



**Capitol Hill Day
June 13, 2013**

Political Interference in Research

The AAUP has long opposed efforts to politicize public support for research. If basic research is to continue to advance knowledge, researchers must have access to high quality data and research proposals must be subjected to rigorous peer review, not reviews conducted on the basis of political criteria. The AAUP calls on Congress to reject all measures that would politicize the criteria by which research is approved and funded.

The AAUP [condemned](#) the measure approved in March to defund most political science research at the National Science Foundation (NSF) unless it met the limited criteria of “promoting national security or the economic interests of the United States,” and calls on Congress to rescind this provision. Efforts that would extend this logic to all NSF funding, such as a recently circulated discussion draft of legislation to be called the High Quality Research Act, would add an unnecessary and disruptive political review process to NSF funding decisions. When politicians can defund research using criteria that disregard the successful peer review process, all scientific research is potentially chilled.

Similarly, there have been efforts in Congress to defund research awards by the National Institutes of Health in the field of health economics. In 2012, a House Appropriations subcommittee voted to eliminate the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, which conducts research into healthcare cost savings. This session, Rep. Gregg Harper of Mississippi introduced H.R. 1724 “Kids First Research Act of 2013,” which would prohibit NIH research in health economics unless the Director submits a report to Congress that such research should be given priority over research on pediatric diseases such as autism and cancer, a measure that creates a false juxtaposition of priorities as an excuse to defund valuable research for political motives.

HR 1638 (Rep. Duncan of South Carolina) would limit the activities of the U.S. Census Bureau solely to conducting the decennial census for purposes of apportionment. Other censuses and surveys, including the American Community Survey, vital for information about demographics and economics that inform policy at all levels of government, would no longer be available.

The AAUP opposes legislation that would substitute the political judgment of Congress for the proven scientific peer review process.

The AAUP supports the Fair Access to Science and Technology Act of 2013, HR 708 (Rep. Doyle of Pennsylvania) and S. 350 (Sen. Cornyn of Texas), bipartisan legislation that directs federal agencies to develop public access policies for research conducted by employees of that agency or from funds administered by that agency. As ten national and regional library, publishing, research and advocacy institutions wrote in 2012, “Timely, barrier-free access to the results of federally funded research is an essential component of our collective investment in science.” The AAUP also calls on Congress to lift prohibitions against distribution of CRS reports free to the public that paid for them.

For more information, contact:

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