



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

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**Statement by Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)**  
*A Review of Sexual Harassment and Misconduct in Science*

**Chairman Smith:** Although federal law prohibits gender discrimination, including sexual harassment, a disturbing number of cases of inappropriate behavior and harassment of women in science occupations and studies have come to light recently.

There must be fair, timely and consistent procedures for investigating and adjudicating allegations of harassment.

Unfortunately, we will hear this morning that such procedures are not always in place and are not uniformly administered. These inconsistencies create an environment where harassment and discrimination goes unchallenged in classrooms, labs and workplaces.

Individuals affected by such misconduct can suffer long-term harm to their education and careers, as well as to their mental and physical well-being.

There are broader implications, as well. Engaging more girls in STEM studies and more young women in STEM careers is essential to meeting the global competitive challenges in science and technology.

Despite representing one-half of college graduates and one-half of the total U.S. workforce, women account for less than 25 percent of America's STEM workforce.

In the last few months, the committee and the full House approved several bipartisan bills aimed at boosting interest in STEM subjects and opportunities among our military veterans and among women and other under-represented groups.

But efforts to boost STEM opportunities for women and girls might be greatly hampered if there is a culture in science that does not respect and support them.

It is the responsibility of the science community, universities and federal science agencies to ensure there is a fair, functioning process under the law in place for harassment complaints and resolutions. It is their responsibility to take steps to ensure that classrooms, laboratories and workplaces are safe.

No taxpayer dollars should be awarded to a university researcher who engages in harassment and inappropriate behavior toward a colleague or a student under their

charge. Regardless of the merits of a particular research project, all scientific research is undermined if misconduct is allowed to go unchallenged.

And if there is a finding of research or workplace misconduct by a federally funded researcher, that information should be made public so that every research institution, federal agency and student is aware of the finding.

Last month Ranking Member Johnson and I requested that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) conduct a full study of federal grant-making agencies' compliance with relevant laws and policies for harassment, how agencies share relevant information, and identification of recommendations for better enforcement.

I look forward to that report in addition to the recommendations from today's witnesses.

I thank Chairwoman Comstock for holding this important hearing.

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