



Opening Statement of Ranking Member Michael Waltz

Subcommittee on Research and Technology Hearing: “National Science Foundation: Advancing Research for the Future of U.S. Innovation Par II”

May 6, 2021

Thank you, Chairwoman Stevens, for holding today’s hearing, the second legislative hearing this subcommittee is having on the “NSF for the Future Act.” This hearing will provide an important opportunity to hear from a variety of stakeholders on how Congress can best leverage and expand the mission of the National Science Foundation to ensure we maintain our edge against rising global competition.

Over its 71 year history, the National Science Foundation (NSF) has played a vital role in advancing basic scientific knowledge across the spectrum of disciplines – from engineering to biology - and has become the gold-standard for basic research across the world. In that time, the NSF has funded 236 Nobel Prize winners.

NSF also plays a critical role in supporting America’s colleges and universities, accounting for approximately 25 percent of all federally-funded basic research. America’s universities have long been regarded as the best in the world, largely due to the support of the NSF.

I am grateful that today we will be hearing from a number of these institutions. I’m especially pleased to welcome Dr. Butler, President of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, which calls Florida’s 6th District home. Embry-Riddle leads the world in training premier aviation and aerospace talent. Through a partnership with the State of Florida, they are also engaging thousands of high school students by providing pre-college STEM education programming focused on aerospace applications.

As the Members of this Committee know, actively engaging students in grades PreK through 12 in STEM and connecting it to their community plays a critical role in sparking students’ interest in STEM. It greatly increases the likelihood they will pursue STEM majors in college. The 6th District and the state of Florida are lucky to have institutions like Embry-Riddle, who are working with their communities to train our next generation of STEM experts. An investment in research and STEM education is an investment in our future.

That's one reason why the "NSF For the Future Act," is so important, it increases funding for fundamental research and improves STEM education and research training. As we invest in STEM education programs with proven track records like Embry-Riddle's, NSF must be able to scale-up in a sustainable way. The NSF For the Future Act also creates a new directorate, accelerating solutions to major challenges.

While making these investments, we must focus on protecting taxpayer funded research and technologies from adversaries like the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). I look forward to strengthening safeguards throughout the legislative process to improve best practices and prevent research theft.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses on how they are addressing the challenges of research security and how we can build on previous successes to safeguard America's intellectual property and confront the CCP's wholesale theft.

With the CCP leapfrogging the United States technologically, we are at an inflection point and it is critical for the U.S. to scale 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 sustainable way. By investing in NSF and basic research, American technology, American innovations, and the American workforce will continue to lead the world. I look forward to working with Chairwoman and Ranking Member Lucas, to move the NSF for the Future Act through the Committee in a bipartisan process and to the House Floor for consideration.

I'd like to thank our witnesses for taking the time to join us today their share their expertise. I look forward to your testimonies.

And I yield back the balance of my time.