



April 8, 2025

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

As members of the Democratic Women's Caucus, we are deeply concerned by your Administration's attacks on women's health research across the federal government. First, Secretary Kennedy implemented a 15% cap on indirect research costs for the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) grants.¹ Then, multiple agencies and departments who perform critical health research circulated memos with a ban on words that include terms such as 'female' and 'woman.'² Most recently, you influenced lawmakers to pass a Congressional budget that guts the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program at the Pentagon,³ which dedicates funding to women's health research.⁴ **Let us be clear: your actions will kill women.**

We call on you to direct your Administration to remove the research funding cap, rescind the list of banned words, and prioritize funding for women's health research.

Your Administration's cuts to indirect costs have direct impacts on women. Indirect research costs include funding for laboratory space, research equipment, faculty salaries, and building utilities—literally the costs of keeping the lights on.⁵ The NIH highlighted that in 2024, \$9 billion of the \$35 billion provided in grants covered indirect costs. If all 2024 grants were restricted by the 15% cap, the NIH would have only been able to provide \$4 billion for indirect costs rather than the necessary \$9 billion. When you cap funding for essential functions of research, it takes away from the research actually happening.⁶ About 58,000 jobs have been cut in the scientific research industry, and across the country,

1 National Institutes of Health. (2024, March 22). *Request for information (RFI): Inviting comments and suggestions on opportunities and challenges for the future of research on chronic pain*. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-25-068.html>

2 Sherman, J., & McIntire, M. (2025, March 7). *Under Trump, words like 'diversity' and 'inclusion' disappeared from government websites*. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2025/03/07/us/trump-federal-agencies-websites-words-dei.html>

3 Cohen, P. (2025, March 13). *Fears grow about plan to cut Pentagon medical research fund*. *Roll Call*. <https://rollcall.com/2025/03/13/fears-grow-about-plan-to-cut-pentagon-medical-research-fund/>

4 U.S. Department of Defense. (2024, March 8). *DOD commits \$500 million for women's health research, supports better care for all*. <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3913913/dod-commits-500-million-for-womens-health-research-supports-better-care-for-all/>

5 Alonso-Zaldivar, R. (2017, May 23). *Trump budget would cut \$5.8B from NIH, shift funds to industry*. *AP News*. <https://apnews.com/article/trump-nih-medical-research-funding-cut-indirect-costs-e7629d0d45d141b2ac47c54550411aff>

6 National Institutes of Health [@NIH]. (2025, March 26). *NIH has made women's health a priority with new investments in research. Today, we announced a landmark \$200 million in new funding opportunities...* [Post]. X. <https://x.com/NIH/status/1888004759396958263>

thousands of research grants are being rescinded as uncertainty about the future of funding arises.⁷ Cutting research funding and researchers will halt critical women's health research that could save lives.

Between 2013 and 2023, the NIH awarded only 8.8% of grant dollars to projects focused on women's health.⁸ Rather than encouraging more research focused on women's health, your Administration's actions are destroying the limited research projects in existence. As a result of the funding cap and the lack of clarity with the list of banned words, women-centered research projects are being rescinded at an alarming rate. These projects include research on early breast cancer detection and long-term health outcomes for children born to mothers who contracted COVID-19 during their pregnancies.⁹ Additionally, a \$400,000 project to better study intimate partner violence (IPV) during pregnancy was also terminated.¹⁰ Another critical project that is in danger includes a 7-year, \$168 million initiative to investigate and improve maternal health outcomes. The NIH established research centers across the country to execute this initiative. However, it is unclear if their funding will be rescinded due to their research grant being focused on "women," "females," and other terms that fall within the list of banned words.¹¹

Your Administration is endangering the lives of millions of women in every corner of the United States. We call on you to direct your Administration to remove the research funding cap, rescind the list of banned words, and prioritize funding for women's health research. Without this research, clinical trials will end, medications will not be approved, and new detection and treatment methods will stall – all of which will leave women to suffer and die, affecting families across the country.

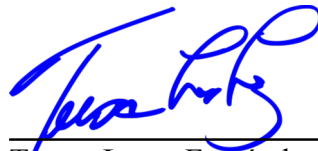
Sincerely,



Deborah K. Ross
Co-Chair
Policy Task Force
Democratic Women's Caucus



Sydney Kamlager Dove
Co-Chair
Policy Task Force
Democratic Women's Caucus



Teresa Leger Fernández
Chair
Democratic Women's Caucus

7 Sherman, C. (2025, February 15). 'A scary time to be a scientist': How medical research cuts will hurt the maternal mortality crisis. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/feb/15/trump-medical-research-funding-maternal-mortality>

8 Ibid.

9 Smith, J. (2025, March 18). *Columbia University agrees to federal oversight to restore research funding*. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/18/nyregion/columbia-research-grants-trump.html>

10 McShane, J. (2025, March 25). *Domestic violence and maternal mortality are rising. The NIH just defunded a project to study both*. *Mother Jones*. <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2025/03/domestic-violence-and-maternal-mortality-are-rising-the-nih-just-defunded-a-project-to-study-both/>

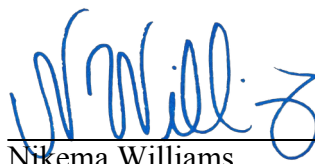
11 Sherman, C. (2025, February 15). 'A scary time to be a scientist': How medical research cuts will hurt the maternal mortality crisis. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/feb/15/trump-medical-research-funding-maternal-mortality>



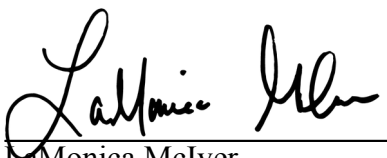
Lois Frankel
Chair Emerita
Democratic Women's Caucus



Joyce Beatty
National Leaders &
Advocacy Organizations
Liaison
Democratic Women's Caucus



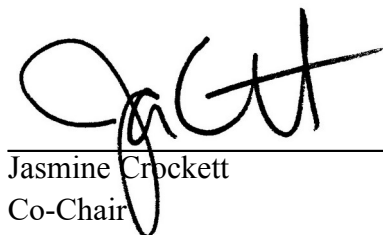
Nikema Williams
Chief Whip
Democratic Women's Caucus



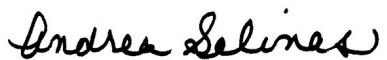
LaMonica McIver
New Member Liaison
Democratic Women's Caucus



Chrissy Houlahan
Chair
Servicewomen, Women Veterans,
and Military Families Task Force
Democratic Women's Caucus



Jasmine Crockett
Co-Chair
Communications Task Force
Democratic Women's Caucus



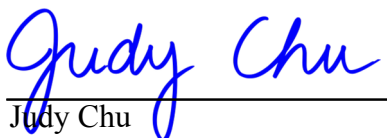
Andrea Salinas
Congressional Hispanic
Caucus Liaison
Democratic Women's Caucus



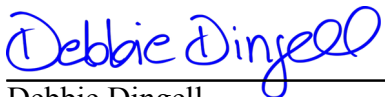
Norma J. Torres
New Democrats Coalition
Liaison
Democratic Women's Caucus



Kelly Morrison
Co-Chair & Liaison
Reproductive Health Care
Task Force
Democratic Women's Caucus



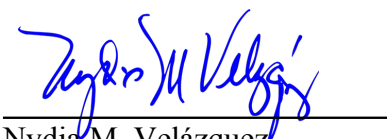
Judy Chu
Co-Chair & Liaison
Reproductive Health Care
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Democratic Women's Cauucs



Debbie Dingell
Senate Liaison
Democratic Women's Caucus



Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
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Terri A. Sewell
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Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
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Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress



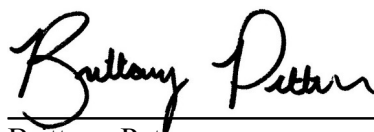
Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



Laura Friedman
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
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Brittany Pettersen
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



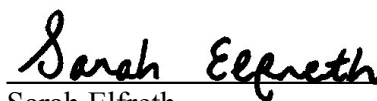
Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress



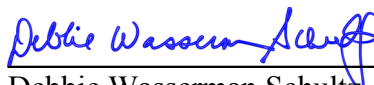
Lauren Underwood
Member of Congress



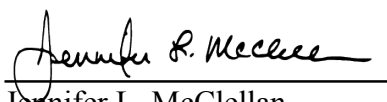
Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



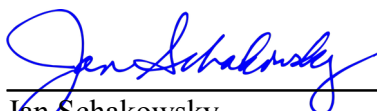
Sarah Elfreth
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
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CC:

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