



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

Opening Statement

Ranking Member Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)

Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight Hearing:

Justice for Whom? Examining the Justice40 Initiative's Oversight and Implementation

June 26, 2025

Thank you, Chairman McCormick and Ranking Member Sykes. And thank you to our witnesses for testifying today. Though I must say, I find the timing of today's topic perplexing.

On January 20, 2025, President Trump's term began. That same day, he announced the rescission of President Biden's Executive Order that established the Justice40 Initiative. Here we sit, over five months later. Justice40 is a thing of the past. For the four years it was active, my Science Committee colleagues on the other side of the aisle brought no credible accusations of waste, fraud, abuse, or mismanagement of the Justice40 Initiative, though their political disagreement with its priorities is entirely predictable. While the last five months have elapsed with zero Justice40 activities, they have seen the unprecedented upheaval of our American scientific enterprise. It is not inherently unusual or inappropriate to hold oversight hearings on shuttered programs, but it is deeply strange to simultaneously ignore what is happening in real time.

Since the shuttering of the Justice40 Initiative, billions of dollars of federal grants have been frozen. Civil servants have been fired or coerced out of the federal scientific workforce, eviscerating agencies' ability to make science-backed decisions and leaving all Americans more vulnerable to threats like extreme weather and public health risks. Laboratories are being shuttered, including a cutting-edge air pollution lab run by EPA in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. NASA has eliminated its Office of the Chief Scientist. The National Science Foundation is being evicted so the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development can have a private dining room, a personal gym, and elevator, with reserved parking for his five cars. The Department of Energy canceled two dozen Office of Clean Energy Demonstration awards, including three in Chairman Babin's district. The Secretary of Health and Human Services swapped out expert advisors on the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices for a ragtag group of anti-vax influencers and frankly, cranks. And every single one of our science agencies faces draconian cuts in the President's proposed budget – a budget that only China could love.

I am under no illusion that we all fall on the same side of each of these issues and the myriad other changes that have been implemented by the Trump Administration since January 20. But with each passing hearing, it gets more frankly weird, to ignore them. And this hearing is a clear example of that. The last Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee hearing was canceled when

the subject of that hearing – the Billion Dollar Disaster report, an excellent example of how President Trump has eviscerated federal science – was eliminated. And yet, this hearing was announced with full awareness that the Justice40 Initiative has been dead for months. My Republican colleagues' objective on this issue was realized on the very first day of this Administration.

Why don't we start focusing on the actual state of American science? We don't all have to agree. But it is wrong to continue to pretend it's not happening. If my Republican colleagues support this Administration's actions, they could hold hearings to explain that position. If they disagree with what has been happening to federal science, I invite them to step up to the plate and stand up for the laws that Congress has passed that President has ignored.

Thank you to our witnesses for testifying today. It's not your responsibility that we're talking about program that no longer exists instead of the random and radical evisceration of the science enterprise of the United States of America. I yield back.