

Trump fires National Science Board

By **Jacob Taylor**

President Trump fired the entire National Science Board (NSB) in late April. The board advises Congress and the president on scientific issues and has traditionally played a major role in shaping NSF policy.

The White House did not formally announce the 22 firings, nor did it initially provide a rationale for them. News slowly trickled out as board members learned that they had been terminated.

Several days after the firings, the White House said the board had been dismissed because of “constitutional questions” raised by a 2021 Supreme Court ruling that limited the power of federal officials who are appointed without going through the Senate confirmation process. The Trump administration contends that the 1950s statute that created the NSB runs afoul of that ruling. “We look forward to working with the Hill to update the statute and ensure the NSB can perform its duties as Congress intended,” a White House spokesperson said.

NSB committee members are scientific experts who are selected by the president and serve six-year terms in a part-time capacity. NSB chair Victor McCrary and vice chair Aaron Dominguez were elected to lead the board last August after former chair Darío Gil left to lead the Department of Energy’s Office of Science.

As of press time, NSF has been without a confirmed director since April 2025 and has shed roughly a third of its staff since the start of 2025. The White House proposed halving the agency’s budget last year, and it has made a similar proposal for the next budget cycle. The proposed cut would also reduce NSB’s budget from \$5 million to \$3 million.

The NSB firings drew swift criticism from Democratic leaders. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA), the ranking member of the House

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, released a statement implying that Trump may seek to replace the board with “MAGA loyalists who won’t stand up to him.” Maria Cantwell (D-WA), ranking member of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, called the firings “a dangerous attack on the institutions and expertise that drive American innovation and discovery.”

Scientific societies, including the Association of American Universities, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the Union of Concerned Scientists, also criticized the firings.

White House seeks to stop paying publishing fees

By **Lindsay McKenzie**

The Trump administration’s fiscal year 2027 budget request, released in early April, calls for a “government-wide prohibition on publishing and subscription fees.” The White House says the use of federal funds for “expensive subscriptions to academic journals and prohibitively high publishing costs” should be covered only if “required by Federal statute or approved in advance by a Federal agency.” The administration justifies the ban by saying that “research funded by taxpayers should be publicly accessible; yet many publications charge the Government to both publish and to access the same research study.”

At a mid-April hearing on the budget request, House investigations and oversight subcommittee ranking member Emilia Sykes (D-OH) said that the Trump administration’s proposal for the federal government to stop paying the fees “is an issue in need of a scalpel, and this decree is a sledgehammer.”

Sykes continued, “Cutting federal funds for publishing costs is only going to put a further strain on our

universities and researchers who are already under attack from this administration.” She noted, however, that she has doubts about the fairness of the publishing fees that journals charge. She praised the work of her state and its universities for their negotiated money-saving open-access agreements with major academic publishers.

Republicans on the committee did not weigh in on the proposed prohibition of subscription and publishing fees but expressed dissatisfaction with how the scholarly publishing industry operates. Rich McCormick (R-GA), the subcommittee chair, said that “what was once a straightforward process of peer review and dissemination has become a complex, commercialized marketplace with misaligned incentives and bad actors willing to exploit them.”

Asked by Sykes to comment on the Trump administration’s proposal to stop paying for subscriptions, Carl Maxwell, senior vice president for public policy at the Association of American Publishers, said preventing both federally funded and federally employed scientists from accessing the latest science is “self-defeating.”

Several media outlets reported last year that federal agencies had canceled their subscriptions to some academic journals, including those from high-profile publishers such as Springer Nature.

The National Institutes of Health announced last year that it intends to cap the amount it contributes toward publishing costs for NIH-funded research. The agency has declined to say when it plans to announce the details of that policy. **PT**

For up-to-date information on fiscal year 2027 funding for federal agencies that support the physical sciences, visit AIP’s Federal Science Budget Tracker at <https://aip.org/fyi/budget-tracker>. Each agency page has updated spending proposals, program-level budget details, and a timeline of legislative actions. Historical budget data are also available back to FY 2017.