

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



For Immediate Release
November 13, 2013

Media Contacts: Kim Smith Hicks, Zachary Kurz
(202) 225-6371

**Statement of Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)
Hearing on Keeping America FIRST: Federal Investments in Research, Science, and Technology
at NSF, NIST, OSTP and Interagency STEM Programs**

Chairman Smith: Fundamental scientific research is critical to maintain American innovation and competitiveness. American researchers have developed new technologies that save lives, increase economic productivity, jump-start new industries and improve the quality of life for all Americans.

Our challenge today is to ensure America remains first in the global marketplace of ideas and products. Today we consider a discussion draft of the Frontiers in Innovation, Research, Science, and Technology Act or FIRST Act. The FIRST Act helps ensure that American researchers remain number one in the global marketplace for innovations that change our communities and advance our understanding of the world.

The FIRST Act reauthorizes the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and makes changes to improve coordination of STEM education programs. This discussion draft is, in part, a result of discussions with stakeholders in the R&D community. Federally-funded R&D is one of the best investments we can make in our nation's future. We can't have innovation without research and development. We must continue to support the fundamental R&D that creates jobs, encourages innovations and establishes scientific bridges to next generation technologies.

The FIRST Act affirms our commitment to high-integrity science and prioritizes national R&D to ensure that American tax dollars are used effectively and efficiently in funding federal research. We must focus scientific funding on high priority research like developing technologies to help wounded warriors or creating a high-performance supercomputer to rival China's.

The FIRST Act ensures that our nation stays on the cutting edge of new technology and strengthens technology transfer and commercialization of federally funded R&D. Not only does the FIRST Act help us remain globally competitive in the present, it ensures stakeholder input in STEM programs so that we remain the world leader in innovative research and technology for years to come. Our draft legislation also increases transparency within federally funded science and research. Americans want and deserve to know what their money is paying for.

The FIRST Act requires federally funded research data to be made available to the public. It also requires that federally-funded researchers certify that what they publish is based on accurate representation of research results.

The FIRST Act stresses quality over quantity for publication citations used in NSF grant applications. This provision will ensure that only quality science that is vital to American innovation and competitiveness receives funding.

The bill also directs the NSF to assure that each grant application is relevant to the national interest. The bill requires that NSF staff provide clear justifications for why grants are awarded federal funds.

Government employees and their program managers should be accountable to the American taxpayer for their funding decisions. They should explain why grants that receive taxpayer funding are important research that has the potential to benefit the national interest. It's not the government's money; it's the people's money.

Enhanced transparency and accountability isn't a burden; it will ultimately make NSF's grant award process more effective.

Eight of the 13 Nobel Prize winners in 2013 received support from NSF. We want to continue NSF's success of supporting high-quality research. Making more information available to the American public about awarded grants and requiring that they promote the national interest will help NSF to continue to produce first-rate scientific research.

At a time of budget cuts, Congress has a responsibility to ensure that taxpayer dollars are spent wisely and are focused on national priorities. The FIRST Act will ensure that federally funded research is conducted in a transparent and responsible manner in order to ensure that America remains "FIRST" in all areas of science and research.

###