



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY

Opening Statement

Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)

Full Committee Markup of:
H.R. 4704, the *Advancing Research to Prevent Suicide Act*
H.R. 4990, the *Election Technology Research Act*
H.R. 4979, the *Rural STEM Education Act*

Thursday, November 14, 2019

Good morning and welcome to today's markup of what I think are three excellent bills.

I want to thank Representatives McAdams, Gonzalez, and Balderson for introducing our first bill we are considering: H.R. 4704, the Advancing Research to Prevent Suicide Act.

Suicide is a major public health concern and a leading cause of death in America.

Tragically, suicide is the second leading cause of death for young people between the ages of 10 and 34. While our understanding of suicide has increased over the past 50 years, more research is needed.

This bill directs the National Science Foundation to support research to improve our understanding of the complex risk factors that contribute to suicidal thoughts and behavior and inform efforts to save lives.

This is a critically important issue, and I thank my colleague from Utah for his efforts to address the problem.

We will next consider H.R. 4990, the Election Technology Research Act.

A year from now, America will go to the polls to elect a president, select their representatives in Congress, and make many other important choices at the local and state level.

Transparent, fair, and secure elections are the bedrock of our democracy. While it is human behavior that governs the integrity of elections, the technologies used in elections are a source of vulnerability. Unfortunately, recent elections have been marred by several incidents involving outdated, malfunctioning voting machines. In addition, online voter registration databases in a number of states have been subject to attempted cyberattacks.

These incidents have increased Americans' concerns about the integrity of our elections.

The Election Technology Research Act, makes critical investments at the National Institute of Standards and Technology and the National Science Foundation to support cybersecurity research and modernization of our voting systems. I want to thank Representatives Sherrill and Gonzalez for introducing this good bipartisan bill. It is an important piece of the larger national discussion about ensuring the integrity of our elections.

The last bill we are considering today is H.R. 4979, the Rural STEM Education Act. I want to thank Ranking Member Lucas, Representative McAdams, and Representative Baird for introducing H.R. 4979. As Members of the Science Committee, we know that diversity in STEM is important.

We need talented minds from all backgrounds at the table to ensure we can continue to innovate and compete globally. Unfortunately, students living in rural communities are often overlooked in efforts to address STEM diversity.

This legislation directs the National Science Foundation to support much-needed research and program development to help to address the challenges rural communities face in providing high-quality STEM education. I urge my colleagues to support its passage out of Committee.

I look forward to considering each of these good bipartisan bills today, and quickly moving them to the full House.