

Grading Government Transparency

Scientists' Freedom to Speak (and Tweet) at Federal Agencies

REPORT CARD	Media Policy Grade	Social Media Policy Grade
Bureau of Land Management	B	B+
Census Bureau	B+	B
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	A	C
Consumer Product Safety Commission	C	B+
Department of Energy	Inc	C
Environmental Protection Agency	A-	B
Fish and Wildlife Service	B+	A
Food and Drug Administration	C	Inc
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	B	B+
National Institute of Standards and Technology	B+	B
National Institutes of Health	C	A
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	A	B
National Science Foundation	A	B+
Nuclear Regulatory Commission	B+	B
Occupational Safety and Health Administration	D	D
U.S. Department of Agriculture	C-	D
U.S. Geological Survey	B+	A+

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Recommendations

Federal agency media policies need to be stronger to offer scientists clear guidance and protections against political interference. More broadly, agencies need to put free and open communication ahead of political considerations.

- **Federal agencies** should develop strong media and social media policies that grant scientists the fundamental right of scientific free speech.
- **The Office of Science and Technology Policy** should assess agency progress and speak forcefully on the importance of strong and effective media and social media policies.
- **Congress** should hold agency heads accountable for encouraging the free flow of scientific information to the public.
- **The president** should make strong and effective agency policies on media and social media a priority.
- **Journalists** should call out those agencies that block the free flow of information to the public.

***“Knowledge will forever govern ignorance:
And a people who mean to be their own
Governors, must arm themselves with the
power which knowledge gives.”***

— President James Madison

The Center for Science and Democracy at UCS works to strengthen American democracy by advancing the essential role of science, evidence-based decision making, and constructive debate as a means to improve the health, security, and prosperity of all people. More information about UCS and the Center for Science and Democracy is available on the UCS website: <http://www.ucsusa.org/our-work/center-science-and-democracy>.