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

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of the Subcommittee on Investigations & Oversight

Investigations & Oversight Subcommittee Hearing:

Assessing the Threat to U.S. Funded Research

March 5th, 2025

Thank you, Chairman McCormick – and congratulations on your Chairmanship of this Subcommittee. Also, thank you to our witnesses for appearing today. For years, this committee has led the way in promoting sensible and responsible research security policy.

America did not become the world leader in science because we cowered from our adversaries, we became the world leader because we created a welcoming research environment that set the standard of how global science is conducted. While we are proud of these values, we are also aware that adversarial governments, including the People's Republic of China, often take advantage of our system and exploit its openness. But our response should not be to let our opponents fundamentally change our American scientific culture, and in turn, make it difficult for our researchers to address our most pressing national challenges.

As a proud representative of Ohio's 13th District, I know what's at stake. Ohio's 13th is home to a Tech Hub that received $51 million in CHIPS & Science investment to leverage Akron's national leadership in polymer science. From sustainable tires to cutting-edge polymers, the next generation of rubber and plastics production will happen in my district. This opportunity was not created in a vacuum. It was made possible by fundamental researchers around the world working together on chemistry and engineering. Researchers at the University of Akron worked on these fundamental chemistry problems within a global science community. We have benefited from international partnerships, and we welcome the best minds from around the world to grow our national expertise.

Of course, we recognize that there are valid research security concerns, and this committee has worked in a bipartisan way to address these issues, including through the landmark CHIPS and Science Act. Among its many actions, CHIPS and Science authorized the National Science Foundation to maintain a Research Security Office that works closely with law enforcement and intelligence communities to address many of these concerns from a federal agency perspective.

This office, in conjunction with efforts from other SST agencies and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, has created research security training modules, created frameworks to assess grant proposals for national security risks, and issued common disclosure forms for use across grant-making agencies.

Since the Committee began looking at this issue in 2018, universities have also stepped up to the plate, examining their own research enterprise and identifying ways to make it more secure. MIT, for example, compiled a report in 2022 that investigates how our premier research institutions can promote research security while preserving open scientific research, open intellectual exchange, and the free flow of ideas and people.

I look forward to hearing about Dr. Zuber's experience co-chairing the National Academies roundtable, where academics, industry, law enforcement, and the intelligence community worked to come to a common understanding of research security threats and best practices. It is my hope that this Committee continues to be a productive place to hold these important conversations, particularly as we are witnessing attacks to the very core of our federal research enterprise.

Just as we must be clear-eyed about the threat posed by foreign adversaries, I hope that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle don't shy away from speaking out when our own government weakens U.S. standing on the international stage. If we do not maintain American leadership in science and technology, we will lose what is worth protecting in the first place.

Thank you, I yield back.