

Several thousands of people took to the streets this past weekend in more than 100 cities to protest the Trump administration's wide-ranging attacks on vital scientific research, including its attempts to slash funding to the National Institutes of Health and hence local universities and research labs across the country.

The result was small but potent demonstrations in red states like Missouri, Montana, and Ohio as well as big crowds in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and on the mall in Washington D.C. Here in Los Angeles, hundreds of scientific researchers and their supporters crowded onto the sidewalks and park space in front of the Federal Building in Westwood just across from the UCLA campus. There was a good mix of people associated with UCLA and USC carrying signs like "Mad Scientist," "Ciencia no silencio," and "Don't Have the Measles? Thank Science."

By my tally, there were 128 separate U.S. events registered at the Stand Up for Science website. Demonstrations even popped up in Canada and France to show support for American researchers.

Add to that the thousands of people worldwide who marched in the streets for International Women's Day and you've got evidence that American citizens are not going to preemptively capitulate to a second Trump term's illegal attacks on rights, laws, and norms.

What's more, we saw lots of media coverage of these protests and the voices of the varied participants, which is critical for there to be momentum. Mainstream media coverage of US protest movements is notoriously lackluster thanks to undercounts of crowd size; skepticism of citing activists as sources; and editorial decisions to ignore protests or relegate coverage to the proverbial back pages. In January, media coverage largely dismissed the notion of a Trump 2.0 resistance. Stories on the pop-up Tesla protests have been few and far between. But the Stand Up for Science (SUFS) protests got decent coverage, including a preview feature in the New York Times, stories by NPR, the Washington Post, AP, LA Times, and dozens of headlines in regional media outlets focused on their local universities.

The attempted freeze on research funding is just one line of attack in the war on the federal government — a war that may only be stopped by the courts. On March 5, a federal judge in Massachusetts ordered the NIH to hold off on planned cuts to federal funding, writing that the administration was impacting "thousands of existing grants, totaling billions of dollars across all 50 states—a unilateral change over a weekend, without regard for on-going research and clinical trials." Because of the "imminent risk of halting life-saving clinical trials, disrupting the development of innovative medical research and treatment, and shuttering of research facilities, without regard for current patient care," the court issued a nationwide temporary restraining order. In a separate development, the NIH has also begun terminating grants for active projects studying environmental justice, climate change, and other topics, according to reporting by Max Kozlov and Smriti Mallapaty for the journal Nature.



A popular sign at the Westwood protest. (Photos by the UCLA Emmett Institute)

Social media is a part of the SUFS story too, thanks to how these protests were organized: as a grassroots reaction by researchers on the social media site Bluesky. The site, which functions as a sort of alternative to X, has grown rapidly since the November election, partly fueled by users who work in science and climate-related fields. So, who showed up to protest? Sociologist Dana Fisher shared some survey results with Drilled. Fisher's team interviewed 344 protestors in Washington D.C. and of that group 22% said it was the first protest they'd ever participated in while 18% of participants said they were mobilized via Bluesky.

Following the success of Friday's walkouts and protests, the folks behind Stand Up for Science are seeking input on how to continue growing the movement. They have a Google Form seeking ideas and suggestions here.

The map of official events organized by Stand Up for Science included 32 rallies

from coast to coast, as well as another 96 unofficial events locally organized that popped up more organically ahead of the March 7th date. Those smaller events are in some ways a better indication of what's happening. "The Missouri Capitol's south lawn was packed Friday as nearly a hundred Missourians protested federal budget cuts as part of a national movement called Stand Up for Science," reported the Columbia Missourian. I'll just leave that full list here in case anyone still thinks that science is somehow just a concern of coastal elites. As the protest signs say: science is 4 everyone.

Official

Birmingham, AL

Little Rock, AR

Sacramento, CA

San Francisco, CA

Denver, CO

Hartford, CT

Washington, DC

Tallahassee, FL

Atlanta, GA

Chicago, IL

Indianapolis, IN

Topeka, KS

Frankfort, KY

Boston, MA

Lansing, MI

Saint Paul, MN

Jefferson City, MO

Raleigh, NC

Trenton, NJ

Santa Fe, NM

New York, NY

Columbus, OH

Newport, OR

Salem, OR

Philadelphia, PA

Pittsburgh, PA

Providence, RI

Columbia, SC

Nashville, TN

Austin, TX

Seattle, WA

Madison, WI

Unofficial

Juneau, AK

Fairbanks, AK

Tucson, AZ

Tempe, AZ

Phoenix, AZ

Cotati, CA

Sonoma, CA

Berkeley, CA

Palo Alto, CA

Santa Clara, CA

Santa Cruz, CA

Merced, CA

San Luis Obispo, CA

Santa Barbara, CA

Northridge, Los Angeles, CA

Los Angeles, CA

Pasadena, CA

San Diego, CA

Golden, CO,

Boulder. CO

Fort Collins, CO

Newark, DE

Gainesville, FL

Tampa, FL

Davie, FL

Edwardsville, IL

Carbondale, IL

Urbana, IL

Honolulu, HI

Ames, IA

Grinnell, IA

Iowa City, IA

Lawrence, KS

Baton Rouge, LA

New Orleans, LA

Laurel, MD

Scarborough, ME

Lewiston, ME

Amherst, MA

Falmouth, MA

Williamstown, MA

Winona, MN

Golden Valley, MN

Duluth, MN

Warrensburg, MO

Missoula, MT

Hamilton, MT

Helena, MT

Bozeman, MT

Omaha, NE

Lincoln, NE

Reno, NV

Las Vegas, NV

Gallup, NM

Plymouth, NH

Hanover, NH

Buffalo, NY

Geneseo,NY

Rochester, NY

Clinton, NY

Cobleskill, NY

Albany, NY

Potsdam, NY

Asheville, NC

Charlotte, NC

Winston-Salem, NC

Corvallis, OR

Reedsport, OR

Eugene, OR

Oklahoma City, OK

Rapid City, SD

Clemson, SC

Salt Lake City, UT

Knoxville, TN

Wichita Falls, TX

Denton, TX

College Station, TX

University Place, Houston, TX

Charlottesville, VA

Norfolk, VA

Virginia Beach, VA

Williamsburg, VA

Burlington, VT

Castleton, VT

Cheney, WA

Yakima, WA

Richland, WA

Walla Walla, WA

Pullman, WA

Bellingham, WA

Friday Harbor, WA

Morgantown, WV

La Crosse, WI

Rhinelander, WI

Jackson, WY