



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

Opening Statement

Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)

Full Committee Markup of:

H.R. 7569, the “Energy Cybersecurity University Leadership Act of 2022”
H.R. 7361, the “National Weather Service Communications Improvement Act”
H.R. 7289, the “Federal PFAS Research Evaluation Act”
H.R. 7180, the “Brycen Gray and Ben Price COVID-19 Cognitive Research Act”

May 17, 2022

Hello, and welcome to today’s markup of four good bipartisan bills. I know it’s a busy day, so I will be brief.

The first bill we are considering is the Energy Cybersecurity University Leadership Act of 2022, which was introduced by Representative Ross. This legislation would authorize the Secretary of Energy to provide financial assistance for graduate students and postdoctoral researchers pursuing coursework at the intersection of cybersecurity and energy infrastructure. The ultimate aim of this Act is to contribute to the development of a diverse, inclusive, and highly skilled workforce with the knowledge and expertise required for integrating cybersecurity considerations into the research, design, and development of new energy infrastructure. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this crucial legislation.

The next bill we will consider is the National Weather Service Communications Improvement Act, a bipartisan bill introduced by Representative Randy Feenstra. Reliable communication is critical during weather events. It is vitally important to ensure that National Weather Service employees can communicate without difficulty or delay. This bill will upgrade National Weather Service communications systems to bring them into the 21st Century. This is a good bill, and I urge its adoption.

Next, we will consider the Federal PFAS Research Evaluation Act. This bipartisan bill was introduced by Representative Lizzie Fletcher. PFAS compounds are found in many common products such as firefighting foam, cookware, and packaging. However, there is still a lot we do not understand about these chemicals. This bill would help to address knowledge gaps in our understanding of PFAS on various topics. This bill directs the EPA Administrator to enter into an agreement with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to conduct a series of studies to identify the research and development needed to improve our understanding of PFAS.

The bill also requires the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy to submit an implementation plan for federal PFAS research and development activities. We must continue to deepen our understanding of PFAS substances, and this bill will help us get there. This is a good bipartisan bill, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

The final bill for today's markup was introduced by Representative Gonzalez. It is the Brycen Gray and Ben Price COVID-19 Cognitive Research Act. While the fog of the COVID-19 pandemic is beginning to clear and we are all eager to resume something resembling normalcy, many COVID-19 survivors are still suffering. Early research results indicate that a COVID-19 infection may leave individuals with an increased risk of developing mental health conditions. And they may be at an increased risk of death by suicide and drug overdose. While researchers are raising alarms about these risks, improved data collection and additional research are needed to better understand the mental health implications of a COVID-19 infection. This bill directs the National Science Foundation to rally the research community to take on this task. I urge my colleagues to support this important bill.

I want to thank my colleagues for participating in today's markup. And I want to give a special thanks to my friend Representative Lofgren who will be taking the gavel for me today.

With that I now recognize the Ranking Member to present his opening remarks.