

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



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**Statement of Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)**

*An Overview of the Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Proposals for the National Science Foundation and National Institute of Standards and Technology for Fiscal Year 2016*

**Chairman Smith:** Thank you Madam Chair, and thank you to Dr. Córdova, Dr. Arvizu and Dr. May for being with us here today.

The National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) support fundamental scientific research that is critical to American innovation and competitiveness. Our challenge is to set funding priorities that ensure America remains first in the global marketplace of ideas and products, without misusing the American people's hard-earned tax dollars.

For example, why does the administration increase funding for the Social, Behavioral and Economic Science Directorate by over seven percent while proposing an average of less than four percent for the Biology, Computer science, Engineering and Mathematical and Physical science directorates?

I do want to mention and applaud the steps taken by NSF to improve transparency and accountability. NSF's new policy acknowledges the need for NSF to communicate clearly and in non-technical terms when the agency describes the research projects it funds.

The new policy also emphasizes that the title and abstract for each funded grant should act as the public justification for NSF funding. It should explain how the project serves the national interest and is consistent with the NSF mission, as set forth in the 1950 legislation that created the Foundation. I understand Dr. Córdova presented this at the November National Science Board meeting and received positive comments.

It appears the new NSF policy parallels a significant provision of the FIRST Act approved by this Committee last fall – a requirement that NSF publish a justification for each funded grant that sets forth the project's scientific merit and national interest. The reference to the 1950 original enabling legislation and its NSF mission statement is consistent with the FIRST Act, too.

NIST does valuable, important work as well, which includes maintaining industrial and technical standards and managing cybersecurity guidelines for federal agencies. But the proposed 30 percent increase in the NIST budget for next year is unrealistic.

Although there are a number of areas proposed for very large increases, the \$150 million for the National Network of Manufacturing Innovation (NNMI) program is of particular concern. Last year, with strong bipartisan support, this Committee, the full House, and the Senate approved HR 2996, the Revitalize American Manufacturing Innovation Act (RAMI).

This bill authorized about \$5 million per year for NNMI from NIST with the bulk of the program funding to be transferred from the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy budget at the Energy Department's Office of Science.

I don't know why the administration is ignoring the duly enacted RAMI Act.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today on the subjects I mentioned above.

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