



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

Opening Statement

Chairwoman Haley Stevens (D-MI)
of the Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight

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 and welcome to today's hearing. I want to thank our distinguished panel for joining us today.

Our global leadership in research and development has long been a point of national pride for the United States, and I am especially proud of Michigan's rich history of being a leader in groundbreaking scientific research.

We have built the world's most successful research enterprise based on the values of openness and transparency, which closely aligns with our democratic principles in the United States. Maintaining our nation's competitive edge in research depends on our commitment to equipping our greatest minds with the resources they need to continue to lead on the global stage. Our leadership also depends on our ability to identify, understand, and address emerging risks to the nation's research enterprise.

In recent years, concerns about the risks to the U.S. research enterprise from undue foreign influence have grown. Agencies have reached out to universities and research institutions across the country to raise awareness about this threat of foreign misconduct. Agencies have sounded the alarm that some foreign governments, most notably China, are carrying out a strategic and systematic campaign to undermine the integrity and security of U.S. research. The Chinese government has sought to boost its own research capabilities by exploiting America's openness to advance their own national interests. The Chinese government sponsors numerous talent recruitment programs seemingly designed for the benign purpose of recruiting top science talent. However, these programs often use coercive tactics that compel or incentivize U.S. researchers to be dishonest, commit grant fraud, or even steal intellectual property for the benefit of a foreign entity. It's written right into the contract terms.

As Chair of the Research and Technology Subcommittee, I am committed to ensuring that America's taxpayer-funded research is not stolen by competitors. I also share concerns raised by

my colleagues about the potential collateral harm done to scientists and students who have acted with integrity, and the harm done to our ability to continue to recruit talent from around the world.

These are not simple problems with simple solutions.

Even so, working in close partnership with the House Armed Services Committee, this Committee has led the development and enactment of bipartisan legislation to provide agencies, universities, and researchers with the resources and the support they need. I commend Chairwoman Johnson, Ranking Member Lucas, and Ranking Member Waltz for their leadership in building consensus on measured and targeted responses to the threat of research security.

In the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act, we enacted provisions to establish an interagency working group focused on identifying and raising awareness of research security risks and coordinating agency activities to address them. This working group, called the Joint Committee on Research Environments (JCORE), has been very active and recently released much needed guidance on best practices for universities and a new set of agency policies and requirements.

We also authorized a National Science, Technology and Security Roundtable at the National Academies to increase communication and collaboration between and among the government and universities.

In this year's NDAA, we followed-up with amendments to equip researchers with much needed training, prohibit participation in problematic foreign talent recruitment programs, and lay the groundwork for a government-wide risk assessment center.

I am proud of this Committee's work in this space, but this is a rapidly evolving issue, and our work is not done. I'm glad to have important thought leaders on this topic with us here today. We know that scientific creativity flourishes in a research ecosystem that encourages innovation and discovery. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses about how we can further improve our efforts to balance security with the openness that allows our research ecosystem to thrive.