

**Resolution Title: Resolution on the Bush Administration Threats to Science and Scientific Integrity**  
**Submitted by: Professional Staff Congress, Local 2334**

Whereas, the U.S. government uses vast amounts of information to make policy, guard against disease and protect the public health and welfare. It is critical that the government use accurate and unbiased scientific information to make policy; and

Whereas, there has been a pattern of suppression and distortion of scientific findings by high-ranking Bush administration appointees across numerous federal agencies involved in scientific findings related to air pollution, global warming, mercury pollution, childhood lead poisoning, reproductive health, and drug resistant bacteria, all of which affect the health of all Americans and especially the health of children, including their ability to learn; and

Whereas, there have been irregularities in the appointment of scientific advisors and advisory panels that upset the legally mandated balance of these bodies; \*and these committees are important to ensure that the best science is brought to bear to protect the public's health; and

Whereas, it is important that members of such scientific and public health advisory committees be the most qualified scientists and experts in their fields. Members of AFT who have served on these panels have been removed for failing political litmus tests that have no bearing on a nominee's expertise or advisory role; and

Whereas, the administration has placed people who are professionally unqualified or who have clear conflicts of interest in official posts and on scientific advisory committees, has disbanded advisory committees before their work was complete, and has censored and suppressed reports by government scientists; and

Whereas, the leadership of Health and Human Services (HHS) has taken actions to limit the free exchange of scientific information, intimidate researchers, including AFT members, and threaten the funding of peer reviewed research relating to sexual behavior, sex education, and sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS \*\*; and

Whereas, these activities suggest an effort to inappropriately influence these committees, their scientific conclusions, and the results of scientific research so that they will be in line with Administration policy; and

Whereas, these actions have directly affected the service and research of AFT members as well as our health and the health of our students and clients; and

Whereas, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Executive Office of the President, through its "Proposed Bulletin on Peer Review and Information Quality,"<sup>1</sup> is now considering requiring that all federal agencies institute a new system of "peer review" which includes procedures that differ markedly from those used that have been strongly endorsed by the academic and scientific community;<sup>2,3,4,5</sup> and

Whereas, there is no evidence that proposed new procedures are likely to improve the quality of science used in the regulatory process;<sup>6,7,8</sup> and

Whereas, the proposal unnecessarily limits agency discretion, is likely to result in delays in protecting the nation's health, safety and environment,<sup>9,10,11,12,13</sup> and may constrain public health officials from reacting quickly in times of national emergency;<sup>14,15</sup> and

Whereas, the proposal has conflict of interest provisions that could restrict many of the nation's leading academic and scientific experts from serving as peer reviewers<sup>16,17</sup> including most AFT members because they receive research funds from federal agencies such as the National Institutes of Health; therefore be it

Resolved, that AFT reaffirm the principle that scientific and expert advisory panels be free from the influence of parties that stand to gain financially from the panels' decisions, oppose the "Proposed Bulletin on Peer Review and Information Quality," request that OMB withdraw the proposal, and encourage other educational and scientific organizations to oppose this proposal; and be it further

Resolved that the AFT urge President Bush to issue immediately an executive order and take other actions to prohibit further censorship and distortion of scientific information from federal agencies, and put an end to practices that undermine the integrity of scientific advisory panels; and be it further

Resolved, that AFT urge Congress to hold oversight hearings to investigate and assess the allegations of distortion of agency reports and the biasing of advisory panels, ensure that the laws and rules that govern scientific advisory appointments are followed, protect against the domination of such panels by individuals tied to entities that have a vested interest at stake, and that those appointed meet high professional standards and insure that the public has access to all government scientific studies and findings of scientific advisory panels, and be it further

Resolved that AFT urge Congress to investigate and hold oversight hearings on recent attempts to undermine the scientific peer-review process at the National Institutes of Health, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality; and be it further

Resolved, that AFT urge its members to encourage their professional societies and colleagues to become engaged in this issue, bring their concerns to their elected representatives, and communicate the importance of this issue to the public, both directly and through the media, including AFT publications.

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I hereby certify that the above resolution was approved for submission to the 2004 AFT Convention by the:

Delegate Assembly

at a meeting held on

May 27, 2004

Signed:

(President)

(Secretary)

Professional Staff Congress

Local or Retiree Council Name

Local 2334

AFT#