



COMMITTEE ON

SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

REPUBLICANS Frank Lucas, Ranking Member

Opening Statement of Ranking Member Frank Lucas

Full Committee Markup of H.R. 4609, H.R. 3858, H.R. 4588, H.R. 4606, H.R. 4599

July 27, 2021

Thank you, Chairwoman Johnson, for holding today's markup. The bills we're considering today are a continuation of the important and bipartisan work we've been doing on American scientific competitiveness.

Last month, the House overwhelmingly passed our legislation to redouble our investment in the National Science Foundation and the Department of Energy Office of Science. These bills are the cornerstones of our blueprint to build up America's research and technology enterprise. Today we're filling out that blueprint with the rest of the elements needed to shore up our nation's technological success. First among those is reauthorizing the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).

NIST is the most important government agency that most Americans have never heard of. As "industry's laboratory," NIST's work to promote U.S. innovation supports roughly half of our gross domestic product. NIST gives businesses the measurement science, standards, and guidance they need to produce exceptional products that can be globally competitive.

The NIST for the Future Act invests in the emerging technologies needed to drive progress, including cybersecurity, quantum sciences, artificial intelligence, and advanced manufacturing. It also prioritizes scientific and technical research services, expands our support for American manufacturers, and upgrades outdated NIST facilities. Finally, it prioritizes our participation and leadership in international standards-setting bodies. As new technologies grow and spread, it's critical that we are able to influence the standards and specifications that guide their development. This investment in NIST will go far to support American competitiveness and expand the resources available to American businesses. I want to thank Chairwoman Johnson, Chairwoman Stevens, and Ranking Member Waltz for working with me on this important bill.

Next up we'll consider the National Science and Technology Strategy Act led by Ranking Member Waltz. This bill creates a strategic, whole-of-government approach to research and development, ensuring better coordination between federal agencies and a more strategic plan for achieving U.S. research and development goals. Additionally,

the bill requires the President to submit an annual report to Congress on national research priorities and activities, as well as global trends in science and technology, including potential threats to U.S. scientific leadership. A comprehensive, strategic approach to American research and development is more important now than ever, especially as we pass legislation to increase our investments in our federal scientific enterprise. This bill ensures we are regularly reviewing and updating our research priorities so we're maximizing taxpayer dollars and investing in the most critical areas for technological advancement.

Following that, we'll debate H.R. 4588, the Regional Innovation Act. This bill establishes innovation hubs across the country, ensuring technological development isn't limited solely to the coasts. I talk a lot about the value of taking advantage of talent across America and giving diverse communities a chance to contribute to important scientific work. This bill guarantees that as we build out our technical capacity, we are driving innovation in geographically diverse areas, with at least one-third of the newly created regional innovation hubs in rural or under-served areas.

Next up is H.R. 4606, the Energizing Technology Transfer Act. This legislation is an important complement to the DOE Science for the Future Act because it helps turn the discoveries we make from basic research into useful technologies that the private sector can commercialize.

Finally, we'll consider H.R. 4599, the Steel Upgrading Partnerships and Emissions Reduction Act, or the SUPER Act for short. This bill, from Representatives Anthony Gonzalez and Conor Lamb, will support R&D into clean steel production and use. This will help reduce carbon emissions while supporting American manufacturing and production.

Together, these five bills address key components of American competitiveness. They were all developed with extensive stakeholder input through a bipartisan process, and they're all intended to catalyze our scientific growth.

The threat we face from China is real and growing every day. It threatens American jobs, cybersecurity, and national security. But our plan to ensure our competitiveness is not about top-down planning, like the Chinese Community Party. It's about coordinating our own strengths - bringing together all federal agencies, and all sectors of the U.S. innovation economy together to coordinate and ensure the oxen are pulling the cart in the same direction. The bills we are considering today, along with the NSF for the Future Act and DOE Science for the Future Act, represent a thoughtful vision for American science and technology development that is strategic, comprehensive, and – importantly – workable.

I'm very proud of the work this Committee and our staff have done. I'd like to thank all of my colleagues – particularly Chairwoman Johnson – for the work that went into these

bills. I'm eager to mark them up today and pass them out of Committee. I believe we have a strong starting point for a comprehensive legislative package on American competitiveness, and I look forward to finalizing our policies into law.