



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

## Opening Statement

**Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)**

Subcommittee on Research and Technology Hearing:

*A Review of the National Institute of Standards and Technology Fiscal Year 2020 Budget  
Request*

April 9, 2019

Good morning, and I welcome Dr. Copan before this Committee for the first time. In today's hearing we will review the Administration's fiscal year 2020 budget request for the National Institute of Standards and Technology. In short, it's a myopic and harmful request given NIST's critical role in our nation's economic competitiveness and national security. Once again, this Administration is proposing steep cuts to NIST's important work across nearly the entire portfolio of the agency, from its basic measurement science to its industrial partnerships.

The consequences of the 35-day partial government shutdown that closed NIST's doors this past winter may be instructive if this budget proposal is enacted.

The shutdown of NIST's neutron research facility, according to NIST's own briefing materials, had repercussions on important industrial research and delayed the PhD work of many graduate students who represent our future capacity to lead and innovate. Yet this budget proposes to shut down two of the facility's instruments and reduce maintenance funding, ensuring that the entire facility will have more frequent shutdowns.

The shutdown resulted in lost opportunities and delays in research critical to U.S. competitiveness, including research in advanced computing and communications. Yet this budget proposes to eliminate programs addressing multiple information technology and data challenges.

The shutdown resulted in NIST's inability to participate in and contribute to important international dialogues addressing emerging technology issues that will shape the future economy, such as cybersecurity, internet of things, and digital connectivity. Yet this budget proposes to lay off 17 percent of NIST's scientists and engineers, the very U.S. experts who are needed to participate in these international discussions.

Those are just three examples out of many. It should be puzzling to all of us that the Administration can be so devoted to "cut, cut, cut" that they don't stop to think about the consequences of the cuts, even when the evidence is laid bare before them.

NIST gets much less recognition and support than it deserves, among both the general public and the political leadership in Washington. While this hearing is to examine the troubling

consequences of the 2020 budget request, it is also an opportunity to bring positive attention to NIST's mission and the critical work of NIST's dedicated scientists and engineers.

I thank Dr. Copan for being here this morning and I look forward to the discussion.