



# President's Office

---

## Letters to the UMB Community

### March for Science

---

To the UMB Community:

I know many of you are planning to join the hundreds of thousands of people expected to march this Saturday in Washington, D.C., to celebrate—and defend—science. I thank you for lending your voice and your advocacy to this movement because, without a doubt, science needs defending these days.

President Trump's budget proposal cuts 31 percent from the Environmental Protection Agency, slashes the Department of Energy's basic science research program, and zeros out a program that supports early-stage research into technologies that could reduce our national dependence on fossil fuels. The National Institutes of Health (NIH), which spends \$32 billion a year on biomedical research—most of which goes to universities and medical schools across this country—would see a nearly 20 percent cut, bringing the agency's budget to its lowest level in 15 years. By no means is it only science under attack: The president's proposed budget eliminates the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The assault on science comes not only in the form of draconian budget cuts, but in ways meant to politicize science or intimidate those who undertake it. The administration has issued gag orders on science agencies engaging in unsanctioned speech and sent letters to agency heads ordering that they identify scientists working on climate research. As a presidential candidate, Mr. Trump endorsed theories that have no basis in science—for instance, that vaccines are linked to autism or that climate change is a hoax.

And so I stand with those who will march this weekend to defend science and the scientific method. It is the scientific method that teaches us how to ask questions, form hypotheses, and then—critically—test those hypotheses with rigorous and replicable experiments. It is this method that protects us against specious theories and unproved (and unprovable) "facts."

As a physician, I know that it is because of science that diseases that were once widespread and incurable are now—within my own lifetime—eradicated or treatable. This is the science that some in Congress and in the White House want to cut, attempting to persuade the American people that the basic research undertaken in labs across this country doesn't affect them. But it does, and powerfully. Every modern medical advancement that has saved patients in a physician's care and relieved their loved ones of grief had its origins in the research lab.

U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price, himself a physician, defended President Trump's proposed \$6 billion cut to the NIH budget by suggesting that these cuts would be carved out of the overhead costs that universities like ours incur in doing research—costs such as operating and maintaining the facilities in which the research is conducted. However, as any businessperson knows, this overhead isn't frivolous. It's exactly what enables our people to keep doing the research that builds the science that ultimately saves and enriches lives. And I propose that it is precisely these kinds of efforts that many Americans *want* their tax dollars to support.

UMB is educating the next generation of health care practitioners, scientists, researchers, and policy experts, the people who will one day solve the greatest challenges of human health and well-being. I take this responsibility to train tomorrow's problem-solvers seriously, and I support all of you in your fight to preserve smart and humane science policy and investment. I stand with you because your work matters. Science matters. Truth matters.

The budget priorities of this administration do not reflect the America I know, an America strengthened by its science and scientists, by investments made in research that protects its people, advances its interests, and enlarges global cooperation. The shortsightedness we've seen over the last three months undoubtedly threatens science, but science will prevail. It always does.

Sincerely,

**Jay A. Perman, MD**

*President*

[Back to Letters to the UMB Community](#)

---

The University of Maryland, Baltimore is the founding campus of the University System of Maryland.  
620 W. Lexington St., Baltimore, MD 21201 | 410-706-3100  
© 2016-2017 University of Maryland, Baltimore. All rights reserved.