

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



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**Statement of Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)
Hearing on Private Sector Programs that Engage Students in STEM**

Chairman Smith: To achieve the innovations of tomorrow, we must better educate American students today. The federal government spends nearly \$3 billion dollars each year on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education activities. These programs are found primarily at the National Science Foundation and the Department of Education.

Today we will hear from leaders and experts from private sector organizations that focus on engaging students in STEM education. Two of them were established for this express purpose.

We need to learn what is taking place outside of the federal government so we can be sure we are not spending taxpayer dollars on duplicative programs. And we need to more effectively use taxpayers' dollars to gain the most benefit for our students and our country.

It is critical to understand what is working and how we can build on that success. The leaders of these organizations and the student participants here today are in a good position to provide us with useful information.

A well-educated and trained STEM workforce will promote our future economic prosperity. But we must persuade our nation's youth to study science and engineering so they will want to pursue these careers.

Great strides are being made in STEM education by the organizations represented here today, FIRST and Code.org, and by institutions like the Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology and Northwestern University. Unfortunately, American students still lag behind students of other nations when it comes to STEM education. American students according to one poll rank 26th in math and 21st in science. This is not the record of a country that expects to remain a world leader.

We need to ensure that young adults have the scientific and mathematic skills to strive and thrive in a technology-based economy. You can't have innovation without advances in technology. And the STEM students of today will lead us to the cutting-edge technologies of tomorrow.

The students participating in our second panel are proof that a STEM education can prepare our next generation of scientists, engineers, entrepreneurs and leaders. I look forward to hearing about the STEM programs and activities of our witnesses.

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