



## **Opening Statement of Chairman Frank Lucas**

Full Committee Hearing

*Examining Federal Science Agency Actions to Secure the U.S. Science and Technology Enterprise*

February 15, 2024

---

Thank you for joining us at this hearing on research security and protecting our taxpayer investments.

Research theft is one of the single greatest threats to our competitiveness as a nation. It takes our hard-won innovation and puts it to work for our adversaries, hurting our economy and our ability to stay at the leading edge of discovery.

This is no idle threat either. China has been explicit about their efforts to steal the results of our research to further their own technological progress.

The Chinese Communist Party has made it clear that they intend to surpass us as the global leader in science and technology, and they have no qualms about using intellectual property theft, forced technology acquisition, and other illicit means to do so.

That's why this Committee has been proactive in our response to this threat and has passed multiple bills to protect American research.

In the 2020 NDAA we passed the Securing American Science and Technology Act, which established an interagency committee within the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy to coordinate research security across the federal government.

That same year, the Trump Administration released National Security Presidential Memorandum-33 to direct a national response to protect our research and technology.

In 2021 we went even further and began requiring all federal R&D funding applicants to disclose all of their sources of support, ensuring there are consistent conflict of interest policies across agencies.

And in 2022 we passed several research security protections as part of the CHIPS and Science Act to halt the theft of U.S. innovation.

We banned participation in malign foreign talent programs designed to recruit researchers to work for our adversaries.

We also required plans to protect sensitive basic research and created an Office of Research Security and Policy at NSF.

Taken together, these measures provide a strong framework for research security. But to be of any use in protecting our investments, the Administration needs to actually execute this framework.

Four years ago we directed OSTP to coordinate and harmonize research security across the federal government. In that time, some progress was made. And while I am pleased that this hearing sparked the release of three different policy guidance memos yesterday, congressional deadlines were missed and there is work still to be done.

The government needs to have timely, clear, and uniform guidance on this issue for our agencies and for our researchers.

It's unacceptable that we don't have that. We've heard from agencies and stakeholders saying they are having trouble implementing their own research security guidelines because there are no government-wide standards yet.

I would like to request Unanimous Consent to enter into the record this statement from the Association of American Universities, as well as a letter sent by AAU's President, Barbara Snyder, to Dr. Prabhakar earlier this week.

This letter states that, "since the June 2023 comment deadline, OSTP has not released final requirements or an update to the research community on the status of finalizing" the requirements for research security programs.

It goes on to emphasize the importance of harmonizing these requirements across the federal government and encourages OSTP to finalize the requirements as soon as possible.

So today I expect to hear more about this work and I'm hoping to get answers on why we aren't further along in this process.

I understand that this is a complicated endeavor. America's strength in science and technology has been driven by our unique research ecosystem, which combines federal, academic, and private R&D efforts.

For that system to work, we need a degree of open science that facilitates collaboration and transparency.

I also want to be clear; we are not here to target researchers based on their race but based on the actions they have taken. Our goal is to ensure that all federally funded scientists follow the U.S. principles of scientific fairness and integrity.

The U.S. has benefitted greatly from international scientific collaboration and the contributions of foreign-born scientists.

I want the U.S. to remain a desirable place for brilliant minds to come and share their ideas.

That's what makes us different than China. We celebrate freedom of thought. And when possible, we share information in good faith so that we can maximize innovation.

Our challenge is preserving this culture of transparency and openness – particularly when it comes to basic research – while protecting the sensitive information that could benefit our adversaries.

I believe that we are up to this challenge. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today on how we can continue to keep America's R&D strong and productive.