



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

Opening Statement

Ranking Member Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)

Full Committee Markup

H.R. 6213, the National Quantum Initiative Reauthorization Act
H.R. 6131, the Commercial Space Act of 2023

November 15, 2023

Thank you, Chairman Lucas. Today the Science Committee will consider two bills that represent two different kinds of scientific frontiers.

Our first bill, sponsored by Chairman Lucas, is the National Quantum Initiative Reauthorization Act. H.R. 6213 continues the work this committee began five years ago, and I am very excited to co-sponsor this legislation that builds upon our prior accomplishment. The National Quantum Initiative fosters a whole-of-government approach to advancing quantum technologies that are likely to generate significant investment from U.S. companies. The success of our earlier Act is reflected in our nation's current leadership in quantum applications. After significant stakeholder outreach and bipartisan discussions, we are ready today to update the Quantum Initiative Act to meet the new opportunities and challenges facing this revolutionary technology.

With this bill we will make the critical human and physical infrastructure investments that will enable the United States to move quantum technologies from lab to market. The bill includes a strong focus on preparing a quantum-ready domestic workforce, from the skilled technician to the doctoral graduate. It authorizes new quantum testbeds, updated state-of-the-art federal research laboratories, and new centers to advance research in quantum sensing, measurement, and engineering.

H.R. 6213 will leverage our international partners to maximize our quantum research and development capabilities and better compete with our adversaries. It will also officially bring NASA into the initiative and secure for them the resources needed so that we can incorporate their unique capabilities, perspectives, and testing capacity into the quantum ecosystem. Lastly, the bill updates the goals and objectives of many quantum programs across agencies to ensure quantum research can move beyond fundamental research into demonstration and commercial applications.

I enthusiastically support this bill and thank Members on both sides of the aisle for their important contributions.

The next bill we will consider is the Commercial Space Act of 2023. Regrettably, I will not be able to join my Republican colleagues in support of this bill.

I commend and thank Subcommittee Chairman Babin for his leadership on the many important issues facing the commercial space industry that his bill tries to address. However, I have both process and substantive concerns that are too significant for me to look past on this bill. Most concerning, the bill before us today will be considered without the benefit of Members having seen and considered a National Space Council led legislative proposal on authorizing commercial space activities. We knew the proposal was coming, and in fact it was just released this morning.

I will admit that I have been frustrated that we had to wait so long for this proposal. However, given that its release has been imminent for a couple weeks now, I am disappointed by the decision to rush to a markup and effectively ignore a year of hard work and discussion by the Space Council. Whatever I think of the merits of Mr. Babin's bill, the timing of this markup leaves me in an untenable position. I also have some real substantive concerns with what is currently before us, and I will mention some of those when we consider the bill. But that's secondary for today's purposes.

Until we have an opportunity to read and understand what the administration has created and thoroughly vet both approaches, I am unable to engage in good faith bipartisan negotiations to address those concerns.

This bill would likely result in the largest expansion of space regulatory policy since we first began legislating on this topic in the 1980s. It is important enough to take our time to work with the National Space Council and our external stakeholders to get it right. And I want to be clear- I am not advocating that we rubber stamp the Administration's proposal. But we shouldn't be ignoring it either.

So, I will be respectfully opposing this bill today. However, I want to take a moment to acknowledge that the Chairman and his staff have engaged with us on their bill. As always, I want to thank the Chairman and his staff for working with us in a transparent and honest fashion. It really is a model for the rest of Congress, and even on a day when I will be politely disagreeing with the Chairman, I wanted to thank him for his efforts.

On that note, I yield back the balance of my time.