

AIBS ACTION ALERT • PHONE SCRIPT

Call Congress: OMB Proposed Grants Rule

The whole call will likely take under 5 minutes. You will almost always speak with a staff assistant or reach voicemail — that is fine and it still counts. Offices tally constituent calls by issue and report the numbers up. You do not need to be an expert, and you should not try to be. Say who you are, where you live, what you want, and why it matters to you.

BEFORE YOU CALL

- [Look up your Representative and Senators](#), then find the phone number for a **district office** near you.
- Call all three offices — your Representative and both Senators. Each office keeps its own tally.
- In August, use the **district or state office** rather than Washington. Members are home, lines are shorter, and district staff often have more time to talk. If no one picks up and the mailbox is full, try another district office or the Washington office — a call to any of them is logged the same way.
- Have your ZIP code ready. Offices use it to confirm you are a constituent.
- Skim the [AIBS one-pager](#) first.

THE SCRIPT

Replace the bracketed text with your own details. Read it aloud once before you dial.

1. Introduce yourself

“Hi, my name is **[Name]** and I'm a constituent calling from **[City, ZIP]**. I'm **[a biologist at ____ / a graduate student at ____ / a museum curator / a science educator]**.”

2. State the issue and the ask

“I'm calling about the Office of Management and Budget's proposed rule on federal financial assistance — the rewrite of the federal grants regulations, docket OMB-2026-0034. The comment period was only 45 days, but almost half a million comments came in, and those that have been publicly posted are overwhelmingly opposed. OMB intends the final rule to take effect October 1. Congress and the public deserve more information and more input before a rule of this magnitude is finalized.

I'm asking **[the Senator / the Congresswoman / the Congressman]** to call the White House and ask them to withdraw the rule.”

3. Say why, in one or two sentences

Pick the point that matters most to you. Do not try to cover all of them.

- “Under this rule, a political appointee would have to sign off on every grant before it's awarded, and could override the expert peer reviewers. That's not how we've funded American science, and it's not how we stay ahead.”
- “It would let agencies cancel research that's already underway whenever priorities change. You can't restart a clinical trial or recover 20 years of a long-term dataset. That's not saving money — it's throwing away money we already spent.”
- “It would rewrite 456 sections of federal grant regulations, and OMB admits in its own analysis that it could not quantify what any of it would cost. The public got only 45 days over a single summer to respond. That's not enough time for the public to weigh in on something this big.”
- “It bans grant funds from paying open-access publication fees, which the federal government separately requires. The rule contradicts existing federal policy.”
- “The added reporting and the end of fixed-amount subawards would push small colleges, museums, and field stations out of federally funded research. Those institutions are in districts like ours.”

4. Make it local — the most important 20 seconds

“This matters to me because **[my lab's NSF award supports four students / our museum's collection digitization project links us to a dozen partners / I run a field site in the district that has been collecting data since 1998]**, and **[what would happen under this rule]**.”

5. Ask a question and offer to follow up

“Can you tell me whether **[the Senator / the Representative]** has taken any action on this rule? I'd be glad to email you a one-page summary — what's the best address?”

Asking a question turns a tally mark into a conversation, and asking for an email address gives you a real contact for follow-up.

6. Thank them

“Thank you for your time, and please pass this along to **[the Senator / the Representative]**. I appreciate the work you all do.”

IF YOU GET VOICEMAIL

Leave the short version — it still gets logged. Speak slowly and give your name, city, and phone number clearly at the end.

“Hi, my name is **[Name]**, I'm a constituent at **[City, ZIP]**. I'm calling to ask **[the Senator / the Representative]** to call the White House and ask them to withdraw OMB's proposed federal

grants rule, docket OMB-2026-0034. It would put political appointees in charge of signing off on grants, over the judgment of the expert reviewers, and let agencies cancel research that is already in progress. Nearly half a million people commented in just 45 days, and the comments posted so far run strongly against it — but OMB still plans to finalize by October 1. A change this big deserves more public input before it is locked in. I'm **[a scientist at ____]** and this would directly affect **[my work / my students / my institution]**. My number is **[phone]**. Thank you.”

IF THEY ASK YOU SOMETHING YOU CAN'T ANSWER

Say so. It is the right answer, and it creates a reason to follow up.

“That's a good question and I don't want to guess. Let me find out and get back to you./Let me connect you with someone at AIBS who can follow up.”

Then email publicpolicy@aibs.org and we will follow up with the office.

DOS AND DON'TS

- **Do call as yourself**, on your own behalf, from a personal phone when you can. Check your institution's government-relations policy before speaking for it.
- **Do be brief and be kind**. The person answering is often young, underpaid, and fielding hundreds of calls. Courtesy is remembered.
- **Don't read a script word for word** if you can help it. Your own sentences are more persuasive than ours.
- **Don't get drawn into partisan argument**. This rule affects research funded under every administration, and the mechanisms it creates would be available to all of them. Keep the focus there.

AFTER THE CALL

1. If a staffer gave you an address in step 5, send them the [AIBS one-pager](#).
2. If you submitted **comments** on the OMB proposed rule, you can send those too.
3. Send an email to your Representative and both Senators using our editable [template letter](#). A call plus a written follow-up is far more effective than either alone.

Quick reference: Capitol switchboard 202-224-3121 • Docket OMB-2026-0034 • Proposed May 29, 2026 • Comment period closed July 13, 2026 • Intended effective date October 1, 2026

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