

Research & Technology Subcommittee Hearing

*Review of the Networking and Information Technology R&D Program*

*October 28, 2015*

Opening Statement of Ranking Member Johnson

I want to thank Chairwoman Comstock for holding this important hearing. The Science, Space, and Technology Committee played a central role in the development of the *High Performance Computing Act of 1991*, the bill that set the stage for 25 years of scientific and technological progress under the Networking and Information Technology Research and Development, or NITRD, Program.

Advances in networking and information technology are a key driver of our economy, our national security, and our wellbeing. NIT R&D contributes to increased productivity in existing industries and opens the door for the formation of new ones. We've all heard how Google grew out of a basic research project funded by the National Science Foundation. NIT R&D protects our brave men and women in the military by improving intelligence gathering and sharing and providing them with more effective and safer equipment. NIT R&D has improved health care and saved countless lives by contributing to advanced diagnostic and surgical tools, distance medicine, and improved medical research.

NIT is truly pervasive in our society. Even those of us who lived most of our lives before the advent of wireless technology don't know how we would live today without the devices we carry around in our pockets.

In their 2015 review of the NITRD Program, the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology, or PCAST, expressed concern that researchers today face difficulty getting funded for riskier, more speculative long-term investigations. According to the PCAST report, funding pressures are pushing scientists to choose more short-term, problem-solving research. I worry deeply about the impact of flat and declining budgets across our science and technology enterprise. I hope that any budget deal being worked out now, and in the future, will allow for increased investments in all fields of science and engineering.

That was just one of many recommendations from PCAST and other experts. Today's hearing is an important opportunity for Committee Members to hear from the experts about key issues for NITRD reauthorization. Our Committee has tried several times to update and reauthorize the NITRD legislation so that it continues to push the boundaries of information technology science and technology and maximizes opportunities for coordination, collaboration, and strategic planning among the many NITRD member agencies. I look forward to working with my

colleagues on both sides of the aisle to develop a good bill and move it through the House. Perhaps we will have more success this time around in the Senate.

I thank the excellent panel for being here today. I yield back.