



COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY
Lamar Smith, Chairman

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Statement of Chairwoman Barbara Comstock (R-Va.)
National Science Foundation Part 1: Overview and Oversight

Chairwoman Comstock: My district in Virginia is home to many research and technology companies on the forefront of technological innovation.

The innovative products and services they offer are often the end-result of taxpayer-supported research conducted at universities and research laboratories.

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is the primary source of federal funding for non-medical basic research. NSF funds 12,000 competitive grants a year, and supports the work of over 377,000 scientists, engineers, educators and students across the country.

Basic and fundamental research is about good jobs and a secure future. Americans face enormous challenges, and NSF has a role to play in helping address them.

Through research and activities supported by the NSF, we have the opportunity to boost our economy, enhance our national security, strengthen our cybersecurity infrastructure, and create a STEM-job ready workforce.

The purpose of today's hearing is to provide an overview of the National Science Foundation's research and STEM education portfolio and priorities, and to update the Committee on oversight matters.

In January, the American Innovation and Competitiveness Act (AICA) was signed into law, a bill that reauthorized many of the activities at NSF and reformed programs to maximize the nation's investment in research.

I am proud that the bipartisan law resulted from the work my subcommittee conducted last Congress, and that a bill I sponsored, the *Research and Development Efficiency Act* was included, which will help reduce the regulatory burden on scientists and universities.

The AICA also included a number of provisions to improve the coordination of STEM education programs across the federal government and promote inclusion in the STEM fields.

Last week, the President signed into law two additional STEM related bills, which originated with this committee, that will help the next generation of young women have greater opportunities to pursue careers in the STEM fields that are central to our 21st century economy.

One was my bill, the INSPIRE Women Act, which authorizes NASA to encourage young women to study the STEM fields and to pursue careers that will further advance America's space missions. The other bill was the Promoting Women in Entrepreneurship Act, authored by my colleague Ms. Esty, which promotes women and jobs in STEM fields through the NSF.

Dr. Cordova, I look forward working together on these efforts, particularly in STEM and cybersecurity.

Ms. Lerner, I also greatly value the work of the Office of Inspector General. Your work and recommendations have led to millions of dollars saved – protecting the taxpayer's investment in research.

I look forward to hearing more from both of you about your priorities for the coming year and about how we can work together to maintain our nation's leadership in innovation.

I know we all have innovative STEM initiatives in our districts that provide models for others. I recently visited a global medical device company, K2M, for the kickoff of their Innovation Challenge Program.

The program hosts students in Loudoun County, and engages them in a semester long program where they solve engineering challenges. It also provides the students with mentors from K2M.

Others—including VISA, who partnered with Women in Technology and the “STEM for Her” program—put on programs in my area specifically designed for young women to get engaged in STEM subjects.

I encourage other members of this Committee to engage with the young people in their districts on STEM so that we, and they, have the brightest possible futures.

And with that, I look forward to hearing the testimonies of our guests.

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