



Opening Statement of Chairman Frank Lucas

Full Committee Hearing

An Overview of the National Science Foundation Budget Proposal for Fiscal Year 2024

April 26, 2023

Good morning. Today's hearing focuses on the National Science Foundation's budget proposal for fiscal year 2024. I'd like to thank Dr. Panchanathan and Dr. Reed for taking the time to participate. I'm looking forward to hearing your testimony and thoughts on how the National Science Foundation can best support America's scientific progress.

Thanks in part to NSF's work, America has long led the world in science and technology innovation. To maintain that leadership, we have to adapt to a changing reality. As we're all aware, the pace of innovation is accelerating, global competition has increased, and the United States risks losing its edge.

We face a particularly challenging threat from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which is aggressively pursuing technological supremacy through foreign acquisitions, forced technology transfers, and frequently, cyber espionage.

Beyond the threats from our adversaries, we are also facing a technological revolution. Advances in artificial intelligences, quantum technology, and biotechnology are going to change the way we live and work, how we grow food and treat diseases, and even how we defend ourselves against foreign threats.

I strongly believe that the nation that leads in science and technology will shape the world order for the next century. I'd like that nation to be ours, and I'd like for emerging technologies to be developed with our values of transparency and fairness.

The CHIPS and Science Act authorized critical investments and modernizations at the NSF to tackle the challenges of reinvigorating American innovation and leadership in science and technology.

It doubles down on NSF's world-leading basic research, while also enhancing NSF's ability to move research from lab to market through the establishment of the Technology, Innovation and Partnership Directorate (TIP).

The new TIP Directorate aims to take fundamental research funded by NSF and help apply those discoveries to solving national challenges from artificial intelligence to climate change.

The TIP Directorate will also foster strategic partnerships with industry, including small businesses and startups, to cultivate innovation ecosystems that will enhance America's long-term competitiveness.

Another goal of CHIPS and Science was to improve the geographic diversity of our scientific workforce and ensure all Americans have opportunities to participate and excel in STEM education and employment.

CHIPS and Science authorized a number of activities to ensure that investments aren't just happening in places like San Francisco and Boston, but also in places like Stillwater, Oklahoma. We're ensuring funding isn't just going to a handful of universities, but also to land-grant institutions like Oklahoma State and Historically Black Colleges and Universities like Langston University.

I look forward to hearing about how NSF is working to improve geographic diversity in STEM through various programs and initiatives like the Regional Innovation Engines and the missing millions.

These investments also have the potential to inspire the next generation of researchers and scientists. And those individuals will be the key to maintaining American leadership for decades to come.

In addition to expanding the geography of our research infrastructure, we also need cutting-edge facilities for our federal scientists and researchers from academia and industry to conduct big science—research that can't be done in individual labs and requires massive equipment that industry cannot provide.

So I'm looking forward to hearing more about those investments today.

Any discussion of NSF's work right now must include a significant focus on research security.

Research theft and malign foreign influence are explicit strategies within the CCP's plan to become the global leader in science and innovation.

This Committee has carefully worked with federal research and national security agencies, as well as universities and other stakeholders, to identify and provide the resources, authority, and tools needed to identify and address malign foreign influence and research theft.

We have worked to strike the correct balance between keeping our research enterprise open, but also protecting it from adversaries who seek to take advantage of our open system.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today about how the Foundation is utilizing these authorities and tools to address the challenges of research security and protect America's intellectual property.

As we look at the President's budget request for the Foundation, we in Congress have the responsibility to ensure that it offers a sustainable path forward for the U.S. research enterprise.

I have concerns that the use of supplemental funds last Congress may create a situation of feast and famine for our research enterprise. We must do everything we can to avoid this.

Innovation thrives on stable and predictable funding, and our nation's students, scientists, and research institutions depend upon it.

Again, I thank our witnesses for being here today, and I look forward to your testimony.

I now recognize the Ranking Member for her opening statement.