



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY

Opening Statement

Ranking Member Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)

Full Committee Hearing:

“Unleashing the Golden Age of Science: Examining the Priorities of the FY2027 Research and Technology Enterprise”

July 22, 2026

Thank you Mr. Chairman, and good morning Mr. Kratsios. This topic of this hearing is “Unleashing the Golden Age of Science.” That title is stunningly ironic, as this Administration is systematically destroying U.S. science, while our allies and adversaries alike look on astonished. So let me propose an alternative title: “Unleashing the Golden Age of Science in the People’s Republic of China” – because this Administration’s actions only serve to strengthen the hand of China while decimating the U.S. research enterprise.

As reported earlier this month by the Association of American Universities, major research universities across the nation accepted 15% fewer applicants to PhD programs for fall 2026 compared to fall 2025. This is on top of decreases recorded in fall 2025 admissions. These decreases were not just in fields disfavored by this administration- they were across the board in STEM fields.

International students have long been a lynchpin of U.S. leadership in science and technology, so none of us should be celebrating their 17% reduction in PhD admissions at U.S. universities. However, even more shocking given Administration rhetoric, is the fact that PhD admissions for U.S. students also dropped by 13%. So much for America First. We are destroying the seed corn for the future of U.S. science and technology. Meanwhile, China is not only doubling down on their scientific investments, they are also actively recruiting researchers away from the U.S.

Big new initiatives and promises mean nothing when agencies act capriciously – canceling grants mid-way, delaying awards for months even after they have been selected through the rigorous merit-review process, and blacklisting educational and research institutions at will. And if anyone has any doubt as to intent, just look at the proposed OMB rule effectively codifying all of these terrible practices.

Mr. Kratsios, you are the face of this Administration’s science and technology agenda. You appear to have a direct role in some of what’s been happening, but you are accountable for the entirety of it. I will focus on just a couple of egregious actions.

First, you may claim to be free-market conservatives, but you're acting like a bunch of communists. Communists have the government own the means of production. You are bullying American companies into handing over equity stakes in exchange for Federal funding. There is zero transparency to the public, or even to Congress, on how you intend to dispose of those shares, on what timeline, and where any profits will go. We are left to our imagination.

Given the widespread corruption of the last 18 months, what I imagine is this Administration once again disadvantaging the American taxpayer for the benefit of the President's friends.

Next, I want to focus on the National Science Foundation, the crown jewel of our government's support for discovery science across all fields of science and engineering. The President requested a \$3 billion cut to NSF in both FY 25 and FY 26. Congress said "heck no" and funded the agency close to the FY 24 level. Yet, money is not getting out the door. There are now multiple credible reports of the Administration "taxing" up to 30% of funds for each of NSF's research directorates, to apparently create some kind of slush fund for Administration priorities. I want to be clear: this would be in direct contravention of the funding law that Congress passed in January, and is entirely illegal.

Mr. Kratsios, you have a background in venture capital. I come from Silicon Valley myself, with a deep appreciation for the ways in which VC has accelerated innovation. But government is not VC. There is no Silicon Valley without fundamental research - the kind government funds - the kind that wins Nobel prizes. But you appear to be imposing the VC model on government. It is a dangerous game to play - one that is already hollowing out our fundamental research base and our talent pipeline.

From the targeting of major universities, to the suppression of inconvenient federal science, to the slandering of diversity in our research enterprise - all of it has helped to throw American science into crisis. Mr. Kratsios, I hope that you are prepared to give serious answers to serious questions about the actions being taken by this Administration and by OSTP specifically under your watch. I yield back.