

Opening Statement

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U.S. House Committee on Science

Hearing: Views of the NIST Nobel Laureates on Science Policy

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I want to welcome everyone to this morning's hearing and I want to congratulate the NIST Nobel prize winners before us today.

I want to take a few minutes to make two points. While the researchers before us today are outstanding in their fields, it is my experience that all the researchers at NIST are first rate.

NIST's work in metrology and standards has put the agency at the forefront of many fields of scientific research. I wouldn't be surprised if Dr. Debbie Jin, the 2002 MacArthur genius grant winner, is named NIST's fourth Nobel Prize recipient.

In reading through the summaries of the work of these three individuals, I was struck by how their work represents a forty-year commitment by NIST to cutting-edge research in related fields. This is a tribute to the vision and foresight of past NIST directors.

I welcome the opportunity to learn about our panelists' research efforts and their potential impact. However, I am especially interested in their thoughts on Federal support for scientific research.

We hear many reports that the U.S. is losing its research edge and that China, India and Mexico are outpacing us in the graduation of scientists and engineers.

There has also been great concern that the quality of our K-12 science education is putting us behind other countries. So I intend to use today's opportunity to ask them about their opinions and recommendations on these topics as well.

Again, my congratulations to all our witnesses on their accomplishments.