

**OPENING STATEMENT OF
THE HONORABLE VERNON J. EHLERS
RANKING MEMBER
SUBCOMMITTEE ON RESEARCH AND SCIENCE EDUCATION
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

“National Science Foundation Reauthorization, Part 1”

March 20, 2007
10:30 p.m. to 12:30 p.m.
2318 Rayburn House Office Building

I am pleased to participate in the Research and Science Education Subcommittee’s first hearing of this Congress to address the reauthorization of the National Science Foundation. The goals of reauthorization are to improve the functioning of an agency known for both high-caliber research output and internal efficiency, which makes our job somewhat more challenging than trying to improve upon an agency with glaring shortcomings. Finding areas in need of improvement can be best-achieved by hearing from expert witnesses like those before us today, and the NSF consumers who will testify at the end of the month in a second hearing.

In finding areas for strengthening and improvement, I believe we must remain cognizant of the uniqueness of the National Science Foundation. What goes for other agencies may not necessarily apply to NSF. I know the Committee is interested in exploring some of the relationships NSF has established with industry, and I am keenly interested in encouraging those relationships while maintaining the quality of NSF fundamental research. As current researchers know, potential applications are important but should not dictate research design exclusively.

Chairman Baird and I share concerns in several areas of NSF, including maintaining the integrity and capacity of the peer review process; managing increasingly interdisciplinary research portfolios; and educating our future workforce in all STEM-related jobs, not just those historically identified as science and engineering careers. Finally, I look forward to hearing about NSF’s preparations for future funding increases that this Committee has worked tirelessly to authorize and, ultimately, see supported through the appropriations process.

I thank Dr. Bement and Dr. Beering for being here today and look forward to their testimony.