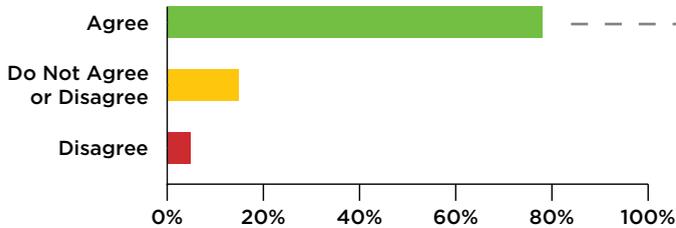
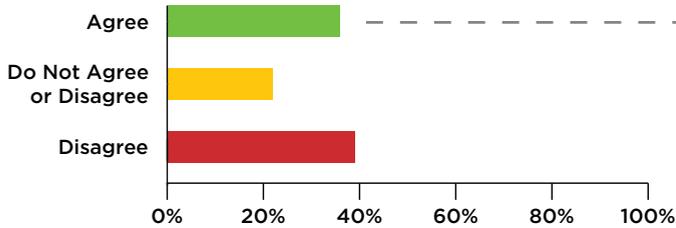


Surveying the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

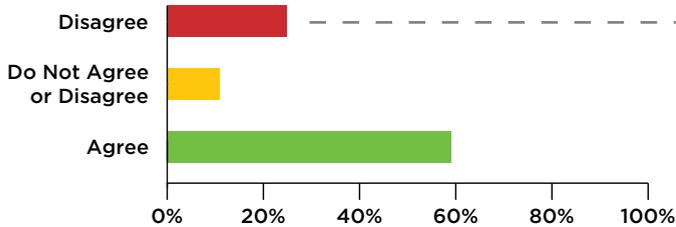
Scientist Voices under President Biden



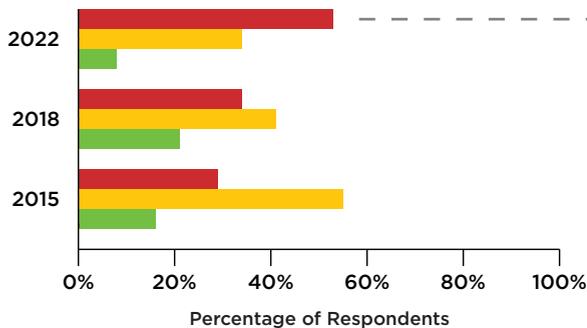
247 out of 317 CDC scientists agreed: the agency adhered to its scientific integrity policy.



128 out of 356 CDC scientists, more than any other agency surveyed, reported being asked to omit from their scientific work certain words viewed as politically contentious.



While most agreed, **86 out of 345 CDC scientists** felt that the agency's scientific work on COVID-19 has not consistently informed its policy decisions.



172 out of 324 CDC scientists disagreed that senior leaders with conflicts of interest inappropriately influenced agency decisions, more than under the Obama (176 out of 524) or Trump (349 out of 1,208) administrations.

See reverse for more information on this survey. For the purposes of this fact sheet, "Agree" includes both "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" response categories, and "Disagree" includes both "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree." For detailed breakdowns of responses and exact survey questions, please visit www.ucsusa.org/resources/scientists-survey-2022.

Our nation relies on government science and scientists to protect public health, public safety, and the environment. To that end, scientific integrity safeguards are necessary for ensuring that political, ideological, and financial interests do not undermine the use of science in federal decisionmaking, harming the public good in the process.

CDC Scientists Speak Out

Anonymous CDC survey respondents provided their views on scientific integrity, environmental justice efforts, and evidence-based decisionmaking.

“The administration has retained strong scientific advisors, incorporates science in their decision making process, and made improvements in communication and coordination across HHS [Health and Human Services] agencies.”

“An emphasis to make communications to the public more responsive to public health needs will help the agency’s ability to carry out its mission, but only if the methods for speeding communications and clearance processes are done in a smart way. These methods are still be decided upon by senior leadership, so the impact is still uncertain.”

“I believe political and business pressure to end COVID-19 restrictions resulted in premature guidance decreasing length of quarantine (or whether an exposed individual should quarantine at all) and mask-wearing requirements, hindering my agency’s ability to protect public health.”

“It feels like they want to lead with science instead of cover it up.”

In September and October of 2022, the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) and the University of New Hampshire Survey Center administered a survey to over 46,000 federal scientists across six government agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). UCS received survey responses from 378 CDC scientists and experts, for a total response rate of 3.2 percent. The results shed light on how CDC scientists and experts perceive their current working environment and the ability of science to inform agency decisionmaking without political interference.

Codifying Scientific Integrity Principles

As the COVID-19 pandemic has made clear, the CDC is a critical agency whose mission significantly affects the health of the public. CDC scientists surveyed in 2022 perceived progress on scientific integrity and evidence-based decisionmaking. They reported that their offices and divisions were more effective than was the case in prior surveys and agreed that the agency adhered to its scientific integrity policy. However, more than 120 scientists reported being asked to omit certain words from their scientific products, some CDC scientists reported political interference in the agency’s science-based decisions, and some CDC scientists felt that science did not inform CDC policies on the pandemic.

Congress should pass the Scientific Integrity Act to strengthen its scientific integrity protections. Agency leadership should remind management and staff of the definition of political interference and continue to train staff on processes for bringing forward scientific integrity allegations. The agency should strengthen its scientific integrity policy in accordance with guidance from the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and its Scientific Integrity Taskforce.

Jacob Carter is the research director in the Center for Science and Democracy at UCS. **Anita Desikan** is the senior analyst in the Center for Science and Democracy at UCS.

HEADQUARTERS

Two Brattle Square
Cambridge, MA 02138
617-547-5552

WASHINGTON, DC

1825 K St. NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20006
202-223-6133

WEST COAST

500 12th St., Suite 340
Oakland, CA 94607
510-843-1872

MIDWEST

One N. LaSalle St., Suite 1904
Chicago, IL 60602
312-578-1750

ONLINE

 @ucsusa
 @unionofconcernedscientists
 @unionofconcernedscientists