

**Statement of Science Committee Chairman Lamar Smith  
Hearing on “An Overview of the National Science Foundation  
Budget for Fiscal Year 2014”**

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Thank you , Mr. Chairman. And I want to follow up on your good opening statement in regard to the National Science Foundation (NSF) funding.

We are now in a situation where we must maximize every dollar being spent by every federal agency.

Our focus should be on how the federal government, including the National Science Foundation, can maximize the returns from taxpayer-funded research.

How can the NSF better prioritize which areas of science and engineering it supports?

The NSF has great potential to help American science flourish and thus contribute to our economy and the well-being of our country.

But in my view, the NSF has funded several studies that should not have been approved. However, I do not think that we should pick winners and losers by micromanaging grant decisions at the NSF.

It is the responsibility of the professionals at the NSF to exercise their best judgment and ensure that only proposals that benefit the taxpayer get funded.

It is Congress' job to ensure accountability and transparency for the American taxpayer. How do we avoid micromanaging but achieve accountability at the National Science Foundation?

And how do we ensure an environment where the creativity and the determination of our very best scientists is encouraged?

Mr. Chairman let me stop there but say that I hope that our witnesses will be able to address some of these questions.

They are not easy and it requires, I think, a common understanding and appreciation for what the National Science Foundation does. But also recognition that we may be able to improve the process whereby the NSF grants are approved. And I yield back.