

Opening Statement of Ranking Member Frank Lucas at R&T Subcommittee Hearing on FY20 NSF Budget

May 8, 2019

Opening Statement

Thank you, Chairwoman Stevens and Ranking Member Baird for holding this hearing to review the National Science Foundation's priorities for Fiscal Year 2020.

Since its creation in 1950, the National Science Foundation (NSF) has played a critical role in advancing science for America's national defense and economic security.

Basic research supported by NSF forms the foundation of discoveries that fuel private sector development. It also provides a training ground for our nation's scientists, engineers, and other STEM workers.

We have heard concerns about some of the proposed cuts included in the Administration's request. I would remind my colleagues that the President's budget request is just a starting point for our discussions.

We're here today to learn more about how best to prioritize NSF's resources. It is also important to note that in recent years Congress has decided to fund NSF at a higher rate than the president's budget request.

I believe the federal government has a responsibility to prioritize basic research and development.

This Committee has demonstrated a long history of bipartisan support for the work of the National Science Foundation.

As the Ranking Member I am committed to working with Chairwoman Johnson and the appropriators to continue that support.

However, as I said at a hearing earlier this year on American Competitiveness in Science and Technology, we need to collectively do a better job of explaining why science matters to all Americans.

NSF has a great story to tell. NSF funded research is helping address some of our nation's most critical needs – from treating opioid addiction to bringing high-speed broadband to rural areas across the country.

In my home state of Oklahoma, NSF invests \$25 million a year in research and STEM education. NSF is working with the University of Oklahoma on improving forecasting of supercell thunderstorms. At Oklahoma State, NSF is funding a program to give scientists the skills to be entrepreneurs and start new small businesses.

At townhalls throughout my district in Oklahoma, I talk to my constituents not just about the work NSF and our other science agencies are doing, but—more importantly—why it matters to them. I'm sure my colleagues here do the same.

And the NSF can do even more to help create a culture that both values and prioritizes R&D.

I look forward to working with the leadership of the National Science Foundation and the National Science Board to meet this challenge and ensure America continues to lead in technological advancement.

Thank you to our witnesses Dr. Cordova and Dr. Souvaine for your leadership and for being here today to testify.