

OPENING STATEMENT
Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
Markup of H.R. 6227, H.R. 6229, and H.R. 6226
June 27, 2018

Thank you, Chairman Smith, for holding today's markup of three bills.

The first bill we are considering is the National Quantum Initiative Act. This is a good bill, and I am happy to urge my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring the legislation. I will speak more on this bill in a minute, so let me just say that I am very happy the Science Committee is taking the lead here in a cutting-edge field. I also want to thank the Chairman for working closely with us to craft a bipartisan bill that I think will also be widely supported by industry and academia. This bill really is a good example of what the Science Committee does best, and I look forward to its passage.

The second bill we are considering, the National Institute of Standards and Technology Reauthorization Act of 2018, is another good bill which I am cosponsoring. This bill reauthorizes one of our most important but underappreciated agencies in the Federal government. NIST is a vital partner for American industry in fields as diverse as infrastructure construction to cybersecurity. They are also an essential collaborator with American manufacturing. I want to thank the Chairman for working with us to address some concerns we had with the original draft of the bill, and I support the manager's amendment that is intended to address several of those concerns. I look forward to advancing this bill through the House and working with the Senate to get it enacted.

Finally, we are marking up the American Space SAFE Management Act. Unfortunately, I must reluctantly oppose this bill today. I want to be clear. I strongly support efforts to establish a civilian space situational awareness capability. However, I do not support our Committee rubber stamping the half-baked efforts of the Trump Administration to address the issue.

Currently, the Department of Defense handles space situational awareness for the U.S. Government. There has been a growing recognition that the civilian side of this work would be more appropriate outside of DOD. The Obama Administration began to plan for this, and work was underway to place this function at the Department of Transportation, which currently is the body that promotes and regulates commercial space launch and reentry. Then the Trump Administration came in and decided it wanted to move this function to the Department of Commerce instead. This is in spite of the fact that Commerce has no existing infrastructure or expertise to support this important work. In fact, no credible reason has been articulated for why the Commerce Department is the best place to house this function. The only discernible motivation for reversing course is that they just didn't want to endorse something Obama started. That is a no way to govern, but it wouldn't be the first time this Administration has acted that way.

I'll have an amendment later to do the oversight Congress should have demanded when the Trump Administration first started pushing this agenda. Let's have the Academies look at the

issue and give us guidance on what civilian agency is best suited to shoulder this new responsibility. Maybe they decide Commerce is. Or maybe they will decide that our 21 billion dollar civilian space agency would be best. Then we can come back and make an informed decision, instead of just rubber stamping the ill-formed ideas coming from the Trump Administration. I yield back.