

Statement for the Record

U.S. Senate Committee on the Budget
Hearing on the President's Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Proposal
April 16, 2026

Submitted by the Science and Technology Action Committee

Dear Chairman Graham, Ranking Member Merkley, and Members of the Committee:

The Science and Technology Action Committee, a coalition of organizations and stakeholders committed to ensuring U.S. excellence and global leadership in science, technology, and innovation, appreciates the opportunity to submit this statement for the record in connection with the Committee's hearing with Office of Management and Budget Director Russ Vought. We are grateful for your leadership and for the Committee's ongoing attention to the nation's fiscal priorities and long-term economic strength.

We write to express concern regarding proposed reductions to federal science agency budgets at a time when China and other global competitors are increasing their investments in research and development. The proposed elimination of the Social, Behavioral, and Economic (SBE) Sciences Directorate at the National Science Foundation (NSF) is a case in point. Nations such as China are making robust, coordinated investments in the social sciences as part of broader efforts to shape technological leadership, economic policy, and global influence. Retreating from this domain would cede an important dimension of strategic advantage.

SBE research is a force multiplier for federal investments in science and technology. Breakthroughs in fields such as artificial intelligence, public health, energy, and national security depend not only on technical innovation, but on understanding how individuals, organizations, and societies respond to new technologies and policies. SBE-supported research provides the evidence base needed to improve the adoption, effectiveness, and return on investment of federally funded innovations. Without it, even the most promising scientific advances will fail to achieve their potential impact.

The importance of SBE research is particularly evident in areas of bipartisan concern. It strengthens workforce participation and productivity, informs more efficient and accountable government programs, and helps reduce waste by identifying what works, and what does not, in real-world settings. In healthcare, for example, SBE research helps close the gap between discovery and delivery, ensuring that effective treatments reach patients and are used appropriately. In national security, it enhances our understanding of human behavior in complex environments, supporting more effective strategies to counter emerging threats.

The NSF SBE Directorate plays a unique and irreplaceable role in advancing this work. It supports rigorous, peer-reviewed research that underpins evidence-based policymaking and strengthens the

effectiveness of federal programs across agencies. Eliminating the Directorate would disrupt critical research , and diminish the value of investments made elsewhere in the scientific enterprise.

We recognize and respect the difficult tradeoffs inherent in federal budgeting. At the same time, we believe that reductions that disproportionately affect foundational research, particularly research that enhances the impact and efficiency of other federal investments, would prove counterproductive to the Committee's goals of fiscal responsibility and economic growth.

We therefore respectfully encourage the Committee to support sustained funding for NSF and our nation's other science agencies, and to champion SBE as a strategic imperative for the United States. Doing so will help ensure that federal investment in science and technology delivers the greatest possible benefit to the American people.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued leadership.

Respectfully submitted,

Science and Technology Action Committee