



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY

Opening Statement

Chairwoman Haley Stevens (D-MI)
of the Subcommittee on Research and Technology

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

Thursday, May 13, 2021

Good morning and welcome to today’s markup of H.R. 2225, the *National Science Foundation for the Future Act*.

I want to start by thanking Chairwoman Johnson and Ranking Member Lucas for their leadership in developing this forward-looking legislation. Their commitment to bipartisan collaboration and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders has resulted in a carefully crafted bill that provides a much-needed infusion of funding and addresses needs across the agency’s portfolio.

We have a suite of ambitious proposals to consider in the *NSF for the Future Act* – from scaling up PreK-12 STEM education research innovations and modernizing undergraduate and graduate student training, to making research data more accessible, funding more research-enabling infrastructure, and expanding opportunities to participate in NSF-funded projects.

The bill also ensures the agency is equipped to combat efforts by malign actors to undermine the culture of openness, collaboration, and integrity that has long been the cornerstone of the U.S. academic research excellence. I know this is a particular focus for Ranking Member Waltz, and I look forward to continuing to partner with him on that front. Finally, the *NSF for the Future Act* empowers NSF to continue to evolve by ramping up support for use-inspired and translational research through the creation of a partnership-driven, solutions-oriented directorate.

It’s an exciting time to be a Member of the Science Committee and I am honored to be leading today’s markup. I am a proud cosponsor of the *NSF for the Future Act*, but I take the task before us very seriously. We must take our time and be thoughtful about the needs of the agency and of the American people. While I am excited about the prospect of unleashing the agency to do more of what it does best and to take on new challenges, I feel strongly that our top priority should be to do no harm.

The National Science Foundation plays a pivotal role in our research ecosystem. As the only Federal agency charged with supporting fundamental research across all scientific disciplines, we

cannot risk undermining or diminishing this function. Our capacity to innovate will dry up if we choke off the flow of fundamental research.

As Members of the Science Committee, we know all too well what is at stake and we are doing our due diligence. I have chaired two hearings to explore the challenges and opportunities for advancing NSF's mission through a comprehensive reauthorization bill. We heard from the NSF Director and Chair of the National Science Board that the agency is poised to take on an infusion of funding and an expansion of its mission to deliver benefits of research to the American people. We heard from stakeholders in academia and the private sector and innovation policy experts that the National Science Foundation is an essential asset that has been squeezed by flat budgets for far too long. But that increasing the budget is not enough. A new directorate charged with accelerating use-inspired research with a focus on expanding opportunities, forging new partnerships, and engagement with the public is needed to chart a course for the future of the agency. Chairwoman Johnson held a full committee hearing on innovation in which several of these same points were made by the expert witnesses.

This is the time. This is the time to double down on an agency that has delivered enormous benefits to society over seven decades of steadfast support for fundamental research. All of us have seen the fruits of that investment in our own lives. NSF funded research has spurred innovations and launched new industries that advance our prosperity and competitiveness and improve our quality of life. Countries around the world have taken notice and are investing aggressively to replicate our success by building their own research base. Let's continue to lead by example by restoring the National Science Foundation to its rightful place in our research enterprise while giving it space to evolve into the future.

I look forward to today's deliberation.