Advocating for Science in your District

Meeting with your elected officials in your state/local district is a great way to build strong relationships with your elected officials, communicate your experiences and the communicate the importance of science funding.

Below are some talking points to help you have a successful meeting.

General talking points

1. Round of introductions
    a. Introduce yourself, who you are, what scientific work you do, etc.
    b. Then explain why you're here today to meet with them
        i. Example: "I'm here today to talk to you about the importance of science funding and how the recent changes at the NIH have impacted me and my community."
    c. Explain how recent actions by federal agencies have impacted your lab and how it affects your state and/or the country as a whole.
        i. Example:
            1. By this time of year, I typically would receive scores for my grant applications. However, with the policy changes at key science agencies, I have not received my score yet. This uncertainty harms my lab because it doesn't allow me to prepare my research accordingly.
            2. I run a training program that supports a number of students that was cut. Training programs such as mine attract talented young scientists from across the country and this funding supports parts of their tuition, research and cost of living adding to the local/state economy.

2. Key federal science agencies are not spending funds appropriated by congress for FY 25, training programs are being cut, and research grants are being terminated arbitrarily. These collective actions are damaging our research enterprise and are signaling the wrong message to American scientists and to our research competitors abroad.

3. According to a recent report, these major R&D cuts would reduce America's GDP by 3.8%, which is comparable to the decline in GDP during the Great Recession.

4. These cuts to scientific funding are discouraging U.S. scientists and causing them to pursue research positions abroad, draining our talent pool.

5. The uncertainty of funding is pushing U.S. trained scientists to pursue career opportunities outside of the country in Canada, Europe and out top competitor in science, China.

6. We are asking that you to reverse these actions to re-establish the U.S. the leader in innovation.

General Tips

- ***Prepare ahead of time***
  - Research the lawmaker you're meeting with; how long have they been in office? Have they supported science in the past? Did they graduate from the university you work/attend?
    - Finding common ground is a great way to build strong relationships
  - We highly recommend practice your talking points ahead of time
  - Use ASBMB fact sheets, which can be found on our advocacy action center, to help prepare your talking points
- ***Explain your work clearly and concisely***
  - Explain your work in layman's terms and try to avoid scientific jargon
  - This is also why practice is key
  - Make sure you're grounding the information you're saying in the local impact and how what you're describing affects your community
- Be positive in your messaging
- Don't ask answer questions you don't know the answer to
- Be nonpartisan.

Talking points about the importance of funding key science agencies

1. **National Institutes of Health**
   a. Funding from the NIH has contributed to 354 of the 356 drugs approved from 2010 to 2019—which is over 99%.
   b. The NIH supports roughly 59% of all postdocs in academic research and development concentrated in biomedical sciences.
   c. In FY2024 alone, NIH funding generated $94.58 billion in economic activity.
      i. Relate back to your lab --> for example, my NIH grant supports XXX number of trainees and postdocs which then supports our local economy.
2. **National Science Foundation**
   d. Strengthening NSF funding will allow the agency to fulfill the administration's AI and national security priorities.
   e. The NSF is the only science funding agency that supports basic science research across all science disciplines.
   f. The NSF's annual budget alone represents almost a quarter of the total federal budget for basic scientific research.
   g. Congress must invest in the U.S. research enterprise by robustly funding the NSF.
3. **Department of Energy**
   h. This office is the largest supporter of basic research in the physical sciences in the U.S. and is working to address some of the most pressing challenges of our time.
   i. The DOE supports 17 national labs that provide scientists across all sectors with the research enterprise space to collaborate and answer the nation's pressing scientific questions using state of the art facilities.
   j. The DOE Office of Science supports 11,100 investigators, 3,400 postdoctoral scholars, 5,200 graduate students and 9,700 scientific personnel. This is the

scientific powerhouse that we need to drive U.S. competitiveness and innovation.

Q&A for Potential Questions

Facilities and Administrative Costs

Q: What is your take on facilities and administrative costs? I heard it takes away from funding that supports research.

A: F&A costs do not take away from funding research, in fact it ensures that research is able to function most effectively. Indirect costs cover advanced research lab equipment, secure data storage, radiation and chemical safety and other laboratory maintenance costs. These are real costs, and research cannot be conducted without them.

NIH Restructuring

Q: NIH is planning to restructure its institutes into five focus areas. What should we know about how this reorganization will impact science?

A: Any significant reorganization of NIH must include basic science research and training for the next generation of scientists. Our members across the biochemistry and molecular biology community are funded across NIH institutes and across key science agencies and urge political leadership to ensure basic science research is prioritized.

In addition, we believe that any NIH reorganization and optimization should be made on the foundation of a thorough, consultative process that incorporates congressional hearings, bipartisanship and substantial stakeholder input.

Gain-of-Function Research

Q: The president recently released an Executive Order on Gain-of-Function Research. What are your thoughts on how this will keep Americans safe?

A: I cannot directly speak on the Executive Order Directly. I will refer you to our public affairs team to answer this question.