



COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY
Lamar Smith, Chairman

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Statement of Research and Technology Subcommittee Chairwoman Barbara Comstock (R-Va.)

Academic Research Regulatory Relief: A Review of New Recommendations

Chairwoman Comstock: How can we cut the red tape to optimize our nation's investment in scientific research? That is the question we aim to answer in today's hearing.

Since becoming chair of the Subcommittee on Research and Technology, I have heard concern from many scientists and university leaders that too much time and money is being spent complying with federal rules, regulations and other administrative work, thereby taking away from research and education. Surveys have shown that, on average, researchers spend 42 percent of their time meeting administrative requirements.

Last year, I introduced the Research and Development Efficiency Act, a bill to establish a working group under the National Science and Technology Council to review federal regulations and make recommendations on how to streamline and minimize the regulatory burden on research institutions. That bill overwhelmingly passed this Committee and the House in May of last year.

Since that time, work has continued by the National Academy of Sciences and the Government Accountability Office to study and report on solutions for fixing the patchwork of rules and regulations that govern federally funded research.

In June, the National Academy of Sciences issued its final report: "Optimizing the Nation's Investment in Academic Research: A New Regulatory Framework for the 21st Century." The report includes four major findings and dozens of recommendations for updating and reforming regulations. We are grateful to have Dr. Larry Faulkner here, the chair of the committee that authored the report, who will testify on those recommendations.

Also in June, the Government Accountability Office released a report, "Federal Research Grants: Opportunities Remain for Agencies to Streamline Administrative Requirements."

That report makes three major recommendations, which we'll hear more about from Mr. John Neumann, who led the study team.

We are also fortunate to have two university leaders with us today, to talk about the impacts of regulations on their institutions, and share their expertise. Dr. Angel Cabrera, President of George Mason University, leads not only one of the fastest growing research institutions in the country, but one that happens to be partially in my district (and my daughter's alma mater for her master's degree, I might add).

I look forward to hearing from all of our witnesses about what actions Congress and agencies can take to provide regulatory relief to the research community, ensuring that more of our federal research dollars are spent on scientific breakthroughs and developing a STEM-trained workforce.

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