



AAG

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
of GEOGRAPHERS

AAG Continues Strong Partnership with March for Science

In February 2017, the AAG [announced](#) that we had become a formal partner of the March for Science. At that time, the March was envisioned as a single day, multi-site event that would unite the scientific community and allies in support of evidence-based policies and strong funding for federal research budgets.

The March, which occurred on April 22, 2017, was a tremendous success, with over 100,000 participants in Washington, D.C., and thousands of others in dozens of additional locations. Hundreds of AAG members and other geographers took part through marching, posting on social media, or by signing one of the banners we designed to commemorate the significant event and the AAG's support for science!



Building on this success, March for Science (MFS) was transitioned into a formal organization promoting ongoing advocacy and action. MFS leaders have worked within the science policy community – including the AAG and our friends at AAAS, the Coalition for National Science Funding, and elsewhere – in Washington to advocate on key issues and promote funding increases for research agencies and related federal programs.

Over the last year, the AAG has continued our strong partnership with MFS. We have endorsed sign-on statements or letters organized by MFS on three topics:

- **Defending Scientific Freedom**: Last December, the Washington Post reported that Trump Administration officials had barred staff at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) from using various words in their budget justification documents. This action directly undercut scientific freedom and evidence-based policymaking. The MFS petition called on leaders from research agencies to ensure scientific integrity in their funding and policymaking processes.
- **Graduate Student Tuition Waiver**: Graduate student tuition waivers have long been tax exempt as an important national investment in helping

young Americans gain the training and credentials they need to play important roles in society and help grow the economy. Yet, the U.S. House tax reform bill had proposed counting tuition waivers as taxable income. This would have threatened the ability of many students to afford to enter or continue in graduate programs. Fortunately, the final legislation omitted the harmful provision.

- [Gun violence research](#): For over two decades, a provision known as the Dickey Amendment had effectively blocked the CDC from funding gun violence research. As a result of this letter and related advocacy, the recent omnibus spending bill changed this policy and CDC will now be able to fund research on this important topic.

The 2018 March for Science is scheduled for Saturday April 14, the final day of our Annual Meeting. We will again have banners for members to sign along with “Geographers March for Science” hats available for sale. We are encouraging Annual Meeting participants to support science and our discipline by joining with colleagues in the dozens of sessions that will be held on April 14!

If you have any specific questions about our role as a MFS Partner, please do not hesitate to contact John Wertman of the AAG staff at jwertman@aag.org. As always, we encourage AAG members and others to reach out to your elected officials to express your own views on issues of importance to you.

