



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

Opening Statement

Ranking Member Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)

Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee Hearing:

*“Balancing Biotechnology Innovation and Biosecurity:
Securing U.S. Leadership in a Global Race”*

September 16, 2026

Good morning. Thank you to Chairman McCormick and Ranking Member Sykes for this hearing. Thank you to our witnesses for appearing today.

I want to start, Mr. Chairman, by asking unanimous consent to enter into the record a letter from the American Society for Microbiology, one of our country’s oldest and most respected scientific societies. I agree wholeheartedly with Ranking Member Sykes that the voices of the scientific community need to be heard in this discussion, and ASM has a valuable perspective on these issues. I’ll return to it during my questions.

The Science Committee has an impressive legacy of legislation and oversight for biotechnology and biosecurity. Our bipartisan *CHIPS and Science Act* had several provisions tasking our agencies to support research on the safety and security implications of engineering biology. In this Congress, we approved H.R. 3029, a bill to support nucleic acid screening research at NIST. This bill has since passed the full House and I urge our counterparts in the Senate to take it up. We are also looking closely at the legislative ideas catalyzed by our colleagues from the National Security Commission on Emerging Biotechnology.

For years, this Committee has maintained a deep understanding of, and respect for, the spirit of openness that animates life science research. Republicans and Democrats alike have taken biosecurity and safety seriously, while understanding that to be the world leader in biotechnology, we must be tactful of how we legislate and perform oversight on biosecurity. Unfortunately, the term “tactful” could not be further from the actions of the Trump Administration and how it has approached these issues. Ranking Member Sykes talked at length about many of these concerns. I will focus instead on what is at stake for us to lose.

I understand one of our witnesses, Mr. Hodges, works with Dr. Drew Endy at the Hoover Institution. For those who do not know, Dr. Endy was part of the research community that contributed to the development of one of the very first synthetic cells created entirely from scratch – a remarkable achievement for American life science. In his report, *Biosecurity Really*, Dr. Endy importantly recognizes that the U.S. cannot, as he says, “ride the breaks” on

biotechnology innovation and expect to remain a world leader. In other words, you have to actually invest federal dollars to support your research community. Grant terminations, proposed budget cuts, and agency restructuring by the Trump Administration have critically diminished our country's ability to promote biotechnology. To sustain our progress, we need to reverse course immediately.

We also need to address the incredibly foolish actions that the Trump Administration has taken regarding our international research community. For years, Democrats and Republicans celebrated the fact that the United States was the chosen home of world-class talent. We took pride in the fact that nearly 80% of foreign-born STEM PhD recipients chose to remain in the U.S. But that advantage is now in jeopardy. Just last week, the American Institute of Physics found that the proportion of non-U.S. citizens leaving the U.S. after they receive a physics doctorate nearly doubled, from 16% to 29%. If my colleagues on the other side of the aisle sincerely wish to "Secure U.S. Leadership in a Global Race" for biotechnology, they can start by telling the Administration to stop alienating our country's own life science researchers.

And it's not only about the research done here. International partnerships, open scientific dialogue, transparency in the pursuit of discovery: these are core values for the life sciences. Biotechnology innovation flourishes with them and languishes without them. But the Trump Administration wants to apply the same narrow-minded, intolerant vision to biotechnology as it has in so many other areas. That is terribly misguided, and it is not a formula for American scientific leadership. It is a formula for our decline.

The Trump Administration is responsible for these actions. But Congress is complicit in its own silence. I firmly support the bipartisan work that the Science Committee has done to bolster biosecurity. But I fear that unless Republicans and Democrats alike stand against the destruction of our scientific enterprise, we are ceding our leadership to China in ways that no biosecurity policy will prevent. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.