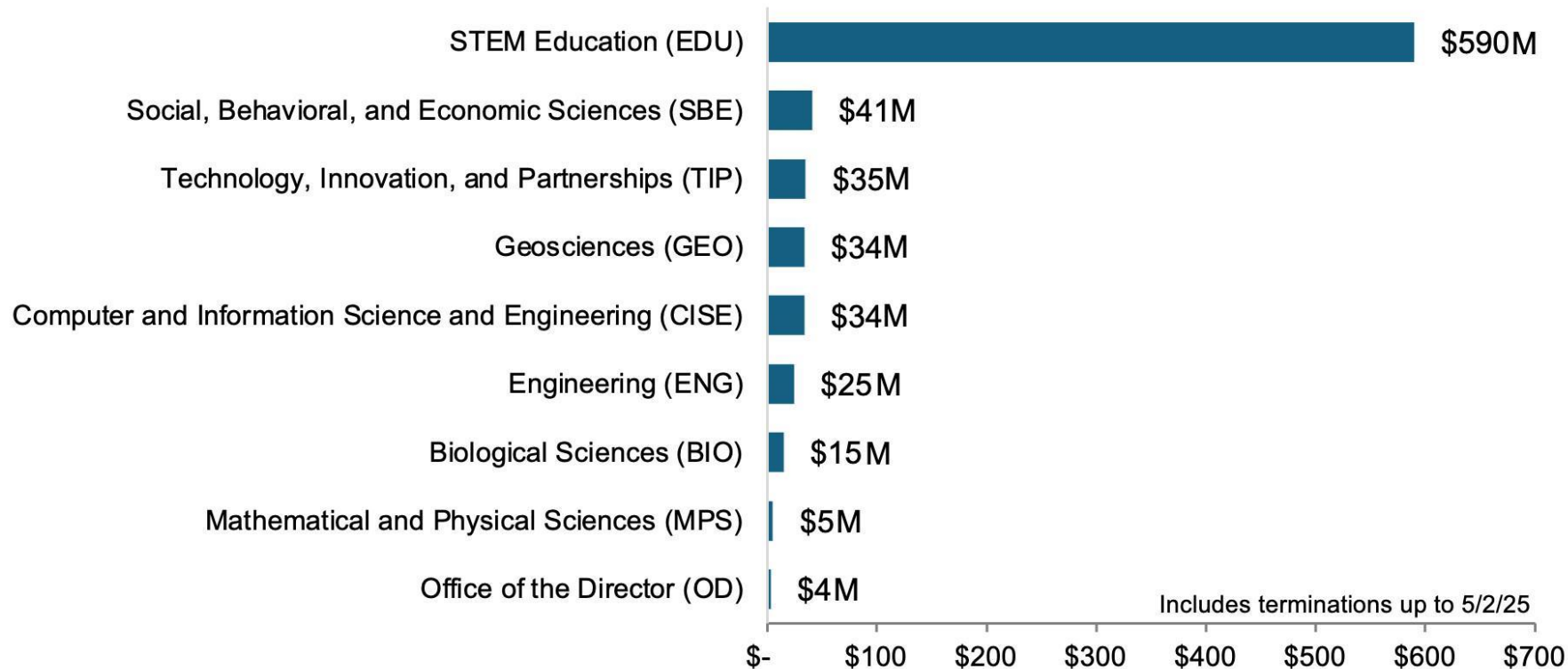
Total Value of
Terminated Grants

\$782M

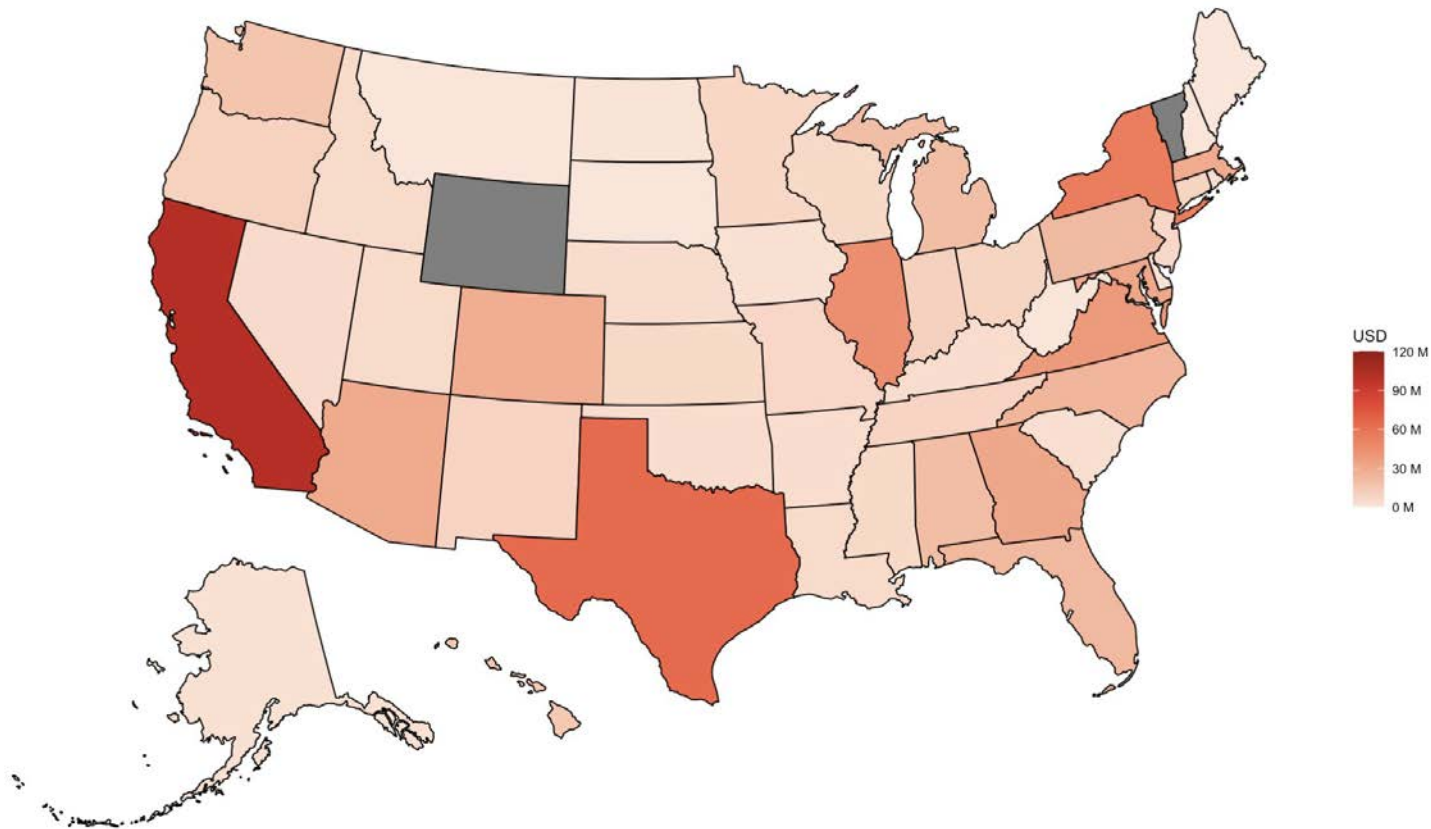
Projected Loss Due to
Early Termination

STEM Education Accounts for 75% of Losses

Terminated NSF Funding (\$M)



The Losses Span 48 States (plus DC, PR, VI)



NSF Announces Relocation June 2025



NSF Is Being Actively Reorganized

Leadership Vacuum

Director departed April 2025. Acting leadership navigating unprecedented disruption without permanent, Senate-confirmed leadership.

Structural Restructuring

Directorates, programs, and offices are being reorganized — scope and rationale remain unclear to the research community.

Staff Reductions

Voluntary departures and DOGE-related attrition have reduced institutional knowledge and capacity across the agency.

Grant Terminations

Over 1,670 active awards terminated — disrupting ongoing research, training, and scientific progress nationwide.

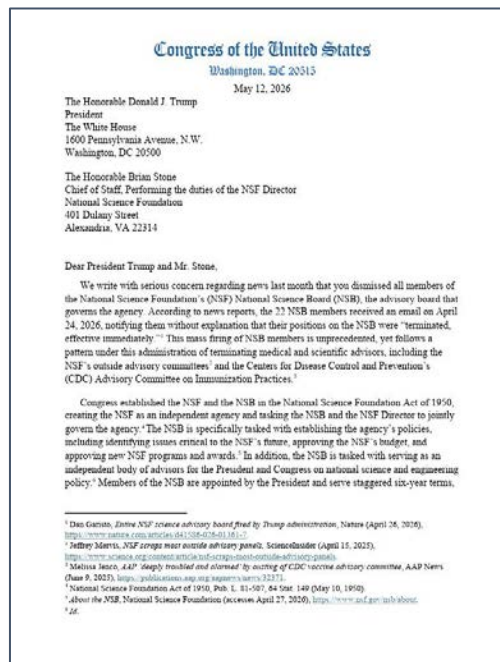
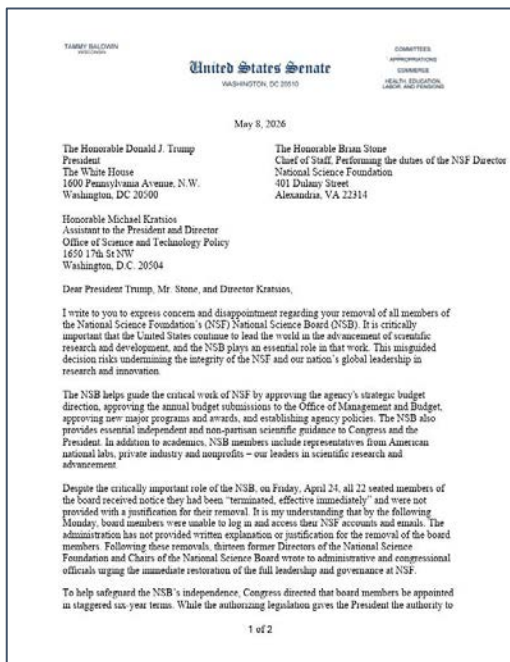
Jim O'Neill Nominated as Next NSF Director



- Nominated on March 2, 2026
- Background primarily in biotechnology and venture capital
- Previously confirmed to serve as HHS Deputy Secretary (June 2025-February 2026)
 - Acting CDC Director (August 2025-February 2026)

National Science Board Dismissed — April 24, 2026

Removes congressionally mandated oversight, prompting responses from Democratic Senators.



NSF Budget: A Dramatic Proposed Reduction

	FY25 Actual	FY26 Enacted	FY26 House Budget	FY26 Senate Budget	President's Request FY27
NSF	\$9.01B	\$8.75B	\$7.00B	\$9.06B	\$4.00B



**The FY27 President's Budget proposes a 56% cut to NSF —
from \$9.01B to \$4.00B.**

This would be the largest single-year cut in NSF history.



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SUPPORT DEMOCRACY

FABBS can HELP

AGENCIES

DOE NSF NIH

EXECUTIVE

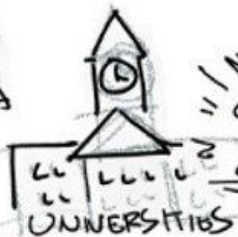


AGENCIES

ARPA-H
HHS/Ed

PUBLIC

MEDIA



Connect the dots!



be informed
push back!

Continue to apply for funding

explain the work

engagement

HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

VOTERS

TEACHERS

JUDICIAL

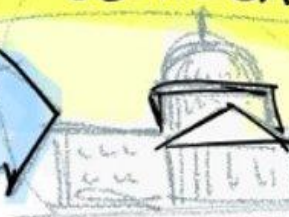


FABBS SUPPORTS our SCIENTISTS

Serving as plaintiffs & expert witnesses

advocacy

LEGISLATIVE



Congress Has Spoken: SBE Has Statutory Importance

FY2026 Senate Appropriations Committee Report Language:

Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences [SBE].—The Committee supports the SBE Directorate and recognizes the fundamental importance of the research it supports in advancing scientific understanding of public health, defense and security, education and learning, and the interface between humans and technology. The Committee provides not less than the fiscal year 2024 enacted level for the SBE Directorate. The SBE Directorate funds more than half of our Nation's university-based behavioral science research but remains the smallest of NSF directorates. The Committee believes that behavioral science provides evidence-based understanding of human behavior and recognizes the SBE Directorate's unique role in funding this research and encourages NSF to continue its support of these programs. NSF is encouraged to support broad-based research in the SBE Directorate to develop and publish recommendations, including from researchers in the social sciences and ethics and technical subject matter experts, on concrete and practical guidelines for how organizations will and should deploy AI systems and identify limitations and concerns about specific deployment of AI systems in settings.

[Statutes](#) and [Report Language](#)

FABBS Advocacy Actions

Proposed Bill Language — Drafting and promoting legislative language to protect SBE and reinstate terminated grants.

Confirmation Hearing Request — Formally requesting a Senate confirmation hearing for the NSF Director nominee — ensuring proper vetting.

Educating Hill Offices — Briefing congressional staff on what is happening at NSF — even supportive offices are not fully aware of the scope of disruption.

Authorizations — Working with the research community on coalition letters and authorization language to protect science funding.

FABBS Responds: Helping Members Navigate Terminations

Webinar for Members — FABBS hosted a webinar walking affected researchers through the termination notices and their options.

Appeals Guidance — Encouraged and supported members in formally appealing terminations with the strongest possible justifications.

Fund Drawdown Support — Helped researchers understand how to draw down any remaining funds they were legally entitled to before termination took effect.

*FABBS moved immediately to support the research community —
providing practical guidance during a period of significant institutional confusion.*

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Eight State Strategy



Mike Rounds



Jerry Moran



Bill Cassidy



Todd Young



Susan Collins



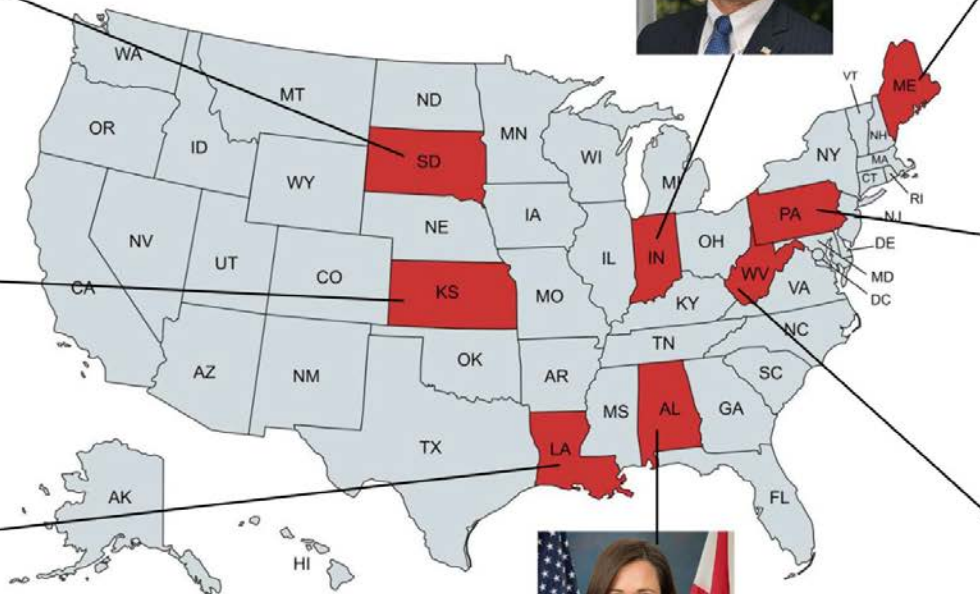
Dave McCormick



Shelley Moore Capito



Katie Britt





FABBS' ADVOCACY menu



Satisfy your appetite for advocacy!

STARTERS (10 min)

[Send an email](#)

Leave a message for a Congressional staff member

[Respond to an action alert](#)

Schedule a meeting – virtual or in-person

SMALL PLATES (30 min)

Volunteer to join a meeting with Congressional staff

Respond to requests
Ex: GRFP, Shutdown

[Support a trainee or early career colleague](#)

Have a conversation with a family member, neighbor, or colleague

ENTREES (2 - 4 hrs)

[Write an op-ed for your local paper](#)

Develop talking points or a one-pager for which you have expertise

Attend an advocacy training

[Make a video about your research or experience](#)

JUMBOS (1 day – 1 week)

[Apply to key positions at federal agencies](#)

Continue to submit funding proposals

DESSERT (5 min)

Thank a federal colleague!

WEEKLY SPECIAL

Focus on connecting with the offices of
[Senator Britt](#) and
[Senator Collins](#)



CONTACT US:



1200 New York Ave. NW
Suite 459
Washington, D.C. 20005

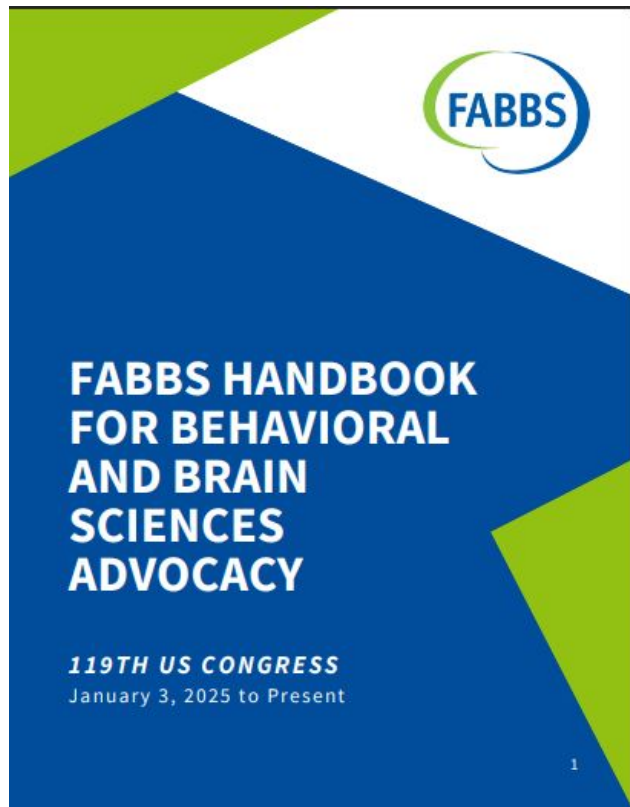


info@fabbs.org



(202) 769-1074

FABBS is Here to Help



[Sign up for the FABBS newsletter here!](#)

Communicating with Congress

FABBS scientists can be a congressional members' greatest resource in science-based policy making. FABBS works to show members of our government that focusing on the sciences of the mind, brain, and behavior can assist them in tackling pressing issues and society's most formidable challenges.

Updated May 2026

If you are interested in joining the FABBS database of researchers eager to engage with Congress, [please submit the form here](#). ¹⁷

New: FABBS Advocacy Menu

2025-2026 FABBS Science Advocacy Resources

[Step 1: Identify Your Audience and Best Point of Contact](#)

[Step 2: Do Your Homework](#)

[Step 3: Talking Points Prompts for Communicating with Elected Officials](#)

Resources for Talking about SBE at NSF

- [FABBS SBE Talking Points](#)
 - [New – Why an Independent SBE Directorate?](#)
 - [SBE Community Support letter \(November 2025\)](#)
 - [Founders, Venture Capitalists, and Business Leaders Letter in Support of NSF \(September 2025\)](#) ¹⁷

On this page...

[Relevant Resources](#)

[2025-2026 FABBS Science Advocacy Resources](#)

[Resources for Talking about SBE at NSF](#)

[Additional Resources for Doing Your Homework and Crafting Your Message](#)

[Connect to Congress](#)

[Resources for Connecting to Congress](#)

[Communicate with Government Agencies](#)

[Draft Policy Briefs](#)

[Resources on Policy Briefs](#)

Relevant Resources

- [Annual Advocacy Outlook](#)
- [Advocacy Handbook](#)
- [Video Series: "What We'll Never Know"](#) ¹⁷

*Thank
you!*