

April 3, 2025

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

On behalf of the Bayh-Dole Coalition -- an organization of American manufacturers, entrepreneurial companies, research universities, venture capitalists and others engaged in transforming federally funded inventions into useful products -- I want to thank you for your leadership in tasking Mr. Kratsios, Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, with revisiting the goals of Vannevar Bush's seminal report *Science: The Endless Frontier*. Your call to "blaze a trail to the next frontiers of science" is both timely and firmly rooted in Bush's visionary foundation.

As you rightly noted, Bush's report "laid the groundwork for the uniquely successful American partnership of Government, industry and academia that built the greatest and most productive nation in human history." It is particularly fitting that you launched this initiative as we approach the 80th anniversary of Dr. Bush's report. The Bayh-Dole Coalition stands ready to support this important endeavor in any way we can.

One major obstacle undermining Dr. Bush's vision was the belief that any invention made with public funding should be given away. Dr. Bush disagreed. He recommended these discoveries should be managed by their creators so they could be turned into useful products. Unfortunately, his advice was not followed. Instead, government agencies took invention ownership and made them freely available both here and abroad. That proved to be a costly mistake.

By the late 1970s, it was clear that the federal government's centralized management of publicly funded inventions had failed. The U.S. had lost its lead in critical industries like

steel, electronics, and automobiles to Japan and Germany. Our competitors greatly benefitted from our technology giveaway. It was widely predicted the U.S. would soon lose our lead in many other fields as well. But because of inspired leadership, that did not happen.

Recognizing the urgent need for reform, Senators Birch Bayh and Robert Dole set out to stop the waste of taxpayer-funded research that produced little economic return. What they uncovered was deeply troubling: across federal agencies, billions of dollars were being invested in research, yet almost none of it was translating into real-world products. For example, not a single new drug had been commercialized from research funded by the National Institutes of Health when the government took the patent rights.

The problem wasn't a lack of innovation. Federal agencies were accumulating patents -- roughly 28,000 at the time -- but fewer than 5% were licensed. The reason? The creators of these technologies had been removed from the process. Further, the government rarely granted exclusive licenses. Without exclusivity, companies had no ability to protect the expensive, high-risk investments needed to transform early-stage research into real-world products.

To fix this broken system, Senators Bayh and Dole crafted the Bayh-Dole Act of 1980. The law removed bureaucratic obstacles and shifted control of federally funded inventions from Washington to the institutions where they were made. It allowed universities, small businesses, and federal laboratories to retain title to their inventions, giving them the authority to license the technologies -- often exclusively -- to private partners. Importantly, the law was one of the first emphasizing that resulting products should be manufactured in the United States.

Though the Act passed with strong bipartisan support, some agencies fought to maintain their control. President Reagan [decisively ended that resistance](#) by embracing Bayh-Dole and extending it to all federal contractors.

As [The Economist](#) later observed: “Possibly the most inspired piece of legislation to be enacted over the past half century was the Bayh-Dole Act of 1980... More than anything, this single policy measure helped to reverse America’s precipitous slide into industrial irrelevance.”

Bayh-Dole, supported by a strong patent system, helped spark a historic innovation renaissance that restored America’s economic leadership. Unlike other nations, our resurgence was largely driven by small business entrepreneurs willing to take on the risk of commercializing nascent technologies emerging from government-supported research. That remains true today.

Remarkably, Bayh-Dole has added trillions to the U.S. economy, created millions of jobs, and launched thousands of companies -- *without adding any bureaucracy or costing taxpayers a penny.*

However, those who believe that government supported inventions should be given away or micro-managed by Washington have not gone away. During your first term, you [successfully blocked](#) attempts to misuse Bayh-Dole so agencies could impose price controls on resulting products.

Unfortunately, efforts to weaken Bayh-Dole escalated under the Biden Administration. In response to your Executive Order requiring agencies to review actions inconsistent with law or Administration policy, the Bayh-Dole Coalition [identified five serious violations of the Act](#) by the Biden Administration, primarily taken in its final days in office. These actions should be immediately rescinded.

It is timely and essential to reexamine how federally funded research can best serve the American people. But for federal research dollars to drive jobs, help create new companies, and even launch entire industries, those dollars must catalyze the development of real-world products. That requires private-sector investment -- and confidence that the federal government is a reliable, consistent partner. Preserving Bayh-Dole is critical to that trust.

We hope that, under your leadership, Dr. Kratsios will consider writing a new version of *Science: The Endless Frontier*. Such a report would be a vital contribution to America's continued prosperity. Please let us know how we can assist in this important work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph P. Allen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and 'A'.

Joseph P. Allen
Executive Director

CC:
Michael Kratsios
Susan Wiles