



COMMITTEE ON

SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

REPUBLICANS Frank Lucas, Ranking Member

Opening Statement of Ranking Member Frank Lucas

Research and Technology Subcommittee Markup of H.R. 2225, the National Science Foundation for the Future Act

May 13, 2021

I would like to start by thanking Chairwoman Johnson, Chairwoman Stevens, Ranking Member Waltz, and their staff, for working so diligently, thoughtfully and in a bipartisan manner on this important piece of legislation.

For the last year, our Committee has examined how we can grow and evolve the National Science Foundation to meet the challenges of the 21st Century, while preserving what makes NSF great. After many discussions with stakeholders and experts, I was proud to join Chairwoman Johnson, Chairwoman Stevens, and Ranking Member Waltz in introducing the NSF for the Future Act.

Our bill doubles down on basic research funding at NSF and preserves NSF's important mission of basic research and science education. The bill also takes steps to enhance NSF's role in moving research from lab to market, building upon work NSF has undertaken in recent years to accelerate commercialization. Our bill takes a comprehensive and strategic approach to reauthorizing NSF, including supporting a domestic STEM workforce and investing in research infrastructure.

There has been a lot of discussion about NSF establishing a new directorate. In the NSF for the Future Act, we put a great deal of care into crafting a new directorate that improves NSF's ability to advance fundamental research, without duplicating or seeking to replace the missions of other federal research agencies. Our proposed Directorate for Science and Engineering Solutions takes the basic research funded by NSF and helps apply those discoveries to solving national challenges from cybersecurity to climate change. We also propose a funding profile for the new directorate that is practical, sustainable, and in balance with the rest of the Foundation.

The NSF for the Future Act will help the United States retain its global leadership in science and technology. The basic research our government supports is foundational to our economic success and has allowed us to remain at the forefront of global science and technology innovation. Our bill doubles down on that recipe for success.

We face very real threats to our scientific leadership from the Chinese Communist Party, and we can't afford to fall behind. As I have said several times in this Committee, there is momentum on both sides of the aisle in the House and Senate for legislation to secure our global science and technology leadership. But it should be comprehensive, strategic, and sustainable.

The Biden-Harris Administration's budget, for example, proposes a \$50 billion fund for a top-down approach to developing technologies at the National Science Foundation. And the Senate is moving forward on a massive so-called China innovation package that is growing larger by the day, with every special interest priority you can imagine.

These proposals are not responsible or sustainable. America's continued scientific leadership requires a comprehensive and strategic approach to research and development that provides long-term increased investment and stability across the research ecosystem. It also requires inter-agency collaboration and public-private partnerships. And it must focus on evolving technologies that are crucial to our national and economic security, like semiconductors and quantum sciences.

I believe that the nation that leads in science and technology will shape the world order for the next century. I'd like that nation to be ours, and I'd like for emerging technologies to be developed with our values of transparency and fairness.

I believe that the only way to reach consensus and produce meaningful legislation is to engage in robust debate and dialogue, to proceed through regular legislative order, and to leave the partisan provisions for partisan measures. Today's Subcommittee markup demonstrates a commitment to that process from Chairwoman Johnson and the members of this Committee. I am pleased to see productive engagement by members of this Subcommittee on both sides of the aisle, with many thoughtful amendments being proposed today.

I will respectfully say that I hope the House and Senate leadership will give the Committees of jurisdiction the opportunity to pass thoughtful legislation that supports American innovation, addresses the generational threat of the Chinese Communist Party, and secures the future for our children and grandchildren.

I look forward to continuing to work with Chairwoman Johnson, Chairwoman Stevens, and Ranking Member Waltz to move this bill across the finish line.