

United States Senate

February 15, 2024

The Hon. Monica M. Bertagnolli, MD
Director
National Institutes of Health (NIH)
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Building One, Room 244
One Center Drive
Bethesda, MD 20892

Dear Director Bertagnolli:

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) plays a large part in expanding our knowledge base in medicine and science. With a budget of almost \$50 billion, NIH must be accountable to American taxpayers and take every action to ensure that taxpayer dollars are used to fund research that is of the highest academic standards and serves the public's interests.

Recently, reports have emerged that researchers at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute may have fabricated or digitally manipulated data to favor their research results. Among the materials of concern are research papers by the Chief Executive Officer, Laurie Glimcher, and the Chief Operating Officer, William Hahn.¹ These allegations are not limited to these researchers and include multiple papers by Glimcher and Hahn and others that may also have incorrect data.² Additionally, because of the alliance between Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Harvard Medical School, many of these researchers are also on the faculty of Harvard Medical School.

This is important because Dana-Farber receives a significant amount of federal funds. Dana-Farber Cancer Institute is a National Cancer Institute (NCI) designated Cancer Center having received about \$173.7 million in funding in 2023 from the NCI and \$223.7 million across the entire NIH.³ Harvard Medical School also received \$34 million from the NCI and \$249.9 million across the entire NIH.⁴

Harvard has demonstrated that it has significant problems with research

¹ <https://apnews.com/article/danafarber-cancer-scandal-harvard-sleuth-science-389dc2464f25bca736183607bc57415c>

² <https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2024/1/12/dana-farber-research-misconduct-allegations/>

³ <https://reporter.nih.gov/search/CFJH7nGvr0GfJf-2l0Gc4A/projects/charts?fy=2023>

⁴ https://reporter.nih.gov/search/H-OYQSaqhkWz6AUfQOq_kw/projects/charts?fy=2023

integrity. Claudine Gay, the recently fired Harvard President, plagiarized more than 40 papers she previously wrote.⁵ Charles Ogletree, a tenured professor and lawyer, committed nearly verbatim plagiarism in his book but remained a member of Harvard Law School's faculty until his death.⁶ Sherri Charleston, Harvard's Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, has also been accused of over 40 acts of plagiarism.⁷ Khalid Shah, a top Harvard Medical School neuroscientist, has also been accused of data manipulation across 21 papers.⁸ Dr. Francesca Gino, a behavioral economist and tenured professor, was found to have committed research fraud in at least four papers, one of which was ironically focused on how to stop dishonesty.⁹

In addition to these concerning issues, Harvard has rightly come under fire for its stunning failure to address anti-Semitism on its campus. Jewish students at Harvard have repeatedly been targeted due to their faith by protestors and hateful groups following the brutal attack on Israel by Iran-backed Hamas terrorists on October 7, 2023. Instead of protecting these innocent Jewish students, Harvard has gone to extreme and disgusting lengths to make excuses for and protect those who continue to target Jews and push horrific anti-Semitic propaganda that promotes the destruction of Israel and seeks to justify the heinous attacks carried out by Hamas which took the lives of more than 1,200 innocent people and kidnapping of hundreds, including Americans.

I will not tolerate taxpayer dollars going to institutions which do not stand up to hate and anti-Semitism, which is why I am proud to fight alongside Senator Tim Scott to pass our *Stop Antisemitism on College Campuses Act*. This good bill which would rescind federal education funding for colleges and universities that peddle anti-Semitism or authorize, fund or facilitate events that promote violent antisemitism.

While we work to move this bill through Congress and to the president's desk to become law, the NIH must do its part to demand that every cent of American taxpayer money is directed toward causes and organizations that display outstanding integrity and share the values of the American people.

Given my grave concerns, I ask that you immediately respond to the following questions:

1. What does NIH do when it learns that existing research might be invalid?
2. Has NIH reviewed the research in question at Harvard Medical School or Dana-Farber Cancer Institute?

⁵ <https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2024/1/3/plagiarism-allegations-gay-resigns/>

⁶ <https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2023/9/15/hbs-francesca-gino-feature/>

⁷ <https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2024/1/31/sherri-charleston-plagiarism-allegations/>

⁸ <https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2024/2/1/harvard-neuroscientist-research-misconduct/>

⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/30/business/the-harvard-professor-and-the-bloggers.html>

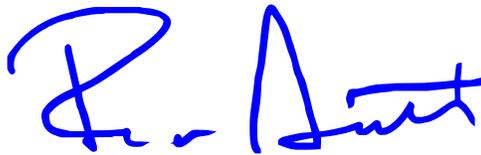
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3. Did NIH or NCI fund any part of the fraudulent research by Harvard Medical School or Dana-Farber Cancer Institute? If so, how much money was misspent on potentially fraudulent research?
4. Many of these papers were published between 1999 and 2017. Did NIH or NCI fund other promising research based on conclusions drawn from these manipulated research papers? If so, how much money was misspent on research driven by fraudulent research?
5. Does NIH have policies in place to ensure that taxpayer dollars are not directed toward organizations that tolerate anti-Semitism? If so, please cite the specific policies and how they have been employed to protect the integrity of taxpayer funding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick Scott". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Rick Scott

United States Senator