



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

Opening Statement

Congressman Ami Bera (D-CA)

Conference Kickoff Meeting
May 12, 2022

Thank you to Chair Cantwell and Chairwoman Johnson for convening this first public conference committee meeting to reconcile two pieces of bipartisan innovation and competition legislation – USICA and America COMPETES. I am honored to have the opportunity to serve on this conference committee. This legislation presents a once in a generation opportunity to invest in America to ensure that the United States remains a leader on the global stage and that the American worker can compete and succeed in the 21st century global economy.

I come to this bill from my role on two critical committees that have come together to forge this important legislation. As a senior member of the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, I believe the best way we can compete on a global stage is to invest in American workers and American ingenuity. Our greatest assets have long been our innovation, our ingenuity, and the American people. We have an opportunity with this bill to bet on American workers and invest in our nation's innovation that will lay the foundation for U.S. leadership in science and technology for generations to come while supporting the growth of our STEM workforce and unleashing our potential to outcompete any other nation.

One critical piece that I strongly support in both bills is the robust funding for domestic semiconductor manufacturing and research and development (R&D) and supply chain resiliency. Semiconductors are part of everything from our phones to our cars and investing in domestic manufacturing and R&D of these key components will spur innovation and reduce costs for consumers. In addition, we have seen during the pandemic how small breakdowns in the global supply chain can impact our economy but also how investments in domestic manufacturing and R&D can lead to innovative technologies and save lives.

The pandemic has also shown that in times of need, Congress can come together and produce meaningful bipartisan legislation that invests in America such as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Package. While that bill focused on physical infrastructure, we have an opportunity here to invest in our human infrastructure – our research institutions and our workers. I am particularly proud about how the American COMPETES Act makes a robust investment in our nation's research institutions and in particular, our public research universities. Our research institutions are part of what truly makes America great and in addition to the discoveries they produce, they are great drivers of innovation and our economy.

As Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, Central Asia, and Nonproliferation, I believe we must establish lasting structures and programs to enhance American diplomatic, economic, and security engagement with our allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific. The Foreign Affairs Division of America COMPETES includes several bills of mine that would do just that – The Countering China Economic Coercion Act, which would establish the first-ever interagency task force to respond to the People’s Republic of China’s growing economic coercion against government, businesses, organizations, and individuals; The Taiwan Peace and Stability Act, bipartisan legislation that strengthens U.S. support for Taiwan’s participation in the international community, advances U.S-Taiwan economic ties, and enhances deterrence over a cross-Strait conflict; The Taiwan Fellowship Act, bipartisan legislation that establishes a fellowship exchange program for U.S. federal government employees in all three branches of government to learn, live, and work in Taiwan for a length of up to two years; The Honoring Our Commitment to Elevate America’s Neighbor Island and Allies (OCEANIA) Act, bipartisan and bicameral legislation that would elevate all of Oceania in U.S. foreign policymaking to help deliver a robust diplomatic and development commitment to support the long-term growth, governance, and resilience needs of the region; and an amendment calling for the full U.S. ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

I look forward to working with my colleagues on this conference committee to resolve the differences between these two proposals in a timely manner so we can send a strong bipartisan bill to the President’s desk for his signature and get these provisions implemented as soon as possible.