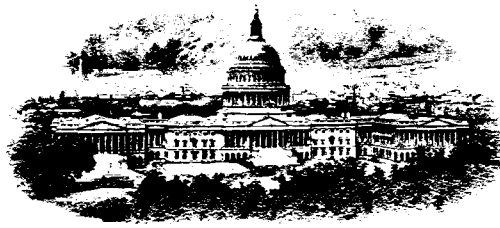


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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

October 30, 2003

The Honorable Tommy G. Thompson
Secretary of Health and Human Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Outrage and utter incomprehension only begin to describe my reactions to the existence of a "hit list" of more than 150 scientists conducting studies on HIV/AIDS, human sexuality, and risk-taking behavior funded through research grants provided by the National Institutes of Health.

The National Institutes of Health determine grant priorities in a highly competitive peer-reviewed process based on scientific merit. I am aghast at every aspect of the issues raised in this situation. It is appalling that such a list could gain credibility as it is circulated among federal government and Congressional offices, prompting concerns that the funding for these projects could be revoked for ideological reasons. I am disturbed that this list would be used to bring pressure against respected researchers working to improve and protect health care. Mr. Secretary, it is simply unacceptable that scientific inquiry and health research be determined by fundamentally narrow-minded, overly moralistic, religious or ideological predisposition.

I join my friend and colleague the Honorable Henry Waxman in demanding that these attacks on science be stopped at their source. I call on you to conduct an investigation to determine if anyone at the Department of Health and Human Services is involved in contributing to the circulation of this list. I request that you take the appropriate steps to ensure against the misuse of information held by the Department. Furthermore, in order to reassure those who are threatened, I urge you to clearly articulate the support of the Department for the NIH peer-review process and the valuable research conducted.

Sincerely,

TOM LANTOS
Member of Congress

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE
Ranking Democratic Member

GOVERNMENT REFORM COMMITTEE

Subcommittee on Energy Policy,
Natural Resources and Regulatory Affairs

Subcommittee on National Security,
Veterans' Affairs and International Relations

Cochair, Permanent United States
Congressional Delegation to the
European Parliament

Member, United States
Congressional Delegation to the
NATO Parliamentary Assembly

Cochair, Congressional
Human Rights Caucus

Member, United States Holocaust Memorial Council