



Ranking Member Jim Baird
Research and Technology Subcommittee
Joint Subcommittee Hearing: “Scientific Integrity in Federal Agencies
July 17, 2019

Thank you, Chairwoman Stevens and Chairwoman Sherril for holding today’s hearing.

In science, carrying out our work with integrity is a bedrock principle.

To quote a National Academies report on the responsible conduct of research: “The public will support science only if it can trust the scientists and institutions that conduct research.”

We must have rigorous policies on scientific integrity, research misconduct, conflict of interest, and data transparency. This instills public trust and confidence in taxpayer-funded research.

Furthermore, all of us in this room agree in the fundamental right of scientists to be able to conduct, publish and speak freely on the findings of their research. It goes to the heart of who we are as Americans and the rights enshrined in the Bill of Rights.

Federal agencies have policies and procedures in place to protect these rights. I look forward to hearing from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) about the results of their study on federal science integrity policies, and their recommendations for improvements.

But I think some conflate the findings of scientific research with public policy decisions.

I’ve done research. As a scientist, I was trained to look at the raw data, analyze it, and leave out my biases.

Science is science. But politics, as all of us on this side of the dais know, is more complicated. Two people may look at the same scientific data and relevant information and come to two totally different policy conclusions.

There is nothing inherently dishonest about that. In politics we have disagreements. We discuss, we debate, we negotiate, we vote, and in the end, the voters decide whose policies they want to support at the ballot box.

I hope today's hearing will be a constructive discussion.

It would be a disservice to the scientists who work in our federal agencies to play politics with the issue of scientific integrity.

You may disagree with the politics of the current Administration, but let's stick with the facts of what is happening with science at our federal agencies, not rumor and exaggeration.

I am very concerned about the process that led up to this hearing, which Mr. Norman will address further in his opening statement.

The Research & Technology Subcommittee has had a good track record of bipartisan work promoting American leadership in science and innovation. I hope and believe that will continue.

Thank you to our witnesses for being here today. I yield back.

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