

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 10, 2026

The Honorable Russell Vought
Director of Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Vought:

We write to express strong opposition to the Office of Management and Budget's sweeping proposed "Regulation for Federal Financial Assistance" rule that would completely overhaul and politicize the grantmaking and cooperative agreement processes across the entire federal government.

Year after year, Maryland turns federal investment into public goods with national and global benefits. Across the state, federal investment supports research into our ocean and waterways as well as our air, crops, livestock and soil. Federal grants support advancements in health and medicine including research into the treatment of diseases such as pediatric cancer and sickle cell disease and drive the development of new technologies that will keep Americans healthy. Grant-funded childcare through Head Start and Early Head Start serves families from the Eastern Shore to Garrett County. These dollars power cutting-edge developments in space technology, satellites, AI, and quantum computing. Federal funds also allow organizations to support victims of sexual assault, violence, and other crimes. The proposed Regulation for Federal Financial Assistance represents a threat to every one of those efforts to better American lives, strengthen our economy, and keep our country competitive. We urge you to immediately rescind this proposed rule that will further risk evidence-based science, research, and innovation in Maryland and across the United States.

On Friday, May 29, 2026, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), in conjunction with federal grant-making agencies, published a proposed rule in the federal register with the stated intent to "improve and clarify government-wide policies and requirements related to the management of Federal financial assistance including grants and cooperative agreements."¹ The purported objectives of the proposed rule include: improving transparency, accountability, and oversight of federal funds; reducing recipient burden; and clarifying 2 C.F.R regulatory text—commonly referred to as the "Uniform Guidance"—as an OMB regulation.²

In reality, if finalized, this more than 400-page rule will make significant, sweeping, and binding policy changes to the Uniform Guidance across more than 40 federal grant-making agencies and offices responsible for awarding billions of dollars in funding and federal financial assistance each fiscal year. It would codify the Trump Administration's campaign to eviscerate our research

¹ Office of Management and Budget et al., "Regulation for Federal Financial Assistance." *FR Doc. 2026-10817*. 29 May 2026, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/05/29/2026-10817/regulation-for-federal-financial-assistance>

² Ibid.

infrastructure and authorize more arbitrary cancellations, job losses due to funding uncertainty, and disruptions of work that require consistent data collection to maintain scientific validity.

This rule would further centralize power within OMB giving it authority over the heads of dozens of federal agencies as well as merit-based processes in matters of grantmaking and cooperative agreements. In doing so, this rule would place layers of bureaucratic and political red tape between elected representatives who are Constitutionally-responsible for appropriations, the federal agencies whose resources support our state and help drive our local economies, and Marylanders who rely on grants to support valuable research and services.

The federal grantmaking process includes essential, non-political guardrails that this rule seeks to eviscerate. Should it be finalized, OMB would have the legal authority to cancel any grant at any time simply because it no longer aligns with “federal agency priorities.”³ In almost all circumstances, Maryland grant recipients would not be able to appeal that decision or have a neutral party, such as a judge, review it. Just last year, legal action helped restore millions of dollars in wrongfully cancelled funding by the Trump Administration for AmeriCorps, mental health services, and biomedical research, among others. This proposed rule would make such cancellations easier. Without the ability to appeal or contest an arbitrary cancellation, grant-supported research including clinical trials and jobs can end with the stroke of a pen. Allowing political appointees to have the final say, rather than merit-based processes or Congress’s decision to fund programs, does not advance the stated goals of transparency or accountability.

Further, the rule contains a tangle of undefined new standards that would not clarify regulations. Federal regulations must be sufficiently clear to allow recipients to understand and comply with their obligations in good faith. This proposed rule introduces new criteria for evaluating grants such as adherence to “gold standard science,”⁴ whether they “promote anti-American values,”⁵ or specific consideration for, “a history of questionable practices,” like “affiliation with a group that has undermined public safety”⁶ but does not provide meaningful definitions for these new standards. Grantees must even ensure that all subrecipients do not, “take actions that could significantly damage the reputation of the pass-through entity, the Federal agency making the award, or the Federal Government.”⁷ The rule does make clear, however, that non-compliance with any of the new vague and underdefined standards can result in immediate termination of support.

Beyond the arbitrary standards that are ripe for abuse, this proposed rule seeks to prohibit freedom of association, speech, and the international collaboration that has made Maryland a leader not only in our region, but in the world. This regulation would bar researchers from using federal funds to publish the research they undertake with our collective resources and would prohibit researchers from attending professional conferences without pre-approval from the federal government. This rule would also presumptively prohibit many international collaborations and further restrict any scientific engagement with foreign entities. Fields from biomedical research to space science

³ *Id.* § 200.340(2)

⁴ *Id.* § 200.205(b)(5)

⁵ *Id.* § 200.205(b)(2)(iv)

⁶ *Id.* § 200.206(b)(2)

⁷ *Id.* § 200.332(h)(i)

regularly put Marylanders in the position of leading work with teams of scientists and engineers in other countries. While security safeguards are always important, this rule would not strengthen them, but in practice, will limit freedom, research, and collaboration in the name of security.

Of course, this proposal does not come in a vacuum; it is being offered in the midst of illegal attacks, uncertainty, and gutting of the entire U.S. scientific and research enterprise by the Trump Administration. We are facing the consequences of these actions in real time. In fiscal year 2025 alone, the Trump Administration indiscriminately terminated thousands of NIH grants and disrupted more than 300 clinical trials, putting thousands of patients including children at risk. Recent reports suggest hundreds of NIH grants are actively being delayed because of the Administration's unprecedented politicalization of the NIH grant review process⁸—and as a result, Maryland-specific NIH competitive awards have decreased by 33% in fiscal year 2026 compared to prior years.

Since the beginning of the President's term, the Administration and OMB's intentional delay in spending appropriated funds, grant terminations and disruptions, and overall fewer federal grants being awarded has impacted billions of dollars in federal funding to Maryland, including our state and local governments, schools, and research institutions. As a result, hundreds of our constituents have lost their jobs, Maryland research institutions and universities are undergoing hiring freezes and layoffs, and graduate and post-doctoral programs have been forced to cut or limit admissions—all which threaten to stifle U.S. leadership and innovation for decades to come.

The people of Maryland and the United States deserve actual transparency, reliability, and accountability from our federal government, not arbitrary rules and political interference from OMB that would weaken our scientific and research enterprise, risk more jobs, and slow down hard-won progress. We urge you to rescind this proposed rule immediately.

Sincerely,



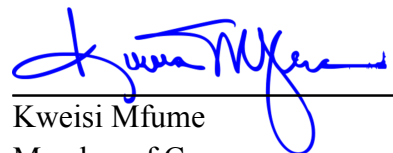
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Angela D. Alsobrooks
United States Senator

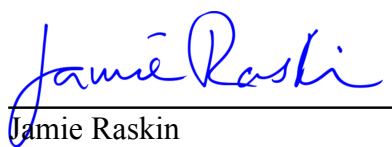


Steny H. Hoyer
Member of Congress



Kweisi Mfume
Member of Congress

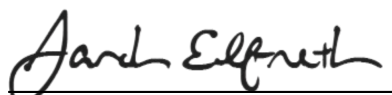
⁸ Kozlov, Max. "Inside the New Political Screening That's Stalling NIH Grants." *Nature*, 26 June 2026, www.nature.com/articles/d41586-026-01924-8.



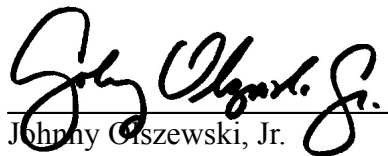
Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



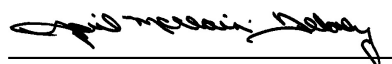
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