

The Honorable Mark Takano  
41<sup>st</sup> District, California  
Modernization Committee Member Day Hearing  
Wednesday, April 14

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Chairman Kilmer, Vice Chair Timmons, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

For more than twenty years, Congress had an independent, bipartisan agency at its disposal – known as the Office of Technology Assessment or OTA – to provide relevant and unbiased technical and scientific assessments to Members of Congress and staff. However, in 1995 the agency was defunded, stripping Congress of the ability to access this crucial resource as we entered the digital age. Today, as Americans are faced with emerging technologies and their social implications – including issues around data privacy and artificial intelligence – Congress is woefully unprepared to respond to these challenges in an informed and meaningful way.

The OTA would provide Members of Congress with the support they need to be effective legislators; especially as emerging technologies are affecting every aspect of our daily lives.

It is essential that Congress has the tools and access to the expertise to not only understand new technology, but also how it shapes our society and our economy. OTA will help Congress understand technology, create meaningful legislation that will mitigate some of the inequality that technology can create, and allow us to adequately respond to the challenges we are facing in world that is increasingly dependent on technology, and predict the challenges that may be coming next.

A dedicated OTA would complement the analyses provided by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and CRS to provide unbiased and in-depth analysis to Members of Congress and their staff with quicker turnaround times. OTA will provide Congress with a forward-looking office to assist whenever needed as rapid changes in technology inevitably continue to arise.

The foundation for good policy is accurate and objective analysis, and for more than two decades the OTA set that foundation by providing relevant, unbiased technical and scientific assessments for Members of Congress and staff. Last Congress, this committee gave a unanimous and bipartisan endorsement to re-establish the OTA.

That same Congress, I introduced the Office of Technology Assessment Improvement and Enhancement Act. My bill would have re-established a modernized OTA that is responsive to all Members of Congress and provides short-term technical expertise while maintaining the forward-looking assessment work that has only grown more critical over the last 20 years of the OTA's absence - and I will re-introduce this legislation again this Congress.

I urge this committee to once again recommend the re-establishment of the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) to make Congress a capable and well-equipped legislative body in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Thank you and I yield back.