



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

Opening Statement

Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)

Joint Investigations & Oversight and
Research & Technology Subcommittee Hearing:
Balancing Open Science and Security in the U.S. Research Enterprise

Tuesday, October 5, 2021

Good morning.

There is an important conversation going on within the research enterprise about legitimate risks to U.S. research. Undue foreign influence compromises the integrity and security of taxpayer funded research. This Committee, on a bipartisan basis, has long been focused on how to mitigate these risks while preserving all that is best about our open research environment.

One significant risk often cited is to our economic competitiveness. If another country gets a head start on commercializing a U.S. research breakthrough, the American public loses out. In critical technology areas, such as quantum and biotechnology, economic competitiveness and national security concerns go hand-in-hand. We have good reason to be particularly concerned about China, because they do not share our values when it comes to use of technologies. We must prevent undue foreign influence in research if we are to keep our competitive edge and help maintain our national security. However, in addition to that, I believe that if we are to maintain our leadership we also need to invest in our own research enterprise.

While the United States is still in the lead, China has dramatically increased its investments in research.

China accounts for 32 percent of global growth in R&D since 2000, compared with 20 percent for the United States. We cannot continue down this path.

I am proud of this Committee's bipartisan work to advance forward-looking, bold reauthorization bills for our major science agencies. The House-passed set of innovation legislation and elements of the Senate's United States Innovation and Competition Act represent a once in a generation opportunity to rightsize our investment in R&D. I am committed to working with our colleagues in the Senate to get those bills enacted this year.

We must also continue our work to convince our colleagues outside of this Committee how crucial these investments are, so that real funding follows enactment of the authorization bills.

Any steps we take to strengthen our research security ultimately will be irrelevant if we do not also invest in our nation's own research enterprise.

I also want to raise the issue of unintended consequences of an overcorrection. We all support efforts to mitigate research security risks, but not at the expense of the Asian American and Asian immigrant science community. Our strength is our diversity, in society and in science. The value of foreign-born researchers to U.S. preeminence in science is undeniable. We will only help speed the advancement of China's research enterprise if we push away talented researchers and students with Asian heritage. I sincerely hope we do not look back 5 or 10 years from now with regret that we pushed away talent who wanted to help our country, not hurt it--and by pushing them away, only amplified the risk to our economic and national security. That is why, today, we invited an expert panel to address how we can achieve the balance that hopefully we all seek.

Thank you and I yield back.