



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

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## Opening Statement

**Ranking Member Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)**

**Investigation & Oversight Subcommittee Hearing:**

*Assessing the Threat to U.S. Funded Research*

March 5th, 2025

Thank you, Chairman McCormick and Ranking Member Sykes. I really do hope that research security remains a bipartisan and productive topic for this Committee. We have an impressive legacy of legislation and oversight on research security. For years, on both sides of the aisle, we have maintained a deep understanding of, and respect for, the spirit of openness that animates fundamental research. Republicans and Democrats alike have taken threats to research security seriously, while understanding that in order to be the world leader in science and discovery, we must welcome international collaboration.

One year ago, we sat in this hearing room and discussed the progress that had been made across the federal government on research security. It is difficult to have that same conversation without acknowledging how different our scientific enterprise looks today. The past six weeks have seen a widespread attack on federal science. Science agencies froze their awards at the order of President Trump and Elon Musk, and recipients of these prestigious grants were worried not only about continuing their work, but about paying their bills.

They now only have certainty for as long as the temporary restraining order lasts. Scientists across the federal government were fired in sweeping terminations of probationary employees, and the Administration is demanding more workforce cuts, which will seriously impede agencies' ability to disburse Congressionally authorized grant money, among other crucial functions. The rug has been pulled out from under our federal scientific enterprise, which has been the envy of the world. It would be naïve to think that this will not affect our ability to attract and retain talent, both American- and foreign-born.

This Committee has a lot to be proud of when it comes to common sense research security legislation. CHIPS & Science bolstered our research agencies' resources and catalyzed cross-governmental harmonization of research security policies. Unfortunately, the progress will backslide due to recent decisions. CHIPS & Science established a research security office within NSF, and this office was seriously impacted by the probationary firings and the resignations amidst the hostile environment Elon Musk and DOGE has created. CHIPS & Science also mandated that NSF run the SECURE Center to support and empower research institutions to mitigate foreign interference. That Center lacks a permanent director, and NSF cannot hire one while the hiring freeze is in place. While probationary employees are being hired back this week,

there is absolutely no guarantee that the agency will get through the forthcoming RIFs without again compromising the research security office. NSF is an incredibly efficient agency – only 5% of its budget is spent on agency operations and awards management.

By firing NSF employees and coercing others to resign, this administration is gutting our ability to distribute grant money to meritorious, cutting-edge research and kneecapping our research security capabilities.

I think that we should reconsider the title of this hearing. The most pressing “threat to U.S. funded research” is coming from inside the house. For years now, when we sat for these hearings, Democrats and Republicans celebrated the fact that the United States was the chosen home of world-class talent. We took pride in the fact that nearly 80% of foreign-born STEM PhD recipients chose to remain in the U.S. If the destabilization of our research ecosystem continues, we are actively tarnishing our reputation and inviting brain drain.

I firmly support the bipartisan work that the Science Committee has done to bolster research security. I hope we can all stand up for that work and insist that existing laws are enforced. Where there are remaining vulnerabilities, I hope we can work together the way we have for years to find common-sense solutions that respect the openness of science first articulated at the presidential level by Ronald Reagan in 1985. I fear that unless Republicans and Democrats alike stand against the destruction of our scientific enterprise, we are ceding our leadership to China in ways that no research security policies can prevent.

I yield back.