The ACADEMY for Radiology & Biomedical Imaging Research

*Advancing Innovation in Imaging Science*

January 23, 2026

Academy Policy & Legislative Update

Dear Academy Friends,

We have some updates on NIH funding progress as well as some policy & legislation updates. Please reach out to us if you have additional questions. Thank you for your support of the Academy and our mission. Enjoy the snow this weekend!

**Appropriations Update**

This week, Congress released a bipartisan agreement on the Labor-HHS appropriations bill, and the House passed it on Thursday. The bill included more money for NIH than either chamber initially proposed. Here is the breakdown.

- The bill provides $48.7 billion for the NIH. This is a $415M increase over FY25.
- Prohibits NIH/HHS from implementing any policy/guidance or publishing a notice of proposed rulemaking that would alter current F&A/indirect cost rates.
- Limits the amount of NIH's budget that can be obligated for multi-year/forward funding (MYF) to the FY2025 levels. (We advocated for 2024 levels, so this is not ideal)
- Directs NIH to fund as many new awards as possible based on meritorious applications.
- Urges I/Cs to obligate additional funds to support new and competing research project grants.
- Directs NIH to provide the Appropriations Committees with an analysis of the types of research supported by MYF in FY 2025 and the selection criteria to identify grants to be funded by this approach.
- Requires NIH to brief the Appropriations Committees no less than monthly throughout FY 2026 on the status of grant announcements, applications, awards, continuations, terminations, or cancellations.

Other notable funding levels in the bill include:

- For a list of all IC funding, click here
- NIBIB is flat-funded at $440 million
- ARPA-H is flat-funded at $1.5 billion
- BARDA is increased by $35 billion (+3.5%)
- AHRQ is cut by $23 million (-6.4%)
- CDC is cut by $19 million (-0.2%)

The Senate will vote on this next week. If the snow delays the Senate's ability to meet and have ample time to debate, a short-term CR will have to pass to continue funding the government.

**New Bill Introduced to Protect NIH From Political Interference**

Congresswoman Diana DeGette (D-CO), Ranking Member of the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health, introduced this legislation to protect American biomedical research and maintain the United States' status as a global leader in science.

This legislation, "Follow the Science Act," comes after a tumultuous year of grant cancellations, significant uncertainty regarding federally supported research, and the politicization of science.

The Follow the Science Act would:

- Cap the number of NIH political appointees.
- Prohibit political appointees from participating in the NIH grant review process.
- Prohibit the NIH from terminating grants without a documented scientific cause.

To read the press release from the Office of Congresswoman DeGette, click here.

**Unfilled vacancies have depleted NIH advisory councils, key players in grant approvals**
Much has been discussed about what it means for the NIH and researchers to lose the leadership of institutes and centers and top leaders throughout the agency. One overlooked item is membership in councils and advisory groups.

According to this STAT article, the majority of the 25 councils are now operating with less than half of their full complement of members. The article goes on to state that the vacancies have left many of the panels without the range of expertise needed to make informed funding decisions. Counsels are an important conduit between academic scientists and the NIH—they are also critical for releasing the agency's research dollars. Without advisory councils' recommendations, the NIH can't cut checks for grants.

**MEDIA**
**If you come across an article that you would like for us to include in our weekly policy emails, please send them to us, in case we miss any.*

"Kratsios Calls on Congress to Back Federal AI Strategy"
"NCI Director says NCI heading into a big year"
"Loss of science leaders has real world consequences"
"NIH to end fetal tissue research"
"US Congress set to reject Trump's sweeping science budget cuts"
"Private sector, philanthropy can't replace Trump administration science cuts"
"'Nice' NIH study sections screw their applicants because of the way NIH calculates percentile"

**Academy Upcoming Workshop!** ***The Stories Behind the Science: Best Practices for Communicating Medical Imaging Research to Policymakers***

- Led by Elizabeth O'Hare, PhD, Director of Government Relations at the Radiological Society of North America (RSNA).
- This webinar will examine how to best translate advances in biomedical research into compelling, relatable narratives that demonstrate the real-world impact of federal investment in scientific research.
- ***Important Note:*** **This workshop is required for participants in the Future of Health: Medical Imaging Research Hill Day**. However, it will also be valuable to anyone who is interested in learning strategies for communicating the importance of scientific progress, momentum, and impact. So, we are disseminating this virtual opportunity broadly.
- View an informational flyer here.
- Register for the workshop here.

***SAVE THE DATE: The Academy is excited to share that we are leading a collaboration among the following imaging societies for a single, collective day of advocacy in Washington, DC, this spring!***

Click here to view the save the date with more event details.

Click here to view the Academy 2026 Spring Events & Meetings website.

****If you are participating in these events and wish to access the private webpage with materials like registration links, Zoom links, and planning session summaries, please respond directly to this email and we will send you the link with a password.*

**Academy Membership Programming Survey**
We've put together a survey to gauge the interests of our membership so we can provide programming opportunities that you want to participate in. Please complete this survey and leave all feedback you may have. Thank you!

**Academy "Funding, Facts, and Follow Up" Emails. Monthly updates and funding opportunities:** Click here to access an archive of the emails we send out, including our most recent.

Thank you for following these Academy updates! If your department, society, or company isn't yet a supporting Member, now is a great time to join. Your support powers our advocacy efforts and helps advance the interests of our entire community. Discover The Value of the Academy in this short clip and explore our membership [here]. For personalized guidance or questions, connect with Olivia Nelson at onelson@acadrad.org —we'd love to hear from you!