

Letter of Support for the Expanding Partnerships for Innovation and Competitiveness Act

The Honorable Frank Lucas, Chairman
The Honorable Zoe Lofgren, Ranking Member
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Lucas and Ranking Member Lofgren,

I am writing to you on behalf of Chainguard to express my strong support for the Expanding Partnerships for Innovation and Competitiveness Act, a bill to establish a nonprofit foundation in support of the mission of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) to advance measurement science and support U.S. innovation and competitiveness.

As a CEO at Chainguard, a software supply chain security company, I have seen firsthand the critical role that NIST plays in supporting U.S. innovation, competitiveness and national security. NIST's work in developing and disseminating standards, providing measurement services, and conducting research is essential to ensuring that U.S. businesses can compete in the global marketplace.

However, NIST currently lacks the flexibility to vigorously promote interactions between academia, industry, and government agencies that would enable it to fully achieve its objectives, including more rapid technology transfer to the private sector. One such example of this is the recent backlogs at the US National Vulnerability Database (NVD), a critical source of information about security flaws in software, that is operated by NIST. The slowdown in processing critical vulnerability information has reached crisis proportions, prompting federal agencies to seek help from the private sector. NIST cited a reduction in resources as the reason for the disruption in operations of the NVD. The security community, including my organization, use the information distributed by NVD to find, prioritize, and fix vulnerabilities in critical systems before attackers try to exploit them. Many organizations rely solely on NVD provided severity scores to prioritize vulnerabilities and align remediation timelines accordingly. This shutdown has disrupted essential resilience efforts across the public and private sectors. Over 50

The Expanding Partnerships for Innovation and Competitiveness Act would address these challenges by establishing a nonprofit foundation that would work synergistically with NIST to facilitate public-private R&D partnerships, allow private funds to supplement federal R&D funding, and increase commercialization of federally funded R&D. In theory, this funding source would ensure that critical programs, such as the NVD remain resourced appropriately while giving a clear path for the private sector to contribute to the continuity of operations.

Funding constraints create missed opportunities for public-private collaboration in critical technology areas, delayed standards development, aging infrastructure, staffing challenges, and reduced research capacity. If the U.S. wants to remain competitive during a time of heightened

technological advancement with the surge of generative AI and quantum computing, we need organizations like NIST fully operational and resourced to produce outcomes that will further innovation and national security. In an era of rapidly advancing technology, characterized by the emergence of generative AI and quantum computing, the U.S. must ensure its competitiveness. To do so, organizations like NIST must be fully functional, well-resourced, and capable of delivering results that contribute to both innovation and national security.

Chainguard supports the work of the Committee and its staff, and looks forward to the passage of this vitally important legislation. would be a major step forward in supporting NIST's mission and ensuring that the United States remains a leader in innovation and competitiveness.

Sincerely,
Dan Lorenc, CEO and Co Founder, Chainguard