

# Thousands demonstrate in the Stand Up for Science protests

Our reporters, Bryan Dyne

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On Friday tens of thousands of researchers, doctors, healthcare workers, students and other supporters of science took part in “Stand Up for Science” protests mostly in the United States, with supporting protests in Canada, Austria, Slovakia and France.

At more than 120 locations, protesters held handmade signs and spoke out against the attacks on scientific research, public education and public health being spearheaded by the Trump administration. While most rallies drew in a few hundred people, thousands demonstrated in Boston, Massachusetts; Washington D.C. and New York City.

The impulse for the protests stems from the Trump administration’s attack on virtually every federally funded scientific endeavor, including climate research, environmental conservation, studies on infectious diseases and more. Thousands of researchers, particularly among those who work to uphold public health have been laid off in order to fund tax cuts for the wealthy, major corporations and war.

The protests are part of a broader movement in the working class that is developing against the Trump administration and its attacks on democratic rights, plans for mass deportations and the dismantling of all social programs in the US in order to channel all of society’s wealth to the financial oligarchy.

There is particular disgust among workers and youth at the ongoing cuts in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), now under the auspices of notorious anti-vaccine disinformation purveyor Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who is enacting policies that will further the spread of dangerous pathogens, including the flu, measles and COVID-19.

Reporters from the WSWS spoke to protesters at rallies across the country.

In New York City, a theoretical physicist with a group

from Rockefeller University, said he works in developing stem cell therapeutics. “We do not get paid enough. But the people who stand to suffer from cuts to science are the lower class. The problem crystallized under Trump, but what is going on politically is symmetrical with nascent fascism in the 20th Century. I think at this rally today, it is important that we are focusing on the attack on funding of science. Science is for everybody. Everyone needs to make rational choices about their life, for healthcare, for climate justice. So does government.”

Another protester at the New York City rally said, “It’s not just scientists that have to unite. It’s all the working class. ... The people that are working for the world, we are the ones who care, and it’s not, you know, the top 1 percent. They are not doing anything for us, and they are the ones in power right now. And we need to take back that power.”

In contrast to many attendees, official speakers at the rallies portrayed the current crisis as solely stemming from Trump and Musk, purposely ignoring the fact that far from “following the science,” it was the Democrats and the Biden administration that dismantled tracking for the coronavirus and encouraged the population to unmask. At essentially every protest, including at the main rally in Washington D.C., speakers advanced the dead-end perspective of pressuring the Democrats by “calling your congressperson.”

The only political presence that fought for an alternative to the Democrats, based on a scientific appraisal of the class nature of modern society, was the *World Socialist Web Site*. Supporters distributed thousands of leaflets, making clear, “Scientists are experiencing the same process of proletarianization now affecting doctors, teachers and other professionals,” and that the only way forward is through building a revolutionary socialist movement against capitalism itself.

At the New York City demonstration a neuroscientist explained to the WSWS, “I work on how the brain processes sensory information, at a very fundamental level. The Trump administration method of move faster and break things might work for private business but not in the NIH (National Institutes of Health). They are misunderstanding science. Science takes time. No one can tell where the next discovery will come from. You cannot make cuts and expect good results. They should cut funding for giant corporations, like BP or Citgo. If they mess with science, we will have a sicker economy.”

“This did not start with Trump,” she added. “The Democrats dropped the ball. Their policies got us here. They were not focusing on real needs, real economy, services. So people got angry.”

A visiting neuroscience and biology scientist from Dublin, Ireland who came to the New York City rally with a group of fellow researchers from Mount Sinai Hospital said, “We need to be able to stand up against fascism. If this attack on research grants had been happening a few months ago, I would not have come to work in New York. I hope the government comes to recognize that what we do is important. The Irish government is not as harsh but they also do not do much funding. The more they do not fund, the more lives that will be lost in the future.”

Ali, a physics PhD student at New York University working on quantum science, said, “Physics was not yet hit like climate science and healthcare, but there is talk of dismantling the CHIP Act. We are here to show support for science. Ultimately, it is useful to go out and show that the politicians must support science.”

David, a scientist from University of California, Riverside, told WSWS reporters at the Los Angeles rally, “It doesn’t matter how comfortable [the rich] are, or how many houses they own, how many super yachts. It’s a big contest to them, all they need is more. They always want more and the planet cannot sustain that.”

“Nobody should be a billionaire,” Jen, a scientist from the University of Southern California, told the WSWS, adding, “Our government should work by the people and for the people, and we’ve got to bring down the oligarchy.”

In Flint, Michigan, one demonstrator spoke on the far-reaching impacts of Trump’s executive orders.

I think that all of the executive orders and all the actions that are being put into place right now to

dismantle all these systems really have a far broader impact that a lot of people realize. If you take away education, where is your kid going to go to school? If you take away science funding, how do you expect to receive medical treatment?

I think people need to get together, and I think they need to utilize the power they do have. Because I think when we come together, we can make a much bigger impact than you might think as an individual. And really, it is not about individualism, like we have to come together, we have to make communities, and we have to build each other up in order to dismantle and recreate the systems that are in place right now.

Asked about the ongoing water crisis in Flint, which was induced by attempts to privatize the city’s water supply and has caused numerous health issues for over a decade, she said, “I think it just kind of speaks to the fact that the systems are in place to take care of the systems. They’re not necessarily always in place to take care of the people, and a lot of things fall to the wayside, which is really unfortunate.”

“I mean, people are not disposable. And it is really upsetting to hear and see how people are being treated, because we are being treated as if we were disposable. I don’t think in the grand scheme of things, regardless of your political party, I don’t think that’s what people want.”

Questioned about the impact of Trump’s proposed tariffs on workers in Canada, Mexico and the United States and the potential for a joint struggle of workers in North America and internationally, she responded, “Oh, absolutely. I’ve already signed the general strike card, so I’m definitely on board.”



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