

Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, D.C., 20510

June 27, 2025

Dear Chairman Cassidy and Ranking Member Sanders,

On June 5, Mr. David Keeling sat before the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee for his confirmation hearing to lead the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Established by the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, OSHA is the leading federal agency for ensuring safe workplace standards and providing employers with critical training, education, and assistance to promote worker safety and health. The standards set forth by OSHA rely heavily on evidence-based practices developed by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), an agency that lost approximately 90 percent of its staff to reductions in force (RIFs) earlier this year.

Subsequently, the President's Budget Request [proposed](#) eliminating all but a handful of NIOSH's signature programs, which would drain the federal government of long-standing occupational health and safety expertise. Evidence-based recommendations for workplace safety developed by NIOSH and implemented by OSHA have decreased the number of workplace deaths by more than 70 percent since 1970. Eliminating NIOSH would put American workers at risk for workplace injuries and death, as there would no longer be an agency monitoring and implementing workplace safety and standards. This includes workers carrying out essential, yet dangerous work, like mining, fishing, and firefighting.

During the June 5 hearing, Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) thoughtfully raised these concerns by asking Mr. Keeling how OSHA will carry out recommendations previously set forth by NIOSH. Mr. Keeling responded by highlighting the use of professional groups and private resources to fill this gap in expertise. On behalf of the occupational safety and health research community, we would like to assert that professional societies very rarely conduct or support this research themselves, if at all. They rely and exist primarily upon membership dues, conference fees, and publications, which would not exist without the research and professionals supported by NIOSH.

The elimination of NIOSH and federal funding for workplace safety research will have devastating impacts for the future of our nation's workforce and will undeniably lead to increased workplace deaths and injuries. The future of safe workplace conditions relies on OSHA's ability to set forth evidence-based standards, and it remains unclear how this will be possible without the existence of NIOSH. The seven signatories listed below represent more than 17,000 individuals from professional and academic organizations that are deeply concerned about the future of NIOSH. We urge Congress to protect American lives and the life-saving occupational safety and health research portfolio supported by OSHA and NIOSH. This is the only way to ensure that decades of federal investments in the field of occupational safety and health are not rendered futile, and that the rich expertise that our community holds is not lost.

Sincerely,

Human Factors and Ergonomics Society (HFES)
American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA)
Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP)

Association of Safe Patient Handling Professionals (ASPHP)

Association of Occupational Health Professionals in Healthcare (AOHP)

University of Cincinnati (UC)

University of California, Berkeley