COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY
REPUBLICANS Frank Lucas, Ranking Member

Opening Statement of Subcommittee on Research and Technology Ranking Member Michael Waltz

Subcommittee on Research and Technology Hearing on "National Science Foundation: Advancing Research for the Future of U.S. Innovation"

April 28, 2021

Thank you, Chairwoman Stevens, for holding today's hearing, our first for this subcommittee in the 117th Congress. I'd also like to thank Dr. Panchanathan and Dr. Ochoa for taking the time to participate. I'm looking forward to hearing your testimony and thoughts on where the future of the National Science Foundation is headed.

Since its creation in 1950, the National Science Foundation (NSF) has served a unique role among Federal agencies, given its broad mission of "promoting the progress of science, to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare, and to secure the national defense." In bringing this mission to life, the NSF supports the basic research that fuels major technological innovations, including smartphones, GPS, and the internet, creates new research disciplines, and supports and trains generations of scientists and engineers

Investments in science and technology drive economic growth – numerous studies have concluded that as much as 85 percent of the long-term growth in America's economy is attributed to advancements in science and technology. For decades, America has led the world in science and technology innovation, but as the pace of innovation is accelerating, global competition has also increased, and the United States is losing its edge. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) poses an especially formidable and growing strategic challenge.

Today, the United States is at an inflection point and it is critical for the U.S. to make strategic investments to build up our R&D enterprise. There is momentum on both sides of the aisle to make these investments, but it must be done in a realistic and sustained way.

I am proud to be an original co-sponsor of the "NSF For the Future Act," with Chairwoman Johnson, Ranking Member Lucas and Chairwoman Stevens. This bill increases funding for fundamental research and improves STEM education and

research training. It creates a new directorate to move the Foundation forward, enabling the NSF to explore new approaches to accelerating science and technology into solutions to major challenges. Most importantly, it does not detract from the agency's core mission of advancing basic scientific knowledge.

While making these investments, we must also secure taxpayer funded research and technologies from adversaries like the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). While the "NSF For the Future Act" includes some provisions to increase research security, I look forward to working with Chairwoman Stevens and Johnson to build upon these provisions to improve best practices and provide tougher safeguards to prevent research theft and foreign influence . Our federal agencies, like the NSF, also need the tools and authority to reject grant applications with known participants in malign foreign talent recruitment programs.

In addition to my work on this distinguished committee, I serve on the Armed Services Committee and regularly receive intelligence on the Chinese Communist Party and how they are leapfrogging the United States technologically and militarily by intellectual property theft. We cannot allow the CCP to advance its authoritarianism with American taxpayer funded research. I am encouraged that Democrats on both committees share these concerns and an interest in addressing undue foreign influence, as illustrated in the April 9 letter from Chairs Johnson, Smith, Stevens and Langevin to President Biden.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses on how the Foundation is addressing the challenges of research security and how we can build upon Congress's previous efforts to safeguard America's intellectual property and confront the CCP's wholesale theft from our research institutions.

As we make these investments, we should also ensure we avoid duplicating the R&D activities of other Federal agencies. As part of the President's recent $2.3 trillion infrastructure proposal, more than $200 billion is tagged for research and development-focused activities, without any clear directive for how these funds will be used or coordinated.

The President is messaging this as the way compete with China, but I would argue that we will not beat China by copying its strategy. Strategic investments in technologies are important but creating a one-time slush fund may do more harm than good. Instead, we should look at proposals like the "Securing American Leadership in Science and Technology Act," which creates a national S&T strategy and doubles funding for basic research across federal science agencies over ten years.

Or, the "NSF For the Future Act." While not a whole-of-government approach, this bill has been thoughtfully developed to protect NSF's core mission and more than doubles the amount of research it will support over 5 years. Both proposals include long-term planning that make investments in STEM workforce, world-class facilities, and the

research needed to develop state-of-the-art technologies. Through these investments, American research, American innovations, and the American workforce will continue to lead the world.

I look forward to working with Chairwoman Johnson, Ranking Member Lucas, and Chairwoman Stevens in moving the “NSF for the Future Act” through the Committee in a bipartisan process and to the House floor for consideration.

In addition, I look forward to working with the leadership of the National Science Foundation and the National Science Board to meet these challenges. Thank you again to Dr. Panchanathan and Dr. Ochoa for your leadership and for participating in this hearing today. I yield back the balance of my time.