

# **FEDERAL SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY AND RESEARCH STABILITY ACT OF 2026**

## **SECTION 1 — SHORT TITLE, TABLE OF CONTENTS, AND FINDINGS**

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### **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the “**Federal Scientific Integrity and Research Stability Act of 2026.**”

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### **SECTION 2. TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

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### **SECTION 3. FINDINGS.**

Congress finds the following:

1. **Federal research funding is essential** to national security, public health, agriculture, energy, and technological competitiveness.
2. **The Naval Surface Warfare Center, Crane Division**, located in Indiana’s Ninth Congressional District, is one of the nation’s largest research and development centers supporting defense readiness and advanced technologies.
3. **Indiana University Bloomington** is a major research institution receiving federal grants from the National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, Department of Defense, and other agencies.

4. Federal research programs require **multi-year stability** to maintain workforce continuity, laboratory operations, and long-term scientific progress.
  5. **Abrupt changes in federal appropriations**, political interference, or administrative disruptions can cause:
    - loss of research personnel
    - termination of long-term projects
    - delays in national security programs
    - waste of taxpayer resources
  6. Scientific integrity is a **non-partisan principle** essential to evidence-based policymaking.
  7. Federal agencies must ensure that **scientific findings are protected** from political manipulation, suppression, or distortion.
  8. A standardized system of **rolling 5-year research funding baselines** will improve planning, reduce waste, and strengthen national competitiveness.
  9. Transparency and public reporting are necessary to ensure **accountability** in federal research programs.
  10. Establishing a **Federal Research Stability Board** will provide independent oversight, continuity, and expert review.
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## SECTION 2 — PURPOSES

The purposes of this Act are:

1. To establish **5-year rolling funding baselines** for federal research agencies.
2. To protect **scientific integrity** and ensure research is free from political interference.
3. To create a **Federal Research Stability Board (FRSB)** to oversee implementation.
4. To require **public dashboards** showing research funding, disruptions, and project status.
5. To ensure **continuity of operations** for federal laboratories, universities, and contractors.
6. To strengthen the United States' **long-term scientific and technological leadership**.
7. To improve **efficiency, predictability, and accountability** in federal research spending.

## SECTION 3 — DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this Act:

1. **“Agency”** means any executive agency, military department, or independent establishment receiving federal appropriations for scientific, engineering, medical, agricultural, environmental, or technological research.
2. **“Research program”** means any federally funded project, grant, cooperative agreement, laboratory activity, or contract involving scientific, engineering, or technical investigation.

3. “**Scientific integrity**” means adherence to professional standards, ethical norms, and processes that ensure the objectivity, reproducibility, transparency, and independence of scientific research.
4. “**Political interference**” means any action by an elected official, political appointee, or individual acting on their behalf that seeks to alter, suppress, distort, delay, or misrepresent scientific findings or research processes for non-scientific reasons.
5. “**5-year rolling baseline**” means a mandatory minimum funding level for an agency’s research programs, calculated as the average of the previous five fiscal years’ enacted appropriations, adjusted annually for inflation.
6. “**FRSB**” or “**Board**” means the **Federal Research Stability Board** established under Section 6 of this Act.
7. “**Research disruption**” means any interruption, cancellation, suspension, or delay of a research program caused by funding instability, administrative action, or political interference.
8. “**Covered institution**” means any university, laboratory, contractor, or research entity receiving federal research funds.
9. “**Principal investigator**” means the lead researcher responsible for the design, conduct, and reporting of a federally funded research project.
10. “**Federal research workforce**” means all federal employees, contractors, fellows, and grant-funded personnel engaged in scientific or technical research.

## SECTION 4 — ESTABLISHMENT OF 5-YEAR ROLLING RESEARCH FUNDING BASELINES

### 4(a). Requirement to Establish Baselines

Beginning in Fiscal Year 2027, each agency shall establish a **5-year rolling research funding baseline** for all research programs under its jurisdiction.

### 4(b). Calculation of Baseline

The baseline shall be calculated as:

- the **average enacted appropriations** for the agency’s research programs over the previous **five fiscal years**,
- **plus an annual inflation adjustment** equal to the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U),
- **plus a stability factor** of 1.5% to account for long-term research continuity.

#### **4(c). Prohibition on Reductions Below Baseline**

No agency may reduce research funding below the established baseline unless:

1. Congress enacts a specific statutory reduction; or
2. The FRSB certifies that the reduction is justified by:
  - program completion,
  - duplication elimination, or
  - documented scientific redundancy.

#### **4(d). Multi-Year Funding Plans**

Each agency shall submit to the FRSB and to Congress:

- a **5-year research funding plan**,
- updated annually,
- detailing projected obligations, workforce needs, and program milestones.

#### **4(e). Continuity of Operations**

In the event of a lapse in appropriations:

1. Research programs shall continue at **baseline levels** for up to **180 days**, funded through an automatic continuing resolution mechanism.
2. Agencies shall prioritize:
  - national security research,
  - medical and public health research,
  - critical infrastructure research,
  - ongoing multi-year scientific studies.

#### **4(f). Protection of Research Personnel**

No agency may:

- furlough,
- terminate,
- suspend, or
- reduce compensation for

any member of the federal research workforce due to a lapse in appropriations during the 180-day continuity period.

#### **4(g). Reporting of Deviations**

Any deviation from the baseline must be:

- reported to the FRSB within **15 days**,
- posted publicly within **30 days**,
- accompanied by a justification and impact assessment.

# SECTION 5 — SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY PROTECTIONS AND NON-INTERFERENCE STANDARDS

## 5(a). Scientific Integrity Policies Required

Each agency conducting or funding research shall adopt, publish, and enforce a **Scientific Integrity Policy** consistent with the standards of this Act.

Policies must include:

1. Protections for scientific findings from alteration, suppression, or distortion.
  2. Requirements that scientific conclusions be based solely on evidence and accepted methodologies.
  3. Prohibitions on political interference in research design, analysis, or reporting.
  4. Procedures for reporting and investigating alleged violations.
  5. Mandatory training for all federal research personnel and political appointees.
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## 5(b). Prohibition on Political Interference

No elected official, political appointee, or individual acting on their behalf may:

1. Directly or indirectly alter scientific findings.
  2. Delay publication or dissemination of research for non-scientific reasons.
  3. Pressure researchers to change conclusions.
  4. Restrict communication of scientific information to Congress or the public.
  5. Retaliate against any researcher for adhering to scientific standards.
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## 5(c). Whistleblower Protections

1. Any federal research employee, contractor, or grantee who reports a violation of scientific integrity shall be protected under **5 U.S.C. § 2302(b)(8)**.
  2. Retaliation is prohibited and subject to disciplinary action, including removal.
  3. The FRSB shall maintain a **confidential reporting portal** for scientific integrity complaints.
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## 5(d). Mandatory Public Disclosure

If an agency head overrules or modifies a scientific conclusion:

1. The decision must be published within **30 days**.
2. The publication must include:
  - the original scientific finding,

- the modification,
  - the justification,
  - the names and titles of decision-makers.
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### **5(e). Protection of Federal Researchers**

No researcher may be:

- reassigned,
- demoted,
- terminated,
- denied funding, or
- otherwise penalized

for producing scientific findings that are politically inconvenient or inconsistent with policy preferences.

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### **5(f). Publication Rights**

Researchers funded by federal grants retain the right to:

1. Publish peer-reviewed findings without political approval.
  2. Present results at scientific conferences.
  3. Communicate with Congress upon request.
  4. Release data consistent with privacy and national security laws.
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## **SECTION 6 — FEDERAL RESEARCH STABILITY BOARD (FRSB)**

### **6(a). Establishment**

There is established an independent entity within the Executive Branch known as the **Federal Research Stability Board (FRSB)**.

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### **6(b). Composition**

The Board shall consist of **nine members**, appointed as follows:

1. **Three** appointed by the President.
2. **Two** appointed by the Speaker of the House.
3. **Two** appointed by the Senate Majority Leader.

4. **One** appointed by the House Minority Leader.
5. **One** appointed by the Senate Minority Leader.

Members must have:

- at least 10 years of experience in scientific research, research administration, or federal budgeting;
  - no current political appointments;
  - no conflicts of interest with federal research contractors.
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### **6(c). Terms**

1. Members serve **staggered 6-year terms**.
  2. No member may serve more than **two terms**.
  3. Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as original appointments.
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### **6(d). Duties of the Board**

The FRSB shall:

1. Review and certify agency **5-year rolling baselines**.
  2. Monitor compliance with scientific integrity standards.
  3. Investigate allegations of political interference.
  4. Publish annual reports on research stability and disruptions.
  5. Approve or deny agency requests to reduce funding below baseline.
  6. Maintain a public **Federal Research Stability Dashboard**.
  7. Conduct audits of research programs at least once every **three years**.
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### **6(e). Powers**

The Board may:

1. Issue subpoenas for documents and testimony.
  2. Conduct hearings and investigations.
  3. Refer violations to the Office of Special Counsel or the Inspector General.
  4. Require corrective action plans from agencies.
  5. Recommend statutory changes to Congress.
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### **6(f). Staffing and Support**

1. The Board may appoint staff, including investigators, analysts, and scientific advisors.
2. The Office of Management and Budget shall provide administrative support.

3. The Board shall have a dedicated annual budget, appropriated separately from agency research funds.
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### **6(g). Independence**

1. The Board shall operate independently of political control.
  2. No member may be removed except for cause, including:
    - misconduct,
    - neglect of duty,
    - incapacity.
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## **SECTION 7 — AGENCY IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS**

### **7(a). Agency Scientific Integrity Officers**

Each agency shall designate a **Scientific Integrity Officer (SIO)** who shall:

1. Oversee implementation of this Act within the agency.
  2. Serve as the primary liaison to the FRSB.
  3. Receive and investigate scientific integrity complaints.
  4. Ensure compliance with 5-year rolling baselines.
  5. Coordinate training for all research personnel and political appointees.
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### **7(b). Agency Scientific Integrity Committees**

Each agency shall establish a **Scientific Integrity Committee** composed of:

- senior scientists,
- research administrators,
- ethics officers, and
- legal counsel.

The Committee shall:

1. Review allegations of political interference.
  2. Recommend corrective actions.
  3. Approve scientific integrity training curricula.
  4. Conduct annual internal audits.
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### **7(c). Annual Scientific Integrity Certification**

Each agency head shall submit an annual certification to the FRSB stating:

1. The agency has complied with all scientific integrity requirements.
2. No political interference occurred, or
3. If interference occurred, it has been fully documented and addressed.

False certifications shall constitute a violation of **18 U.S.C. § 1001**.

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### **7(d). Research Continuity Plans**

Each agency shall develop and maintain a **Research Continuity Plan** that includes:

1. Procedures for maintaining operations during funding lapses.
2. Identification of critical research programs requiring uninterrupted support.
3. Workforce protection measures.
4. Emergency procurement and contracting authorities.
5. Data preservation and laboratory security protocols.

Plans must be updated annually and submitted to the FRSB.

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### **7(e). Data Transparency Requirements**

Agencies shall:

1. Publish non-classified research data in machine-readable formats.
  2. Maintain public repositories for federally funded research outputs.
  3. Provide metadata, methodologies, and reproducibility documentation.
  4. Ensure compliance with privacy, national security, and proprietary restrictions.
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### **7(f). Interagency Coordination**

Agencies shall coordinate with:

- the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP),
- the Office of Management and Budget (OMB),
- the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC), and
- other relevant entities

to ensure consistent implementation of this Act.

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# SECTION 8 — PUBLIC REPORTING AND TRANSPARENCY DASHBOARDS

## 8(a). Federal Research Stability Dashboard

The FRSB shall create and maintain a **public online dashboard** that includes:

1. Annual research funding levels for each agency.
2. 5-year rolling baseline calculations.
3. Research disruptions, including cause and duration.
4. Scientific integrity violations and resolutions.
5. Status of major research programs.
6. Agency compliance ratings.
7. Public access to annual reports and audits.

The dashboard must be:

- searchable,
  - mobile-friendly,
  - accessible under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, and
  - updated at least **quarterly**.
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## 8(b). Mandatory Public Reporting of Disruptions

Agencies must report any research disruption lasting more than **30 days**, including:

1. The affected program.
2. The cause of the disruption.
3. The number of personnel affected.
4. The projected impact on research outcomes.
5. Corrective actions taken.

Reports must be posted publicly within **15 days** of submission to the FRSB.

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## 8(c). Annual Research Stability Report

The FRSB shall publish an **Annual Research Stability Report** containing:

1. Agency-by-agency compliance summaries.
2. Trends in research funding stability.
3. Documented instances of political interference.
4. Workforce impacts.
5. Recommendations for statutory or administrative improvements.
6. A list of agencies requiring corrective action plans.

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### **8(d). Public Access to Scientific Integrity Decisions**

All final decisions regarding scientific integrity complaints shall be:

- published on the dashboard,
  - redacted only for privacy or national security,
  - accompanied by findings of fact and conclusions of law.
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### **8(e). Open Data Requirements**

All non-classified research outputs funded by federal agencies must be:

1. Deposited in a public repository within **12 months** of publication.
  2. Accompanied by data sufficient for reproducibility.
  3. Indexed on the Federal Research Stability Dashboard.
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## **SECTION 9 — OVERSIGHT, AUDITS, AND ENFORCEMENT**

### **9(a). Inspector General Review**

Each agency's Office of Inspector General (OIG) shall:

1. Conduct **biennial audits** of compliance with this Act.
  2. Investigate allegations of:
    - political interference,
    - improper funding reductions,
    - retaliation against researchers,
    - suppression or alteration of scientific findings.
  3. Issue public reports summarizing findings, redacted only for privacy or national security.
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### **9(b). FRSB Investigative Authority**

The Federal Research Stability Board (FRSB) may:

1. Initiate investigations upon receiving credible allegations.
2. Subpoena documents, communications, and testimony.
3. Conduct hearings and depositions.
4. Refer matters to:
  - the Office of Special Counsel (OSC),

- the Department of Justice (DOJ),
  - agency Inspectors General.
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### **9(c). Corrective Action Plans**

If an agency is found non-compliant, the FRSB may require a **Corrective Action Plan** that includes:

1. Specific steps to restore compliance.
2. Deadlines for implementation.
3. Identification of responsible officials.
4. Quarterly progress reports.
5. Independent verification by the OIG.

Failure to implement a Corrective Action Plan may result in:

- budgetary restrictions,
  - administrative sanctions,
  - referral to Congress for further action.
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### **9(d). Penalties for Political Interference**

Any federal official who knowingly engages in political interference shall be subject to:

1. Disciplinary action, including removal.
  2. Civil penalties up to **\$50,000 per violation**.
  3. Referral for criminal prosecution under **18 U.S.C. § 1001, § 1505**, or other applicable statutes.
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### **9(e). Protection of Whistleblowers**

1. Retaliation against whistleblowers is prohibited.
  2. Violators shall be subject to disciplinary action.
  3. Whistleblowers may seek relief through:
    - the Office of Special Counsel,
    - the Merit Systems Protection Board,
    - the FRSB's confidential reporting portal.
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### **9(f). Annual Congressional Testimony**

The Chair of the FRSB shall testify annually before:

- the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology,
- the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation,
- and any other committees of jurisdiction.

Testimony shall include:

1. Compliance summaries.
  2. Trends in research stability.
  3. Documented violations.
  4. Recommendations for legislative improvements.
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## SECTION 10 — CONFORMING AMENDMENTS TO TITLE 5 AND TITLE 31, U.S. CODE

### **10(a). Amendment to Title 5 — Scientific Integrity**

Title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting after **Section 306** the following new section:

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#### **“§ 306A. Scientific Integrity Requirements”**

- (a) Each agency shall adopt and enforce a Scientific Integrity Policy consistent with the Federal Scientific Integrity and Research Stability Act of 2026.
- (b) No agency official may alter, suppress, or interfere with scientific findings for non-scientific reasons.
- (c) Violations shall constitute prohibited personnel practices under 5 U.S.C. § 2302(b).
- (d) Agencies shall designate a Scientific Integrity Officer and establish a Scientific Integrity Committee.
- (e) Agencies shall submit annual certifications of compliance to the Federal Research Stability Board.
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### **10(b). Amendment to Title 31 — Research Funding Stability**

Title 31, United States Code, is amended by inserting after **Section 1115** the following new section:

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#### **“§ 1115A. Research Funding Stability Requirements”**

- (a) Each agency shall establish a 5-year rolling research funding baseline.
- (b) No agency may reduce research funding below the baseline except as authorized by statute or certified by the Federal Research Stability Board.
- (c) Agencies shall submit annual 5-year research funding plans to the Board and to Congress.

(d) During a lapse in appropriations, research programs shall continue at baseline levels for up to 180 days.

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### **10(c). Clerical Amendments**

The tables of sections for Title 5 and Title 31 are amended accordingly.

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## **SECTION 11 — RULEMAKING AND IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE**

### **11(a). Rulemaking Authority**

Not later than **180 days** after enactment of this Act, the following entities shall issue regulations necessary to implement its provisions:

1. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB).
2. The Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP).
3. Each federal agency conducting or funding research.
4. The Federal Research Stability Board (FRSB).

Regulations shall be:

- published in the Federal Register,
  - subject to public comment, and
  - finalized within **12 months** of enactment.
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### **11(b). Implementation Timeline**

Implementation shall proceed as follows:

1. **Within 90 days:**
  - Appointment of FRSB members.
  - Designation of Scientific Integrity Officers (SIOs).
2. **Within 180 days:**
  - Publication of draft regulations.
  - Establishment of agency Scientific Integrity Committees.
3. **Within 12 months:**
  - Final regulations issued.

- Launch of the Federal Research Stability Dashboard (beta).
  - Submission of initial 5-year research funding plans.
4. **Within 18 months:**
- Full operational capability of the FRSB.
  - Completion of first-year scientific integrity training.
5. **Beginning FY 2027:**
- Mandatory use of 5-year rolling baselines.
  - Activation of 180-day research continuity protections.
6. **Within 24 months:**
- First annual Research Stability Report published.
  - First round of agency audits initiated.
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### **11(c). Interim Guidance**

Until final regulations are issued, agencies shall follow interim guidance issued jointly by OMB and OSTP.

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### **11(d). Technical Assistance**

The FRSB shall provide technical assistance to agencies, universities, laboratories, and contractors to ensure compliance.

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## **SECTION 12 — SEVERABILITY**

### **12(a). Severability Clause**

If any provision of this Act, or the application thereof to any person or circumstance, is held invalid:

1. The remainder of the Act shall not be affected.
  2. All other provisions shall remain in full force and effect.
  3. The invalid provision shall be interpreted as closely as possible to the original intent of Congress.
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# SECTION 13 — EFFECTIVE DATE

## 13(a). General Effective Date

Except as otherwise provided, this Act shall take effect **upon enactment**.

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## 13(b). Delayed Effective Dates

1. The 5-year rolling baseline requirements shall take effect **October 1, 2026**.
  2. The 180-day research continuity protections shall take effect **October 1, 2026**.
  3. Scientific integrity training requirements shall take effect **January 1, 2027**.
  4. Public dashboard requirements shall take effect **no later than July 1, 2027**.
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## 13(c). Applicability

This Act applies to:

- all federal agencies conducting or funding research,
  - all federally funded research programs,
  - all covered institutions,
  - all federal research personnel,
  - all political appointees with oversight of research programs.
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