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## Private Donor Helps Fund Scientists After Trump's Proposed "Anti-Science" Budget Cuts

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The famous American Astrophysicist, Neil deGrasse Tyson, once said,

“The good thing about science is that it’s true, whether or not you believe in it.”

Neil deGrasse Tyson’s quote from The Colbert Report distinguishes the difference between opinion and fact. Science, as a base, is always true. Yet, it is interpretation that imparts human error. In other words, while science is a universal truth, not everyone believes in the importance of science.

Consider President Trump’s [2018 budget request](#). Many of these call for massive cuts in spending on scientific research, medical research, disease prevention programs and more. If these requests are met, the National Cancer Institute would face a \$1 billion cut compared to its 2017 budget. The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute could see a \$575 million cut, and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases would see a reduction of \$838 million. The administration would cut the overall National Institutes of Health budget from \$31.8 billion to \$26 billion.

The National Science Foundation, which gives \$7 billion a year in grants to universities and research institutes, is not specifically mentioned in the budget. However, unspecified “other agencies” are in line for a 9.8 percent budget cut.

Since Trump became president, the official White House website also deleted all mentions of climate from the site – all but one – the promise to eliminate the “harmful and unnecessary” Climate Action Plan.

Following these actions, scientists and other employees of the EPA and USDA were told not to speak to the public about climate change or other scientific concerns that should be addressed.

### Private Donations To Fund Science

Due to Trump’s anti-science policies and budget cuts, scientists are looking towards private donors for funding. Philanthropic dollars have now come to play an important role in scientific progress.

The successful American financier and philanthropist, Jeffery Epstein, is well known for supporting science; he is currently taking action to help a number of scientists thrive during the “Trump Era.”

None of this is new for Jeffery, though. Jeffery’s funding for science dates back to the year 2000, when he founded the [Jeffery Epstein VI foundation](#) to support cutting-edge science and science education around the world. The Jeffrey Epstein VI Foundation has supported many leading scientists including Stephen Hawking, Martin Nowak, Gregory Benford, Lee Smolin, Seth Lloyd, Lawrence Krauss, Artificial Intelligence scientist, Marvin Minsky and Nobel Laureates Gerard ‘t Hooft, David Gross and Frank Wilczek.

In 2003, the Foundation established the [Program for Evolutionary Dynamics](#) at Harvard University, providing a \$35 million gift to the university. The program is one of the first to study the evolution of molecular biology with the primary use of mathematics. It also became one of the first departments to develop a mathematical model to show how cancer cells evolve as infectious bacteria and viruses such as HIV.



Lifeboat Foundation  
American Financier and Philanthropist, Jeffery  
Epstein

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While Jeffrey has donated large sums of money to help find a cure for cancer and infectious diseases, President Trump’s proposed budget seeks an \$82 million cut for the center that works on vaccine-preventable and respiratory diseases, such as influenza and measles.

Trump’s budget also proposes a cut of \$186 million from programs at CDC’s center on HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis, sexually transmitted infections and tuberculosis prevention. One of the biggest cuts, however, is \$222 million for the agency’s chronic disease prevention programs, which are designed to help people prevent diabetes, heart disease and stroke, and obesity.

“I have helped scientists for 20 years and I don’t really believe that you can say you fully understand a particular problem, unless your ideas can be tested against solid evidence,” Jeffery said. “But to tackle those problem you need resources, and if you have them the results can be marvellous. For example, in one simple and elegant equation, mathematics managed to describe the whole motion of the planets that alluded men for ages.”

### **A Helping Hand Goes A Long Way**

Private donors who help fund science-based research and projects, such as Jeffery, are making a huge difference. When federal dollars become tight, the donors who step in become the real heroes. And while private funds are not usually as large as federal funds, these donations can go a long way in terms of finding cures for diseases.

For example, HIV/AIDS was once viewed as a death sentence in the 1980s, but years of privately-funded research have helped scientists understand the basic biology of viruses and the workings on DNA. The Program for Evolutionary Dynamics, funded by Jeffery, is now conducting research in mapping colon cancer resistance to inhibitor drugs, mapping the progression of pancreatic cancer, targeting the topology of minority mutations that drive tumor growth and creating a database to predict and minimize resistance to HIV drugs.

Robert Trivers is an evolutionary biologist and sociobiologist, who some consider to be one of the most influential evolutionary theorists alive today. Robert is one of the scientists who has received support from Jeffrey.

“Jeffrey’s donations have permitted me to work on whatever I choose, in whatever way I choose,” Robert said. “Most of this is theoretical work. I think I have recently solved the problem of “honour killings” in terms of the effects of repeated first cousin marriages (Muslim) and long histories of within caste endogamy (Hindu). Jeffrey’s support included discussions with him, which were valuable mostly because he is extremely bright, open-minded and widely travelled. They key is that he gives me consistent, warm support without me having to write endless applications for grants, and trusts me to put it to good use, as indeed I do.”

Yet as Trump continues to make anti-science policies and excessive budget cuts, scientists and their supporters can only hope for the best. Science is a unviersal truth, but unfortunately, the truth can be ignored. With the help from private donors though, science can continue to thrive and help us evolve.

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