



**Opening Statement of Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee
Chairman Rich McCormick**

Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee Hearing
“Balancing Biotechnology Innovation and Biosecurity: Securing U.S. Leadership in a Global Race”
Wednesday, September 16, 2026

Today’s hearing examines a question that goes to the heart of our national security and our economic future: is America’s biotechnology enterprise adequately protected, and are your taxpayer dollars that fund it being spent wisely and safely?

For decades, American biotechnology has led the world and has become one of our nation’s greatest strategic assets.

Our researchers, our universities, and our companies have produced vaccines, therapeutics, and innovations that have saved countless lives and driven our economy forward.

But that leadership is no longer guaranteed.

The Chinese Communist Party has made biotechnology a national priority, pursuing it with the same coordination and intensity it has applied to semiconductors and artificial intelligence.

The CCP understands that whoever leads in biotechnology will hold significant advantages in medicine, agriculture, industry, and defense for decades to come.

We cannot afford to be complacent.

At the same time, we must ask a question closer to home: has our oversight of high-risk biological research kept pace with the risks we face?

In 2014, the federal government paused funding for certain gain-of-function research while it evaluated the risks and benefits.

In 2017, the Department of Health and Human Services established the P3CO Framework, a case-by-case review process.

Subsequent experience, particularly with federally funded research involving the Wuhan Institute of Virology and EcoHealth Alliance, raised serious questions about how effectively that system worked in practice.

I am encouraged that this Administration has taken the threat seriously.

Executive Order 14292 directs federal agencies to restrict support for dangerous gain-of-function and other high-risk biological research where adequate oversight and safeguards are lacking and calls for stronger screening of synthetic nucleic acids.

These are important, overdue steps.

But an executive order is only as strong as its implementation, and this Committee has an obligation to ensure these directives are carried out fully, consistently without loopholes for research conducted overseas or outside the scope of federal funding.

We cannot discuss biosecurity today without also addressing artificial intelligence.

AI is transforming biotechnology, helping accelerate drug discovery, protein design, and biomanufacturing in ways that strengthen American competitiveness and save lives.

That's progress that I welcome.

But the same tools that accelerate beneficial research can lower the barriers to biological misuse, making it easier to search, organize, and analyze dangerous biological information which can be weaponized.

We must ensure that federal support, open datasets, and widely accessible AI services do not become a shortcut for adversaries or bad actors.

That is why I introduced the Biotechnology Workforce Alignment Act—to close the gap between the federal research dollars we invest in biotechnology and the trained workforce needed to build and scale those innovations here at home—not overseas.

My home state of Georgia is a shining example of this put into action, with schools like Georgia Tech and the University of Georgia (UGA) helping lead the way.

We need to ensure that American breakthroughs translate into real American jobs, manufacturing capacity, and economic strength.

I also introduced the Biotechnology Diplomacy Leadership Act to ensure the United States speaks with a coordinated voice on biotechnology policy abroad and confronts the risks posed by adversaries seeking access to our data, technology, and capabilities.

I welcome our witnesses today, who will help us examine whether federal biosecurity policy and oversight have kept pace with the challenges, how the convergence of AI and biotechnology is reshaping both opportunities and risks, and what additional steps Congress must take to keep

America's biotechnology enterprise secure, competitive, and worthy of the American people's trust.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.