



## **Opening Statement of Ranking Member Frank Lucas**

### **Full Committee Mark-up**

*H.R. 4704, H.R. 4990, and H.R. 4979*

10:00 a.m. Thursday, November 14, 2019

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Thank you, Chairwoman Johnson, for holding this mark-up. Today we will consider three bipartisan bills.

The first is H.R. 4704, the Advancing Research to Prevent Suicide Act. I want to thank the bill's sponsors, Mr. McAdams and Mr. Gonzalez, for working together to address this critical issue.

Suicide was the 10th-leading cause of death in the United States in 2016, and the second-leading cause of death among people ages 10 to 34. For our nation's veterans, it is an epidemic. We lose 17 veterans in America a day to suicide.

Despite these rising numbers, there are still major gaps in our fundamental understanding of the underpinnings of suicide and how to prevent it. According to the experts, much more research is needed to understand how people respond to stress, how social influence impacts suicide, and what makes some people more resilient than others.

This bill will support basic research at the National Science Foundation, to improve our understanding of such factors. Basic research in this area will help inform better interventions, and better outcomes. I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Next, we will consider H.R. 4990, the Election Technology Research Act. I am proud to join with Representatives Sherrill and Gonzalez and Chairwoman Johnson as a co-sponsor of this bill.

Integrity and security in elections are fundamental to democracy in the United States, and it should not be a partisan issue. This bill takes appropriate steps to update research activities at the National Science Foundation and NIST to promote the security and modernization of U.S. voting systems.

The bill also establishes an Election Systems Center of Excellence at NIST to foster collaborations between NIST, universities, and state and local election officials, to address security challenges.

The U.S. Constitution vests the responsibility of administering elections with State and local governments. However, the Federal government has an important role to play, in providing guidance and assistance to states on election systems. The Federal government can and should also work closely with State and local election officials to deal with foreign and domestic cyber threats. This bill provides the research tools to do that, without imposing costly or burdensome mandates on States.

I appreciate Chairwoman Johnson and her staff for working with us to produce a good bipartisan bill. I urge my colleagues to support it

Finally, we will consider H.R. 4979, the Rural STEM Education Act, a bill I have introduced with Representative McAdams, Chairwoman Johnson and Representative Baird. I'll speak more on the bill when we take it up in a few minutes.

I once again want to thank Chairwoman Johnson for holding today's markup of these three bipartisan bills, and I yield back.