

**Opening Statement**  
**Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)**  
**Ranking Member**  
**House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology**  
*Improving Technology Transfer at Universities, Research Institutes and  
National Laboratories*  
**July 24, 2013**

Thank you Mr. Chairman for calling this hearing today on the draft legislation, *Innovative Approaches to Technology Transfer Act of 2013*. I am glad that this subcommittee is taking a serious look at the issue of facilitating the creation of successful, profitable, and sustainable small businesses from the discoveries of our research and development enterprise.

The topic today is so critical to our nation's economic and national security. As we continue our efforts to keep our economy on the path to recovery, it is more important than ever that we recommit ourselves to innovation in the United States.

As the President remarked two years ago in his State of the Union address, “we need to out-innovate, out-educate, and out-build the rest of the world.”

Our universities and federal labs are the foundation that America's future will be built on. We have world class scientists and engineers engaged in cutting-edge research that can change the world. We must examine how to translate and transition this research out of the lab and into the marketplace.

Our innovation model has been the gold standard for many years, and nations around the world have been adopting it.

However, we are all very aware that our competitors are multiplying their investments in not only R&D and STEM education, but also in commercialization activities. The United States cannot afford to be left behind. The ideas from our researchers and entrepreneurs with the most commercial potential deserve our best efforts.

In contemplating the next steps for advancing technology transfer, our ultimate goal is to promote the creation of innovation ecosystems that sustain long-term and mutually beneficial collaborations.

Many of today's most beneficial technologies did not emerge out of a straight-line process, but rather they involved the interactions of a network of various public and private sector elements.

While we understand that university culture and business culture are separate and unique entities, we need to learn more about innovative approaches and collaborations that can accelerate technology transfer of federally funded research.

I believe there is not a clear and distinct line in the innovation process at which the public role ends and the private role begins.

The next development or discovery is built on a shifting platform where the lines between research, development, and a final product in the marketplace are blurred.

This feedback is critical and cannot continue without consistent support for the people and the institutions that make up the innovation ecosystem.

The federal government has a great stake in the nation getting a return on the investments we make, and we need to know what we can do that would be helpful to the academic community and start-ups in improving technology transfer. The draft legislation we are considering this afternoon has the potential to improve technology transfer, and I hope that the final version can reflect good ideas from both sides of the aisle.

I'd like to add my thanks to the witnesses for being here today and for providing us with their recommendations on how to make the bill better.

I am looking forward working with my colleagues to move legislation that addresses this important issue.

Thank you Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.