



TRADITIONAL VALUES COALITION

July 27th, 2011

The Honorable Dennis Rehberg
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Rehberg and Ranking Member DeLauro:

Concluding a six-month research period, investigating hundreds of grants issued by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), it has become abundantly clear that there is a serious and concerning misuse of the public trust -- all being funded by American taxpayers in a crushing economic environment.

Traditional Values Coalition has uncovered over half a billion dollars in wasteful spending through the NIH. As the first two reports of our research have been handed over to the public in the last few weeks, certain beneficiaries of NIH have taken great pains to dissemble -- or at best, avoid discussing -- certain fields of research that are striking working families across America as wasteful, illicit, and in many cases outright offensive.

As such, Traditional Values Coalition and the 43,000 churches, pastors, and millions of concerned citizens whose voices we represent here in Washington, D.C., asks the Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and Education for an immediate six month moratorium on NIH grant awards towards behavioral science and foreign institutions, as well as an intensive round of investigations in the conduct of the NIH peer review process.

We should be very clear from the outset of this request. *This is not a concern about the legitimate lines of research that advance the scientific mission of the National Institutes of Health.*

To the contrary, Traditional Values Coalition urges the NIH and the federal government to refocus efforts to reinforce the ethical integrity of the peer review process, to finance equitably specific lines of research in proportion to their threat to public health, and to ensure that ethical norms co-incide with a moral commitment to the dignity of the individuals involved.

What does concern many taxpayers is the direction of the NIH towards certain items of either behavioral research, or instances where the research calls into question the ethical compass of the peer review process or “study sections.”

What is more, these study sections are not only entrusted with an adherence to fixed American ethical standards and norms, but to the spirit -- and not merely the letter -- of both 45 CFR 46 and the nature of the institutional review board, but in instances where the NIH has

approved of studies outside of the United States, an adherence to the human rights provisions of the Helsinki Accords.

There is an alarming lack of ethical integrity within the peer review process at NIH in determining which grants should receive the backing of the American taxpayer, but the types of studies approved by not just one, but two layers of peer review points demonstrates the institutional rot that permeates NIH.

What the press has discussed thus far is but a sample of the grants uncovered by Traditional Values Coalition over a period of extensive and deliberate research. The truly bizarre, discordant, and ethically numb pattern of NIH grant funding in the areas of behavioral science and foreign research concludes that members of Congress -- and the American people -- will receive a full accounting *only* if a full investigation is conducted.

In the meantime, the ethical integrity of the peer review process is most certainly held in question. Those within the scientific community will desperately try to link credible, hard scientific research with both the objectionable, soft behavioral science as well as specific research approved by the NIH that occurs outside the United States, particularly in nations such as the People's Republic of China.

Traditional Values Coalition intends to continue to reveal questionable grants, lines of research, and outline specific instances of waste. TVC will further recommend to your subcommittee, other appropriate committees, and to House and Senate leadership specific areas where the National Institutes of Health has abrogated the confidence of the American taxpayer. Traditional Values Coalition urges you to freeze and investigate these questionable practices at the NIH and restore the ethical integrity of a once-prestigious organization.

Sincerely,



Andrea Lafferty
President
Traditional Values Coalition

cc: Rep. Hal Rogers, Chairman, House Appropriations Committee
Rep. Norman Dicks, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Committee
Sen. Daniel Inouye, Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee
Sen. Thad Cochran, Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Committee

References

- [Summary of NIH Grants Part 1: Samples of Federal Funding](#)
- [Press Release: NIH Wastes Millions on Bizarre Research \(July 18th, 2011\)](#)
- [Summary of NIH Grants Part 2: The Peoples Republic of China](#)
- [Press Release: NIH Grants China \\$90 Million in Taxpayers' Dollars For Research \(July 25th, 2011\)](#)