Senator Scott Wiener, 11th Senate District

Senate Bill 895 - California Foundation for Science and Health Research

SUMMARY

Scientific research and innovation is the engine of California's economic prosperity and a lifeline to millions of families struggling with health challenges. Recent federal cuts threaten to bulldoze the nation's top scientific institutions, disrupting innovations critical to California's future.

To stabilize California's scientific ecosystem, SB 895 creates the California Foundation for Science and Health Research to ensure that life-saving and economically-vital scientific research continues in the state, even if the federal government cuts or withholds federal funds.

SB 895 authorizes up to $7.5 billion in General Obligation Bonds to fund research grants and loans in medical, agricultural, environmental research and more. This funding will safeguard California's role as a global leader in innovation, an investment that will dramatically boost long term tax revenue, drive middle class job growth, and provide hope and healing to millions of Californians confronting deadly and debilitating diseases.

Of the total bond amount, 10% of the funds shall be utilized for a research organization modeled after the Advanced Research Projects Agencies, dubbed the California Advanced Research Project Activities (Cal-ARPA), $250 million shall be to support research commercialization efforts, and $1 billion shall be available to the UC and CSU for research facilities construction.

BACKGROUND

With the support of government agencies such as the National Institutes of Health, U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the scientific community has made innumerable advancements that have dramatically boosted public health, lowered costs, and improved quality of life for Californians.

Research at the University of California alone has made foundational contributions to the invention of the internet, the first modern AI algorithms, the gene editing technology CRISPR, Viagra, highly productive rice varieties that tens of millions rely on, treatment that saves the lives of 90% of premature babies, treatments for 30 million Americans with genetic diseases, and the discovery of the chemicals behind the hole in the ozone.[1]

Scientific research and innovation are also the engines that have driven California's economic success for decades. The breakthroughs produced by universities and scientific researchers have sparked new industries and powered the success of the state's biotech, medical, agricultural, and software industries from startups to global companies. For every dollar invested in National Institutes of Health research there is a return of approximately $2.50 in economic activity.

The National Institutes for Health, the main funder of biomedical research, awarded about $35 billion in grants to research groups last year, including for the University of California.[2]

Federal cuts and suspensions have threatened billions of dollars in scientific research funding, especially targeting California institutions like the University of California and the California State University System.

In 2025, the federal government froze or suspended $584 million in grants to UCLA and demanded $1 billion in fines—jeopardizing thousands of life-saving projects. Research areas at risk include

[1] "7 world-changing UC innovations that emerged from federal research funding," Julia Busiek, University of California Newsroom, July 15, 2025

[2] Prakash Nagarkatti and Mitzi Nagarkatti. *NIH funding cuts will hit red states, rural areas, underserved communities hardest.* University of South Carolina March 7, 2025, Accessed: March 20, 2025. https://www.upi.com/Voices/2025/03/07/national-institutes-of-health-cuts-impact/2641741357136/

cancer treatment, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), HIV/AIDS, pandemic preparedness, climate science, and earthquake and wildfire safety.

Without state action, California could lose its global leadership position in science, innovation, and public health and the billions of dollars in tax revenue and hundreds of thousands of high-wage jobs generated by the state's clear scientific leadership.

SOLUTION

SB 895 creates the California Foundation for Science and Health Research within the Government Operations Agency. This bill authorizes up to $7.5 billion in General Obligation Bonds to fund research grants and loans. It supports research, including basic research, in critical areas such as:

- Cancer, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, ALS, heart disease, and diabetes
- Mental health and addiction
- Pandemic and emerging health threats
- Climate change, wildfire prevention, and environmental health
- Renewable energy and emerging technologies

SB 895 additionally has strict oversight and transparency standards including:

- Annual independent audits reviewed by the State Controller.
- Annual public reports detailing grants, expenditures, and outcomes.
- Public disclosure of all grant awards and funding decisions.

The bill's spending limits also stipulate that no more than 3% of funds can be used for administrative costs.

In addition, the measure proposes groundbreaking ways to make health care more affordable in three primary ways:

- Instructs the foundation to establish provisions by which the state may recoup investments on blockbuster drugs and other highly profitable inventions and discoveries;
- Require access planning to ensure the benefits of this research is available to the public, including planning for affordability for all Californians as well as ensuring the data from funded research is available for future research; and
- Allows California to ensure that licensees are not hoarded and underutilized. In the event a technology is needed, such as a pandemic.

The bills support for commercialization and advanced research projects will further the goals of bringing groundbreaking discoveries funded with public dollars into technologies and treatments that benefit all Californians.

SUPPORT

- **United Auto Workers Local 4811 & Region 6 (Sponsors)**
- **University of California (Sponsor)**
- **Union of American Physicians and Dentists (Sponsor)**
- 350 Bay Area Action
- Abundance Institute
- Access Reproductive Justice
- Alameda Labor Council
- ALS Association
- ALS Network
- American Academy of Neurology
- Alzheimer's Greater Los Angeles
- Alzheimer's Orange County
- Alzheimer's San Diego
- American Anthropological Association
- American College of Physicians-California Chapter
- American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO (AFSCME)
- American Parkinson's Disease Association
- American Brain Coalition
- Association of California Caregiver Resource Centers
- Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities
- Berkeley Faculty Association
- Blood Cancer United, Formerly the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
- California Academy of Sciences
- California Chronic Care Coalition
- California Consortium of Addition

Programs and Professionals
- California Faculty Association
- California Federation of Labor Unions
- California Federation of Teachers
- California Institute of Technology
- California Nurses Association
- California Physicians Alliance
- California Psychological Association
- California State University
- California Working Families Party
- Chamber San Mateo County
- The Children's Partnership
- Children's Specialty Care Coalition
- City of Eureka
- Change Begins with me (Indivisible)
- CLEANEARTH4KIDS.ORG
- The Climate Center
- Council of University of California
- County of San Diego
- Courage California
- Faculty Associations
- Culver City Democratic Club
- Equality California
- Greater Fresno Parkinson's Support Group
- Humane World for Animals
- Indivisible CA: Statestrong
- Indivisible East Bay
- Indivisible Marin
- Indivisible Media City Burbank
- Indivisible Resisters Conta Costa County
- Indivisible San Francisco
- Indivisible San Jose
- Indivisible Sonoma County
- Indivisible West Side LA
- Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis
- Loma Linda University
- The Los Angeles Trust for Children's Health
- Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research
- Natera Inc.
- National Union of Healthcare Workers (NUHW)
- Northeastern University
- Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce
- Parkinson Association of Northern California
- Parkinson's Association of San Diego
- Parkinson's Community Los Angeles
- Parkinson's Foundation
- Parkinson Network of Mt. Diablo
- Parkinson's Resource Organization
- Point Blue Conservation Science
- Public Health Institute
- San Diego Natural History Museum
- San Deigo Zoo Wildlife Alliance
- San Diego 350
- San Francisco Chamber of Commerce
- San Francisco Marin Medical Society
- San Mateo County Economic Development Association
- Santa Monica Democratic Club
- Silicon Valley Leadership Group
- Solano County Democratic Central Committee
- Stanford University
- Teamsters California
- Together We Will Albany-Berkeley and Townsquare Democracy
- Union of Concerned Scientists
- United Auto Workers local 230
- United Auto Workers Local 509
- United Auto Workers local 872
- United Auto Workers Local 1115-California Association of Professional Scientists
- United Auto Workers Local 2478
- United Auto Workers Local 4123
- Universities Allied for Essential Medicines
- University of California Chicanx Latinx Alumni Association
- University of California Davis Faculty Association
- University of California Graduate and Professional Council
- University of California Irvine Faculty Association
- University of California Los Angeles Faculty Association
- University of California Los Angeles Graduate Students Association
- University of California Riverside Faculty Association
- University of California San Diego Faculty Association
- University of California San Francisco Faculty Association

- University of California Student Association
- U.S. Pain Foundation
- Western Center on Law & Poverty, Inc.

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