

THE POLICY SCIENCES CENTER, INC.

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May 20, 2013

Mr. Denis McDonough, Chief of Staff
The White House
1600 PA Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. McDonough:

Concerning the issues that have arisen in the IRS/Tea Party scandal: Since the Reagan Administration, the National Science Foundation has inappropriately killed social science research that it perceives as likely to anger Republicans. The Obama Administration - specifically, Dr. Holdren and his legal counsel - has failed to correct the NSF problem.

These are serious charges: NSF is expected to make, and is widely believed to make, competitive funding decisions by an independent, peer-review Scientific Merit system. Thus I enclose a review for the Yale Corporation (Appendix A) that documents NSF's practices. Dr. Holdren, the President's Science Adviser, may have been unwittingly complicit in duplicity and a coverup: this background material discusses the case of false and misleading statements, co-signed by Dr. Holdren and President Obama's first NSF Director, published on the White House Website.¹

NSF's uncorrected partisan bias has been known in the White House (to Dr. Holdren) since the beginning of President Obama's first term. There are several alibis, but one argument is that NSF officials have claimed behind closed doors that they are protecting the wider NSF budget and (the jobs of) the entire Social, Behavioral, and Economics (SBE) Directorate that might be wiped-out by Republicans unless the Left is defunded and the independent role of our universities is neutralized. NSF supplies the majority of social science research funds to our universities and its partisan accommodations have been brutally effective, especially because they have been hidden behind the claim of a peer review, Scientific Merit decision system. NSF officials are like judges who impose the death sentence on Blacks with the justification that an angry KKK mob will hang the defendant if they give an honest verdict.

Would you apply President Obama's public standards in the Tea Party/IRS case? You can help to restore trust, needed scientific progress and the integrity of public administration in at least three areas:

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Restoring Honest Broker Fairness and Scientific Independence: Three National Benefits:

1.) **University researchers can test Republican (e.g., Ronald Reagan's and Governor Romney's) empirical claims about a dependency syndrome** affecting national modal personality, including a.) the motivation of 47% of Americans; b.) their "willingness to take responsibility for their own lives;" and c.) (allegedly) contributing to many unsolved social and economic problems. There are direct measures that can be used with national probability samples: social scientists have proposed (for 30+ years) a rapid learning system to engage these ideological disagreements and bring evidence to increasing political polarization.

2.) **Worldwide (and domestic) studies of liberation, freedom, equality and human potential.** There is exciting neuroscience evidence of a **Primate Subordination Syndrome** that may connect the dots and illuminate such important processes as recruitment to terrorism and the influence of messianic leaders; the processes of rebellion and democratization in the Arab Spring, and the domestic mystery of unsolved motivational and cognitive inhibitions in lower status populations in the US.

These breakthroughs are partly outlined in the enclosed documentation (Attachment B) for Dr. Lauer at NIH. NSF treats this transformational thinking as if it is an exploding political hand grenade: specifically, the current NSF Assistant Director has invoked an unwritten rule against NSF studies of domestic racism and its effects [e.g. cognitive inhibitions in K-12 science education in lower status populations]. NSF's suppressive behavior is an affront to the rule of law: They will not provide a written statement of who made partisan rules to block this kind of potentially transformative research and by what authority. Scientists cannot obtain independent legal advice about the rule's legitimacy and how it might be appealed.

3.) **Accelerating Economic Recovery.** Republican political hostility to social science research has caused a fearful bureaucracy to inhibit the NSF Economics program - for example, any development of new data systems and budget requests for rapid learning in the current economic crisis. Established theories and data systems have been catastrophic failures. Republicans have been granted victories without the requirement of enacting legislation.

There is a further discussion of these five years of a scientific lockdown and failure in the enclosed letter [Attachment C] to the President of the American Economic Association, asking for a renewed effort for an emergency allocation and rapid learning. [By contrast to NSF, NIH and other scientific agencies in the Administration have been succeeding brilliantly in building Big Data and rapid learning

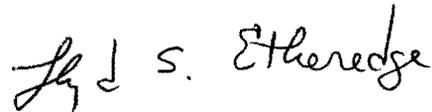
systems.]

NSF's political lock-down apparently contributes to the fatalism of the Obama Administration about the delayed recovery. This fatalism will be difficult to forgive: The President should know that we can do a lot better.

If you agree that President Obama, if well-informed, would order you to correct these problems, I hope that you will brief him.

If further discussion would be useful, I can be contacted in the Washington DC area at 301-365-5241.

Yours truly,



Dr. Lloyd S. Etheredge, Director
Government Learning Project

cc: Dr. Jane Mansbridge, President, American Political Science Association
White House Counsel Kathryn Ruemmler
Press Secretary Jay Carney

Enclosures:

- Attachment A. Letter and background material for the Yale Corporation.
- Attachment B. Email to Dr. Lauer et al. at NIH reviewing the Primate Subordination Syndrome and a breakthrough potential for rapid (domestic policy) learning.
- Attachment C. Letter to AEA President re NSF lockdowns, the IMF summit, and a new rapid learning system for macro-economics

Notes

1. Correspondence with Dr. Holdren is available, from his days as AAAS President, on www.policyscience.net. An off-the-record meeting of our nation's most distinguished scientists was convened, more than a decade ago, by Dr. David Hamburg (a predecessor to Dr. Holdren as AAAS President) and the late Joshua Lederberg [under the auspices of the Carnegie Commission on Science, Technology, and Government] to advocate restoring scientific integrity and an Honest Broker political independence to NSF. Hundreds of scientists have participated in behind-closed-door meetings discussing and criticizing these partisan accommodations. There are many witnesses to the breakdowns of public integrity and the Administration's (e.g., Dr. Holdren's) failure to restore scientific integrity, trustworthiness, and the rule of law.