



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

Opening Statement

Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)

Research and Technology Subcommittee Hearing:
*National Science Foundation: Advancing Research for the Future of U.S.
Innovation*

April 28, 2021

Thank you, Chairwoman Stevens and Ranking Member Waltz, for holding this important hearing. And good morning to our esteemed witnesses.

Last month, I was joined by my colleague Ranking Member Lucas, and Representatives Stevens and Waltz, in introducing the “*National Science Foundation for the Future Act.*”

When I started planning for this legislation, I was open to big ideas. It would be the first comprehensive reauthorization of NSF in a decade. It was an opportunity for Congress, working with the stakeholder community, to take a step back and consider what NSF has achieved in the last 70 years, and what we want it to achieve in the coming decades.

It was also an opportunity for us to think differently about who counts as a stakeholder. I am quite confident that the bill we introduced reflects input from the most diverse group of institutions, organizations, and individuals to ever have a seat at the table for an NSF reauthorization bill. And I am very proud of that fact. If we are to be more inclusive in our research enterprise, as we must be to remain competitive, we must also be more inclusive in our policy-making for science and technology.

As we were beginning to develop our own legislation, Leader Schumer announced his proposal to create a new technology directorate at NSF focused on a discrete list of critical technologies. Even though the details would not emerge for months, his announcement further inspired us to think big. We started from first principles, by asking what problem are we trying to solve and what is the best policy for making meaningful progress.

After going through a months-long bipartisan process of engagement with the stakeholder community, we decided on a somewhat different approach to the creation of a new directorate. Specifically, we have proposed a “Science and Engineering Solutions Directorate.” I believe the competitive and security threat from China is real. I also believe the solutions-driven approach we take in the *NSF for the Future Act* offers the nation a win-win science and innovation

strategy. History teaches us that problem-solving can itself drive the innovation that in turn spawns new industries and achieves competitive advantage.

An introduced bill is still early in the process to enactment. We are holding this hearing and another next week in addition to our ongoing informal dialogue with stakeholders. Further, my intent is to proceed through both subcommittee and full committee markup to maximize Member participation.

In the meantime, I invite all my colleagues to cosponsor the *NSF for the Future Act*. And let me say this to any of my colleagues who might feel conflicted about cosponsoring both this Committee's bill and the *Endless Frontier Act*. Don't feel that way. The two bills have very different scopes, overlapping only in the creation of a new directorate at NSF. I look forward to continuing the discussion about the future of NSF in the context of a comprehensive NSF authorization.

Dr. Panchanathan and Dr. Ochoa, I am very happy with President Biden's commitment to science as reflected in the fiscal year 2022 budget request. I look forward to your testimony today, including the details of NSF's request and your thoughts on the future of the Foundation.

I yield back.