



Open Letter in Support of Academia: How Sociology Benefits Universities and Society

We represent several professional associations dedicated to the promotion and advancement of the discipline of sociology. Our members work in academia, the federal workforce, and the private sector and have been directly affected by recent broadsides on these core institutions. Like many others across the nation, our members have seen federal contracts abruptly canceled, face the imminent threat of job losses, and are reluctant to engage their fundamental, constitutionally protected rights to free speech and dissent. These attempts to silence and discredit do a massive disservice to society at large that will have far-reaching, adverse impacts.

Sociology as a discipline strengthens universities, private industry, and the public sector. In short, our discoveries benefit the public. As sociologists, we engage in the empirical study of society—why it works the way it does, who benefits, and who loses. We analyze social groups from the nuclear family to state governments. Through careful research and analysis, sociologists have shown that immigrants do not raise crime rates, shorter work weeks can improve health, family-friendly policies have concrete benefits for parents, and more.

We thus stand firmly in opposition to recent federal policy that seeks to stifle universities and academic inquiry. Imperiling research and knowledge can never serve the public good. Higher education is a space to ask and answer questions, generating sociological research that contributes to an objectively healthier, safer, and more economically productive society. Additionally, universities house the facilities that train the next generation of sociologists, allowing future researchers to build on existing knowledge, bring valuable analytical skills into private industry, and engage in effective public service.

Dismantling academia doesn't just hurt academics, it deprives everyone of trained specialists who contribute to tech, health care, government, and many other areas. We ask university leaders to resist efforts to stifle scientific discovery and to challenge the attempts to silence academics working in universities and other settings. We call on universities to support sociology departments, students, and faculty and reject efforts to restrict the teaching of sociology at their institutions. Now more than ever, it is critical that leaders—at universities, in private

industry, and in the public sector--state plainly that academia benefits society and that sociology is an essential way that it does so.

Signed,

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