

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 21, 2025

The Honorable Matthew J. Memoli, M.D., M.S.
Acting Director
National Institutes of Health
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20892

Re: National Institutes of Health Common Fund's Faculty Institutional Recruitment for Sustainable Transformation Program Follow-Up Inquiry

Dear Acting Director Memoli,

We are writing to follow up on an inquiry regarding the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Common Fund's Faculty Institutional Recruitment for Sustainable Transformation (FIRST) Program.

On November 1st, 2024, a Congressional oversight letter was transmitted to Former Director Monica Bertagnolli, M.D., expressing concern with the administration of the NIH's FIRST Program, which, as you know, has funneled millions in taxpayer dollars towards diversity-focused hiring practices at institutions of higher education (IHE) nationwide. To briefly recap and convey the extent to which these divisive ideologies constitute the objectives of the FIRST program, FIRST faculty must complete a mandatory statement highlighting their commitment to promoting diversity and inclusive excellence to even qualify for assistance.¹ Such requirements are ludicrous and run completely contrary to what should be the priorities of the NIH in terms of growing the biomedical research workforce.

As referenced in the previous correspondence, independent findings have also revealed that, in large part due to the FIRST Program, multiple IHEs have instituted highly discriminatory evaluation standards to assess a candidate's contributions to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).²⁻³ Such standards have reportedly dictated lower scores for individuals who state an "intention to ignore the varying backgrounds of their students and treat everyone the same" or express reservations about practices that divide faculty and students into "affinity groups" segregated by race.⁴

On December 20th, 2024, the NIH responded to the aforementioned letter and revealed that in FY23 alone, the NIH spent **\$315.7 million** in taxpayer dollars on "diversity and inclusion initiatives," and of that amount, \$57.9 million was allocated toward the FIRST program. Such staggering figures, while not necessarily surprising under the former administration, provide a truly clear example of the very waste, fraud, and abuse that President Trump and DOGE have committed to rooting out of our federal government. We ask that you take all action under your existing authority to halt the use of taxpayer funding for these illegal DEI initiatives that have long been financed under the NIH.

¹ <https://commonfund.nih.gov/FIRST/faqs>

² https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-nih-sacrifices-scientific-rigor-for-dei-f828a6c7?mod=hp_trending_now_opn_pos2

³ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/how-diversity-policing-fails-science-equality-equity-education-texas-tech-job-candidates-interview-dei-pronouns-11675722169>

⁴ https://www.wsj.com/articles/nih-national-institutes-health-dei-medical-research-graduate-school-diversity-statement-woke-critical-race-theory-crt-62ccfba9?mod=article_inline

On that point, recent reporting has indicated that there has been some uncertainty at the NIH regarding the administering of grants and loans specifically tied to DEI.⁵ Any clarity from the NIH on whether this funding has resumed, remained frozen, or canceled entirely would be incredibly beneficial.

The American people spoke loud and clear in November and have made it known that we are no longer going to tolerate this behavior in our federally funded programs. Under President Trump's short tenure, we have already witnessed a restoration of sanity in the management and objectives of our federal agencies through the termination of the Left's woke ideologies, particularly DEI. Despite this unprecedented success, however, Congress must now act to prevent their reemergence. To ensure we are responsible stewards of American taxpayer dollars, it should always remain our prerogative to fund initiatives that seek to enhance our biomedical research capabilities and grow the workforce in a manner free from the use of irrelevant characteristics.

To that end, we are requesting the following information no later than April 25th, 2025.

- Please provide a programmatic breakdown of the \$315.7 million spent on "diversity and inclusion initiatives" in FY23.
- How much in total taxpayer dollars did the NIH allocate to DEI-related initiatives during the following FYs?
 - o FY2021
 - o FY2022
 - o FY2023
 - o FY2024
- What is the status of other NIH federal awards that allocate taxpayer dollars to institutions or individuals to advance diversity among faculty, students, or programs?

We look forward to receiving your timely response.

Sincerely,



Harriet M. Hageman
Member of Congress



Barry Moore
Member of Congress

⁵ <https://popular.info/p/update-nih-reimposes-dei-funding>