political interference in science

The United States has an impressive history of investing in scientific research and respecting the independence of scientists. As a result, we have enjoyed sustained economic progress and public health, as well as unequaled leadership within the global scientific community. Recent actions by political appointees, however, threaten to undermine this legacy by preventing the best available science from informing policy decisions that have serious consequences for our health, safety, and environment.

Across a broad range of issues—from childhood lead poisoning and mercury emissions to climate change, reproductive health, and nuclear weapons—political appointees have distorted and censored scientific findings that contradict established policies. In some cases, they have manipulated the underlying science to align results with predetermined political decisions.

They have also undermined the independence of scientific advisory panels by subjecting panel nominees to political litmus tests that have no bearing on their expertise, and by nominating under- or unqualified individuals—some of whom have industry ties that could represent a conflict of interest. Other scientific advisory committees have been disbanded altogether.

These activities have naturally outraged members of the scientific community, and have also drawn criticism from numerous legislators who rely on the independence of government research. The American public, which trusts its government to make well-informed decisions in the interest of public health and safety, should be concerned as well.

UCS is working with scientists and ordinary
citizens alike to spur appropriate legislative and regulatory action. Find out more information about how you can help us restore scientific integrity to federal policy making.