

November 6, 2025

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

The Honorable Patty Murray, Vice Chair  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole, Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking  
Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Collins, Vice Chair Murray, Chair Cole, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

On behalf of the below 58 scientific societies and institutions, united in our appreciation of and support for the critical role of the National Science Foundation (NSF) to advance the behavioral, social, and education sciences – we are writing to urge you to fund NSF at the highest level possible in FY 2026 appropriations and accede to the critical [Senate report language](#) (pg 164 and below) directing sustained funding for the Social, Behavioral, and Economic (SBE) Sciences Directorate.

The SBE Directorate funds foundational research that has already benefited all Americans by driving technological innovation, enhancing national security, and bolstering economic prosperity. Continued investment in these areas — and all disciplines supported by the SBE directorate — is essential for not only sustaining the future of the nation’s scientific enterprise but also serving the public’s health and well being.

As noted in the [September 23 letter](#) to you from founders, venture capitalists, and the business community, “NSF investments in neural networks and cognitive science helped drive the development of modern-day AI.” The foundational role of cognitive and psychological sciences was further highlighted in the 2024 Golden Goose Awards — [\*How We Think: Brain-Inspired Models of Human Cognition Contribute to the Foundations of Today’s Artificial Intelligence\*](#), demonstrating the breathtaking return on investment in the SBE Directorate. SBE is uniquely positioned to advance guidelines, opportunities, and limitations about the deployment of AI systems moving forward.

The SBE Directorate also provides funding for research vital to military readiness, safety, and cost-effectiveness. For example, understanding of core cognitive skills and memory has allowed the U.S. Navy to build studies on how soldiers think and reason during high-stakes tasks such as navigation, mechanical analysis, and combat. When soldiers cannot regulate their attention, they under-perform across multiple domains. In training and in combat, where distraction and interference are standard, the stakes of attention control can be life-or-death. Numerous other agencies such as DARPA, Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Defense all build and rely on SBE funded research.

Furthermore, the SBE Directorate — with a fraction of the science budgets of other NSF's Directorates — enables the research that drives economic prosperity, measuring and evaluating the impact of federal investment in R&D and bolstering government, industry, and academic partnerships. In fact, earlier this month, the 2025 Nobel Prize in Economics went to two NSF funded researchers for their work on the technological roots of sustained economic growth, continuing a long winning streak of having funded 73 of the 99 laureates to receive the prize to date, including every prize awarded since 1997.

Once again, we thank you for your continued bipartisan efforts to support NSF in FY 2026 appropriations, particularly in light of the massive cuts proposed in the budget request. **As you work to finalize FY 2026 appropriations, we urge you to fund NSF to at least the funding level proposed by the Senate, ensuring that NSF has the necessary funding to support all disciplines, including the behavioral, social, and economic sciences, and to fulfill its ambitious mission.**

Millions of scientists, students, teachers, and entrepreneurs across this country have and will continue to benefit from Congress' investment in NSF — and specifically the SBE Directorate — to advance cutting-edge research to accelerate technological innovation, national security, and economic prosperity.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Political and Social Science  
American Anthropological Association  
American Astronomical Society  
American Brain Coalition  
American Educational Research Association  
American Geophysical Union  
American Institute of Biological Sciences

American Political Science Association  
American Psychological Association Services, Inc.  
American Sociological Association  
Association for Psychological Science  
Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM)  
Association of Population Centers  
Black Men's Brain Health Conference  
Boston University  
Carnegie Mellon University  
Cognitive Development Society  
Cognitive Science Society  
College of Arts and Sciences, University at Buffalo, State University of New York  
Computing Research Association  
Consortium of Social Science Associations  
Council of Graduate Schools  
Council on Social Work Education  
Council on Undergraduate Research  
Davey Strategies  
Department of Psychology, Brandeis University  
Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences  
Georgia Institute of Technology  
Human Factors and Ergonomics Society  
International Bipolar Foundation  
Maryland Population Research Center, University of Maryland, College Park  
Population Association of America  
Psychonomic Society  
Rochester Institute of Technology  
Rural Minds  
Sage  
Social and Affective Neuroscience Society (SANS)  
Society for Behavioral Neuroendocrinology  
Society for Biopsychosocial Science and Medicine  
Society for Judgment and Decision Making  
Society for Personality and Social Psychology  
Society for Prevention Research  
Society for Psychophysiological Research  
Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD)  
Society for Research on Adolescence  
Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues  
Society of Experimental Psychologists

The Academy of Behavioral Medicine Research  
University of Michigan  
University of Oregon  
University of Pennsylvania  
University of Rochester  
University of Colorado Anschutz  
University of Colorado Boulder  
University of Colorado Colorado Springs  
University of Colorado Denver  
Vision Sciences Society  
Washington University in St. Louis

CC:

NSF Acting Director Brian Stone

National Science Board Chair Victor McCrary

#### Senate FY26 NSF Report Language

Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences [SBE].—The Committee supports the SBE Directorate and recognizes the fundamental importance of the research it supports in advancing scientific understanding of public health, defense and security, education and learning, and the interface between humans and technology. The Committee provides not less than the fiscal year 2024 enacted level for the SBE Directorate. The SBE Directorate funds more than half of our Nation’s university-based behavioral science research but remains the smallest of NSF directorates. The Committee believes that behavioral science provides evidence-based understanding of human behavior and recognizes the SBE Directorate’s unique role in funding this research and encourages NSF to continue its support of these programs. NSF is encouraged to support broad-based research in the SBE Directorate to develop and publish recommendations, including from researchers in the social sciences and ethics and technical subject matter experts, on concrete and practical guidelines for how organizations will and should deploy AI systems and identify limitations and concerns about specific deployment of AI systems in settings.