

EXHIBIT 50

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS**

COMMONWEALTH OF
MASSACHUSETTS; et al.,

Plaintiffs,

v.

ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR., et al.,

Defendants.

No. 1:25-cv-10814

DECLARATION OF JOHN E. POOL

I, John E. Pool, declare under the penalty of perjury pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746 that the foregoing is true and correct:

1. I am a Professor of Genetics within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (“UW-Madison”). I am familiar with the information in the statements set forth below either through personal knowledge, in consultation with UW-Madison staff, or from documents that have been provided to and reviewed by me.

2. I submit this Declaration in support of the States’ Motion for a Preliminary Injunction.

3. I have been a Professor of Genetics (or, previously, Assistant or Associate Professor) at UW-Madison since 2011. I also serve as the Director of the J.F. Crow Institute for the Study of Evolution and am a Core Faculty member of the UW-Madison Center for Genomic Science Innovation, an Affiliate Faculty in the UW-Madison Department of Integrative Biology, and a Faculty Mentor in the Genome Sciences Training Program. I received my PhD in Genetics and Evolution from Cornell University and my Bachelor of Science in Biology from Western

Michigan University. My research focus is in the area of population genomics and the genetic basis of adaptive evolution.

4. I submit this declaration to provide information regarding the unexpected procedural delays and irregularities I am currently experiencing as Principal Investigator on a renewal of an R35 grant from NIH's National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS), and the profound impacts of those delays on my laboratory. I have experience with NIH grants, including an NIGMS R35 grant that I held from April 2020 through March 2025 (the renewal of which is the subject of this declaration), as well as two NIGMS R01 grants and an earlier F32 postdoctoral fellowship.

5. The research program funded by the R35 grant, "The Architectures and Underpinnings of Adaptive Evolution and Reproductive Isolation," uses a cost-effective laboratory model organism (the *Drosophila* fly) to investigate fundamental principles of evolutionary biology at the genetic level, including how natural populations adapt to new environments, and what the earliest steps toward becoming two different species entail. This research informs the underpinnings of human trait variation, with relevance to many diseases. The research also clarifies how biomedically important insects are likely to evolve. Additionally, the focus on genetic incompatibilities may inform our understanding of the causes of miscarriage and human infertility, and the health consequences of Neanderthal genetic variants found in most individuals of non-African descent.

6. The grant renewal was for a five-year period that was to commence on April 1, 2025 and has \$2.8M in budgeted funding. It is the only grant funding supporting my lab.

7. The study section for my R35 renewal application met in October 2024 and NIGMS indicated that the expected advisory council date would be January 2025. The advisory council

was then scheduled for February 6, 2025, but was canceled without explanation. The advisory council has now been rescheduled to May 22, 2025. But that date—if it holds, which is uncertain, given all the irregularities thus far—is highly problematic, as the R35 grant that is being renewed already ended on March 31, 2025. Because this was my lab’s only grant, this delay has caused the lab’s funding to lapse.

8. I have also received concerning communications from the NIGMS program officer indicating further delays may be expected, even after the advisory council meeting scheduled for late May. In my experience, the grant would typically issue promptly after advisory council, but my program officer indicated that a funding decision may occur as late as September 2025 and that funding might not begin until after that date.

9. This renewal process has been highly unusual and this delay was unforeseeable. Renewal rates for R35 grants are typically very high, close to 80%, and my lab has been very productive during the previous funding period for this grant. Prior to these delays, the program officer had given me only positive indicators regarding the likelihood of renewal. The renewal proposal had a score of 38 which, per NIGMS’ guidance, could reasonably be expected, for an established investigator like me, to be funded at generally as high a frequency as any better score. In a rather cruel twist, R35 grants are promoted to investigators as a stable funding source, and R35 recipients are required to give up other NIGMS grants in order to receive an R35 award. Paradoxically then, accepting this supposedly stable mechanism puts labs like mine in an especially vulnerable position in the face of this unpredictable volatility at NIGMS.

10. The delays (thus far) have already harmed my lab’s ability to function. As a result of the lapse in funding caused by the delayed advisory council, I lost a senior researcher, who had been funded 50% by the R35 grant, leaving some research unfinished due to the hasty

transition. My lab now has just one staff member, a key researcher who is essential to this program. My ability to continue to pay this researcher is entirely dependent on bridge support from the University (which is unknown at present in light of the overarching budgetary uncertainty and unpredictability stemming from actual and expected changes in federal research funding practices) and the unclear timing and outcome of the R35 renewal application.

11. One PhD student is also acutely impacted by this funding lapse; the lab has no funding to pay him, making his progression towards finishing his degree uncertain. I also declined to recruit a graduate student in light of the lab's completely unpredictable financial outlook.

12. Because of the all of the uncertainty, I am simply unable to make any well-informed budgeting decisions on a short- or long-term basis, jeopardizing my laboratory's work and the contributions the lab makes to the endeavor of science and to human health.

Executed this 13^h day of April, 2025, in Madison, Wisconsin.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "John E. Pool". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

John E. Pool, PhD