





APPEALS COURT DENIES TRUMP ADMIN'S REQUEST TO BLOCK GRANT REINSTATEMENT



(Marcio Jose Sanchez / AP)

By [Vanguard Administrator](#)  August 23, 2025  0 comments

By Vanguard Staff

SAN FRANCISCO – The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit on Thursday denied the Trump administration’s request to stay a lower court order requiring the reinstatement of federal research grants that had been terminated earlier this year as part of a sweeping campaign to eliminate funding tied to diversity, equity, and inclusion programs.

The case, *Thakur v. Trump*, was filed by a group of University of California researchers whose multi-year grants from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the National Science Foundation (NSF), and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) were abruptly cancelled in April. The agencies sent form letters citing changes in priorities and referencing recent executive orders issued by President Trump in January and February 2025. Those orders, which created the Department of Government Efficiency, directed agencies to end projects related to DEI, environmental justice, and similar initiatives.

The plaintiffs alleged the cancellations were unlawful because they were not based on any individualized review of the projects, but instead reflected broad policy directives. They sued in the Northern District of California, arguing the actions violated the Administrative Procedure Act, the First and Fifth Amendments, and separation of powers. In June, the district court issued a preliminary injunction requiring the reinstatement of the grants and provisionally certified two classes of researchers: one for those who received form termination letters with no

individualized reasoning and another for those whose grants were ended under the DEI-related orders.

The government appealed and sought a partial stay of the injunction, limited to grants issued by the EPA and NEH. A three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit, led by Judge Morgan Christen, rejected the request. “We deny the government’s motion,” Christen wrote in the opinion.

The panel found that the government had not shown it was likely to succeed on the merits of its arguments. The court said the termination letters were vague, citing broad rationales such as failure to “serve the best interests of the United States” or inconsistency with agency priorities, without specifying how they applied to particular projects. “The recipients of the form letter and the public were left to guess at the reasons for these terminations,” the court noted.

The opinion highlighted the case of Dr. Neeta Thakur, whose \$1.3 million EPA grant to study the impact of wildfire smoke on California communities was terminated seven months before its scheduled end. The court said the government provided no evidence that the EPA considered reliance interests or the taxpayer investments that would be lost if the project was not completed.

On the First Amendment claim, the panel concluded that the government likely engaged in unconstitutional viewpoint discrimination by targeting projects associated with DEI,

environmental justice, and gender-related research. The court rejected the government's argument that it was simply choosing not to fund certain activities, distinguishing the case from earlier Supreme Court decisions. Instead, the judges found that the administration "selected grants for termination based on viewpoint" and reinforced the principle that, while the government has discretion in allocating subsidies, it cannot suppress disfavored ideas.

The court also rejected the government's claim that it would suffer irreparable harm by being compelled to disburse funds that it might not later recover. While acknowledging that some funds might not be recouped, the judges found the harms to researchers and the public were more significant. They cited layoffs, disruptions to graduate programs, reputational injury, and the destruction of research projects, along with the waste of taxpayer dollars already invested.

"The government cannot suffer harm from an injunction that merely ends an unlawful practice," the panel wrote, citing its precedent in *Rodriguez v. Robbins*.

The Ninth Circuit's ruling leaves intact the district court's order requiring the reinstatement of the cancelled grants while the case proceeds. The broader litigation will continue to determine whether the Trump administration's executive orders and resulting grant terminations violated constitutional and statutory limits.

Follow the Vanguard on Social Media – [X](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#). To learn make a tax-deductible donation, please visit davisvanguard.org/donate or give directly through [ActBlue](#). Your support will ensure that the vital work of the Vanguard continues.

Categories:

[BREAKING NEWS](#) [EVERYDAY INJUSTICE](#)

Tags:

[ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE ACT](#)

[DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY](#)

[DIVERSITY EQUITY INCLUSION.](#) [DR. NEETA THAKUR](#)

[ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY](#) [FIRST AMENDMENT](#)

[NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION](#) [NINTH CIRCUIT](#)

[PRESIDENT TRUMP](#) [RESEARCH GRANTS](#) [THAKUR V. TRUMP](#)

[TRUMP ADMINISTRATION](#)

[UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA RESEARCHERS](#)

AUTHOR

[Vanguard Administrator](#)

VIEW ALL POSTS

Leave a Comment

You must be [logged in](#) to post a comment.

RECENT POSTS

Trump Administration Concedes Court Battle over California National Guard

The Trump administration has withdrawn its request to maintain federal control over the California National Guard, returning command and control to Gov. Gavin Newsom, following a court ruling that the federalization of the National Guard was illegal.

Rising Building Costs and Scarcity Limit Workers' Wages, New Research Shows

A newly published paper in the European Economic Review finds that construction - specifically the supply and price of buildings - plays a central role in determining workers' wages and the share of income going to labor, with important implications for housing policy.

We Made It — Full Match Unlocked. Thank You.

The Davis Vanguard has successfully unlocked the full matching donation of over \$23,000, thanks to the support of its readers and supporters, and is encouraging people to become monthly donors to sustain their independent journalism.

'False Hope': Why Families Who Celebrated Newsom's New Mental Health Court Feel Let Down By It

California's CARE Court, designed to help people with serious mental illnesses, has fallen short of expectations, leaving many families frustrated and desperate for help, while a new law set to take effect in January promises to expand the grave disability standard and open a new pathway to conservatorship.

Legal Battle Erupts over Virginia's In-State Tuition for Immigrant Students

Immigrant rights advocates filed an emergency motion to intervene in a federal lawsuit challenging Virginia's in-state tuition law for immigrant students after state officials agreed to invalidate the statute without mounting a defense, potentially affecting the educational futures of thousands of students.

The People's Vanguard of Davis
P.O. Box 4715
Davis, CA 95617

916-970-3131

info@davisvanguard.org

COMPANY

- › [About Us](#)
- › [Our Mission](#)
- › [Editorial Board](#)

QUICK LINKS

- › [Court Watch](#)
- › [Archives](#)
- › [Submissions](#)
- › [Editorial Board](#)
- › [Comment Policy](#)

ABOUT

The Vanguard provides the Davis Community with incisive in-depth coverage of local government on a wide variety of issues. Since 2006, The Vanguard has provided Davis and Yolo County with some of the best groundbreaking news coverage on local government and policy issues affecting our city, our schools, the county, and the Sacramento Region.

© 2026 Vanguard News Group. All Rights Reserved. Website
Development by Uptown Studios