

COMMITTEE ON
**SCIENCE, SPACE, AND
TECHNOLOGY**
CHAIRMAN LAMAR SMITH



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**Statement of Oversight Subcommittee Chairman Paul Broun M.D. (R-Ga.)
Hearing on Reducing the Administrative Workload for Federally Funded Research**

Chairman Broun: Good morning. Let me begin by extending a warm welcome to our witnesses, and thank you all for appearing today bright and early.

Earlier this year, the National Science Board issued a report that examines concerns raised by educational institutions on the paperwork required of them when applying for federal funds for research. The report references work done by an association, also represented here today, which identified through a couple of surveys that on average, researchers spend 42 percent of their application time on meeting administrative requirements. That is a massive drain on researchers' time and resources, and means they are spending that much less time on conducting active research, which is their primary objective.

Forty-two percent sounds to me to be an extraordinarily high number. I have often spoken against the bureaucracies associated with a large federal government, and it appears that our educational institutions may indeed be victims of bureaucratic red tape. As such, it seems fair to explore solutions such as harmonizing and streamlining federal regulations and reporting requirements. It also makes sense to eliminate ineffective federal regulations while also requiring universities to increase their efficiency and effectiveness.

But, as with most issues that appear before this Committee, there are many sides to consider, and another one of our witnesses today, the Inspector General for the National Science Foundation, will provide us with her perspective as an auditor, which is quite different. While everyone generally agrees that efforts to reduce these administrative burdens should not be at the expense of transparency and accountability, it is the auditor who actually reviews grants for waste, fraud, abuse and mismanagement. Consequently, I am interested in learning about not only how the federal government can -- and needs -- to do a better job in cutting down red tape to bring that 42 percent number down, but also about the tools, or in this case, the paperwork the NSF Inspector General needs to access in order to do her job effectively.

As a physician and man of science, I can appreciate the value to our nation and to our students of research universities' work to sustain the science, technology, engineering and mathematics workforce. The United States relies greatly on the strength and success of our universities in order to remain a world leader in science and technology. But it shouldn't be a surprise to most of you that when it comes to spending taxpayer dollars, I have some well-known opinions on how much -- or how little -- the federal government should spend, and where such funds should go. Don't get me wrong, making sure our science agencies are funded at the appropriate authorization levels is important, but it is that definition of appropriate that is critical. If we really want to reduce the administrative burden on institutions, then all we have to do is reduce the size of the administration -- no money, no problem. But that is a discussion for another day.

I look forward to today's hearing, which I anticipate will inform us on how to reduce the administrative workload for federally funded research without compromising the federal responsibility to ensure taxpayer money is spent in the manner intended.