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an international forum for cell biology™

October 16, 2026

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chair
Labor, HHS, & Ed Subcommittee
Senate Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Ranking Member
Labor, HHS, & Ed Subcommittee
Senate Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Collins, Murray, Capito, and Baldwin:

On behalf of the thousands of basic biomedical researchers in all 50 states and around the world who belong to the American Society for Cell Biology (ASCB), I am writing to thank you for preventing implementation of OMB draft regulation 2026-0034 during the period covered by the current continuing resolution (CR). Press reports indicate that you are also working to include language in the final FY2027 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill that would make these protections permanent. I strongly encourage you to pursue this effort. The proposed regulations threaten the integrity of American science and could undermine the research enterprise that has made the United States a global leader in life science.

The proposed regulations would fundamentally change how federally funded life sciences research is conducted in the United States. By increasing political oversight of scientific decisions, they risk undermining the independence, fairness, and integrity of the research process. As ASCB explained in its comments on the draft regulations, “Replacing expert scientific judgment with greater political oversight risks undermining confidence in the fairness and integrity of the research enterprise. Such changes would make it more difficult to attract and retain the world's best scientists and could encourage American students to pursue training at leading institutions overseas.”

Our concerns go beyond the immediate effects on individual grants or research. Scientific discovery depends on the ability of researchers to ask important questions, evaluate evidence objectively, collaborate with colleagues, and share their findings. Policies that compromise these principles risk weakening the entire research enterprise. They could discourage international scientists from coming to the United States and make it harder for American institutions to train the next generation of researchers.

We must also consider the consequences of these regulations on the country as a whole. According to United for Medical Research's 2026 economic report, NIH-supported research grants generated nearly 391,000 jobs and more than $94 billion in economic activity in FY2025 alone. But the stakes go well beyond these numbers. Scientific research drives discoveries that improve human health, creates opportunities for innovation, and helps sustain America's scientific leadership.

MISSION
To lead a diverse, global and multidisciplinary scientific community focused on the cell, the basic unit of all life.

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Scientific progress will not stop if the United States makes it harder to conduct research here. Instead, the work will increasingly take place elsewhere. Discoveries will still be made, companies will still be founded, and jobs will still be created—but not in the United States. If we want the U.S. to remain a global leader in science, we must protect the time-tested environment that allow scientific discovery to thrive. I urge you to ensure that the final FY2027 appropriations legislation establishes lasting safeguards against implementation of these proposed regulations.

ASCB would welcome the opportunity to assist you as you develop these important safeguards. Please contact Kevin Wilson, ASCB's Chief Policy Officer, at kwilson@ascb.org if we can be of assistance.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Rong Li
President
The American Society for Cell Biology