



Opening Statement of Chairman Brian Babin

Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee Hearing
The State of Scientific Publishing: Assessing Trends, Emerging Issues, and Policy Considerations
April 15, 2026

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing on this important topic.

Science is one of America's greatest engines of innovation, economic growth, and national security. The driving force of that engine is our ecosystem of scientific publishing—made up of journals, academic institutions, federal agencies, and the researchers themselves. This ecosystem is undergoing rapid transformation due to evolving funding models, artificial intelligence, and increasingly competitive academic incentives. While some of these changes benefit the production and dissemination of science, others threaten productivity, innovation, and public trust.

Earlier this year, this Committee sent letters to federal science agencies expressing concerns about the growth of paper mills and predatory journals. These entities exploit the pressure to “publish or perish,” which can flood the system with low-quality or even fraudulent research. When bad science gets published, it wastes taxpayer dollars, misleads policymakers, and can even put public health at risk.

But our agencies are not the only ones who must protect the scientific publishing ecosystem. Academic culture and institutions, and the publishers of scientific journals, also play major roles.

One issue is that the “publish or perish” culture prioritizes quantity over quality, creating opportunities for predatory journals and paper mills to profit while eroding scientific credibility.

Peer review, the cornerstone of scientific quality, is also under stress. Standards are inconsistent, transparency is limited, and conflicts of interest often go undisclosed. The result is research that may pass peer review but fails reproducibility tests or misguides subsequent studies.

Reproducibility and data transparency must also remain critical. Research findings are meaningful only if independent teams can verify them. Yet datasets are often inaccessible, replication studies are undervalued, and open-access policies are inconsistently enforced. A system that rewards transparency, reproducibility, and responsible data sharing strengthens public trust and ensures that science serves the American people.

Additionally, emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and machine learning can be powerful tools for discovery, but they also introduce profound risks. AI can accelerate research, analyze data, and detect errors, but it can also be misused to generate fraudulent papers or

manipulate research results. Without clear oversight, these technologies could amplify the very problems we are trying to solve.

That is why we have invited our witnesses today: to discuss how the publishing industry is addressing these issues and to identify best practices in the publication of scientific research. This hearing is about risk mitigation and building trust in both the scientific community and the publishers who serve it.

Some best practices relate to retractions and corrections. This has been an area of increasing scrutiny. We are pleased to have Retraction Watch with us to discuss how retractions are a necessary part of the scientific process, as well as the damage that can occur when they are delayed, ignored, or not publicized.

Science must serve the public interest—not just the publishing industry or academic career advancement. By taking these steps, we can preserve the integrity of American science, strengthen trust in research, and ensure that taxpayer dollars are invested wisely.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today, and I hope today's discussion will be the first step toward policies that reinforce rigorous, transparent, and trustworthy science.