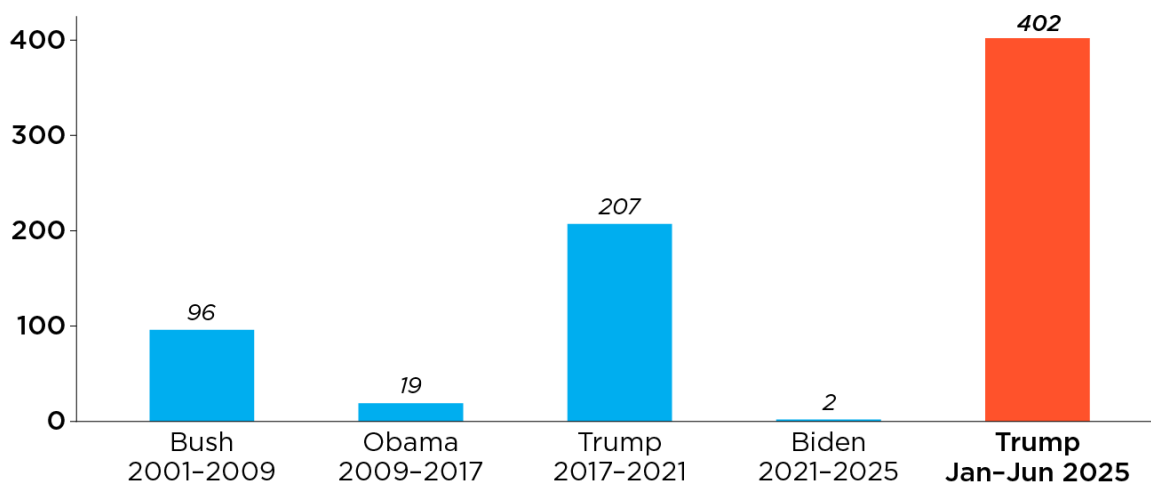


# Science and Democracy Under Siege

## *Documenting Six Months of the Trump Administration's Destructive Actions*

Since January 2025, President Donald J. Trump has led a systemic and coordinated attack on science. In nearly six months, his administration has launched **402 attacks on science**, which is markedly more than in his entire first term. These attacks are not incidental—they are part of a larger strategy to strip public protections, consolidate power, and remove scientific evidence from policymaking.

Figure 1. Extreme Rise in Documented Attacks on Science



*The number of attacks on science during the first six months of President Trump's second term far outpace those during his entire first term. Data source: See [methodology](#). Notes: Documented "attacks on science" include actions, statements, or decisions that result in censoring, manipulation, forging, or misinforming on scientific data, results, or conclusions conducted within the government or with federal funds. Methodology for determining attacks on science has been updated between the current and previous administrations. Data last updated on June 30, 2025.*

## Gutting Scientific Expertise

In President Trump's second term, more than 120,000 federal employees have been laid off or targeted for layoffs, and there are estimates that federal employee layoffs in the first quarter of 2025 were nearly seven times greater than in the first quarter of 2024. These cuts targeted scientific agencies such as Health and Human Services, the Department of Energy, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

## Halting Science and Innovation

The administration ordered the National Institutes of Health (NIH)—the largest funder of biomedical research in the world—to suspend grant review panels and freeze external communications, disrupting research nationwide. Even after some operations resumed, the NIH awarded 54 percent fewer grants than the average over the previous nine years and rescinded 2,958 grants simply for including words like *Black*, *transgender*, or *bias*. Lifesaving research projects on cancer, vaccine hesitancy, and health equity are being denied funding for political reasons.

## Ignoring Public Input

Through executive orders, the administration has directed federal agencies to bypass public comment processes required under laws like the Administrative Procedure Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. The US public is being ignored to benefit corporations and the fossil fuel industry. For example, the EPA has even allowed certain polluters to email requests for regulatory exemptions directly to the president—a chilling bypass of legal norms that will put millions of people in harm's way. Union of Concerned Scientists research shows that 90 percent of these polluting facilities are within five miles of a school or daycare and these facilities are disproportionately located near communities of color, lower income communities, and communities that do not speak English as a first language.

## Eliminating Independent Expertise

Science-based federal advisory committees (FACs), long relied on for evidence-based policy, are being dismantled by the Trump administration. The administration reinstated an executive order that has led to the termination of at least 51 (27 percent) of active science-focused FACs, with more under review.

## Censoring and Suppressing Scientific Information

The administration has substantively changed roughly 847 of the federal government's environment and climate webpages. Officials removed public tools like EJSCREEN (the EPA's environmental justice mapping and screening tool) and the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, denying communities and scientists the ability to track pollution and public health disparities.

## Recommendations to Protect Science and the Public Good

**Congress should take the following actions:**

- **Pass the Scientific Integrity Act**, which would require federal agencies to uphold evidence-based policymaking free from political interference.
- **Oppose the REINS Act**, which would give Congress veto power over regulations based on expert consensus.
- **Pass the EXPERTS Act (formerly the Stop Corporate Capture Act)**, which limits industry influence on science-based rulemaking.
- **Strengthen whistleblower protections** for federal scientists.
- **Restore federal advisory committees**, ensuring they are diverse, independent, and empowered.
- **Reinstate and strengthen public participation in rulemaking** and other government decisionmaking processes, and restore public access to censored scientific data.

## What Is at Stake?

People are already paying the price of these attacks on science: children unnecessarily exposed to lead, families denied clean air, and lives needlessly lost in preventable disease outbreaks. Dismantling science harms every member of the US public—but especially Black, Brown, Indigenous, rural, and low-and-moderate income communities.

You can read the full report recapping the first six months of the Trump administration [here](#). Visit [\*\*www.ucs.org\*\*](http://www.ucs.org) to learn more, access tools for federal scientists, and join the fight to protect science.