



COMMITTEE ON

SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY

REPUBLICANS

Frank Lucas, Ranking Member

Ranking Member Frank Lucas Opening Statement Full Committee Organizational Meeting February 18, 2021

Thank you, Chairwoman Johnson. It's a privilege to once again serve as the Ranking Member of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee.

Last Congress, we were able to accomplish some truly incredible things. The bipartisan legislation we got signed into law helped to improve STEM education, forecast space weather, protect research from foreign theft, and modernize our energy policy with the first comprehensive update in more than a decade.

That's a testament to the value of working together on our shared priorities. I see many more opportunities for us to continue doing so in the 117th Congress.

Investing in American science and technology has never been more important than it is right now.

We're continuing to fight a global pandemic that has caused untold grief and economic devastation, and our research and development is under attack by foreign adversaries like the Chinese Communist party.

These are grave challenges, but I'm optimistic not just that we'll rise to meet them, but that we'll continue to thrive as the world's leader in scientific and technological progress.

I'm excited to get to work this Congress. I believe one of our first tasks should be investing in our research industry to restart all the work that has been disrupted by COVID. We first identified this as a critical issue last June, so I'm disappointed that none of the COVID relief packages have included support for American research.

I'd also like to continue our work to strengthen STEM education and build a strong and diverse STEM workforce. Chairwoman Johnson, I appreciate that we share this priority and that our

first two bills this Congress were bipartisan STEM bills: the Rural STEM Education Research Act and the STEM Opportunities Act.

Another important priority will be maintaining our leadership in space exploration. As we watch what will hopefully be a safe landing for the Mars Perseverance Rover this afternoon, we're reminded of the tremendous things our space program can accomplish. Returning humans to the Moon and sending astronauts to Mars will require us to provide steadfast and consistent support for our missions. I'm looking forward to working on that and continuing to encourage a thriving commercial space sector.

I also strongly believe that we need to make a robust investment in the single biggest driver of scientific progress in America: basic research. I will once again be introducing the Securing American Leadership in Science and Technology Act this Congress, which will double funding for basic research and invest in the infrastructure needed to maintain world class scientific facilities.

This investment is critical to meeting a number of priorities, like keeping America at the forefront of technological progress, developing industries of the future like AI and quantum information sciences, and producing cleaner, more affordable energy.

I'm eager to get started on this important work, and I'm looking forward to working with all of you to support American science.

I yield back, madam Chair.