

CHIPS for America Act has earned so far. This partisan provision has no impact on workers' wages, and it should hardly be a reason to forfeit the strong bipartisan support the CHIPS Program has previously received.

It is important that we send a clear and distinct and unequivocal message to our competitors and rivals in China. Republicans and Democrats have worked together to bolster domestic semiconductor manufacturing and to confront one of our biggest looming threats from China. Now is not the time to sacrifice the progress we made.

I encourage our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this amendment so we can maintain the strong bipartisan support for this essential program.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, in January of 2020, when reports began to circulate about the coronavirus, I instructed my oversight and investigations staff to get a classified briefing from the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of National Security. Around that same time, I publicly said that there were signs that the virus could develop into a worldwide threat. I also noted at that time my concern that China may not be accurately reflecting the scale or scope of the problem and that China was failing to share information with global health organizations. Unfortunately, my concerns proved to be true.

From the beginning, my goal has been to ensure a robust Federal response to the threat and to better understand the origins of the virus.

Today, as we emerge from the pandemic, the focus has rightly shifted to understanding how the virus originated. We lost over 500,000 of our fellow Americans, and this body has spent trillions of dollars to support the U.S. economy during the pandemic.

We the people have an absolute right to know everything that the U.S. Government knows about the origins of the coronavirus. On March 8, 2021, I wrote to the Director of National Intelligence and the Secretary of Health and Human Services requesting all intelligence, among other requests, relating to what the government knows about the origin of the coronavirus. I received some intelligence product, and that product causes very serious concern and further supports my belief that the ongoing review of its origin can't leave any stone unturned. The effort must be a whole-of-government approach.

In response to my letter, the National Institutes of Health, an Agency within the Department of Health and Human Services, stated that it hasn't funded gain-of-function research on the coronavirus. Recent reports have cast doubts on that position.

Dr. Fauci's unit provided \$3.4 million in taxpayer grants to a research orga-

nization called EcoHealth Alliance. That group then issued subgrants to the Wuhan Institute of Virology. It has been reported that from this \$3.4 million, somewhere between \$600,000 and \$826,000 was sent to the Wuhan Institute of Virology. That money, by the way, is U.S. taxpayer money. It was spent on researching bat coronaviruses.

As the Wall Street Journal noted last week, it is likely that the Wuhan Institute of Virology was doing gain-of-function research. If true, that research could have strengthened the virus to the version that caused the global pandemic.

Dr. Fauci has said that Chinese scientists are trustworthy, that "we generally always trust the grantee to do what they say," and that "I can't guarantee that a grantee hasn't lied to us because you never know." He also said, "I can't guarantee everything that is going on in the Wuhan lab, we can't do that." What complete nonsense and a mess that it is.

Well, Dr. Fauci, why can't you know what is going on inside the Wuhan plant if you are going to send taxpayers' money to do it? For crying out loud, be aggressive and be accountable.

We know the Chinese Government can't be trusted. We know the Chinese Government is involved in risky and deadly viral research. We know that sending money to any entity affiliated with the Chinese Government is a risky proposition, which is why any sign of any taxpayer money sent to the Chinese Government should be subject to the most rigorous and comprehensive oversight.

If Dr. Fauci and his team know that taxpayer money is going to the Chinese Government, what steps did he and they take to oversee how that money was used? Well, that question is exactly what I asked in my March 8, 2021, letter to the Department of Health and Human Services. HHS failed to answer what, if any, oversight was done.

In my followup letter to the Department of Health and Human Services on May 26 of this year, I stated the following:

Your letter failed to describe the steps the Department of Health and Human Services took to oversee the research done at the Wuhan Institute of Virology in light of it being funded by the taxpayer.

The taxpayers expect the Federal Government to, at a minimum, know what their money is buying.

Congress expects the Federal Government to perform aggressive oversight, especially when the funded research involves highly infectious and deadly viruses. Furthermore, if no oversight were performed, then that would call into question the government's confidence that no gain-of-function research was supported by taxpayers' dollars, because that is what I was told by the HHS.

The people have a right to know what the government knows about the origins of the coronavirus. The people have a right to know if Dr. Fauci and

other government officials were derelict in their duty to conduct oversight of the money that they knew would end up with the Communist Chinese Government.

Dr. Fauci is constantly going on television to talk about anything that he wants to talk about. He should start talking about what, if any, oversight he did with respect to the taxpayers' money that he knew was going to the Communist Chinese Government.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to complete my remarks before the vote starts.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that there be 3 minutes of debate, equally divided, between the votes today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ENDLESS FRONTIER ACT

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I come to the floor, hopefully today will be the day we wrap up debate on the America Competes-Endless Frontier legislation now known as the USICA, United States Innovation and Competition Act of 2021. We come to talk about this now, primarily because we know that the research dollars invested today are going to decide the jobs of the future. And we know that we all believe a significant increase in the investment in research and development dollars will help us spur innovation, continue to help us compete, and continue to be competitive in key sectors of our economy that are so important to us.

We know that we have been having this debate literally now for more than a decade, starting with President Bush's 2006 report saying America needed to invest more in the National Science Foundation. And at the time, I am pretty sure we thought we were in a track meet where our competitor was maybe half a lap behind us.

I am pretty sure now, as the decade has moved on, we are looking over our shoulder and realizing that the competition is gaining. So we need to make this investment in research and development to stay competitive, to grow jobs for tomorrow, and solve some of our most pressing problems, whether that is climate change, national security on cyber issues, or the advent and usage of artificial intelligence and what that will mean both for our opportunities and for our challenges.

So we are making a renewed commitment to the National Science Foundation. I thank my colleagues again, Senator SCHUMER and Senator YOUNG, for

their innovative legislation. They are telling us a couple of things. They are saying, one, invest more money in research and development, so this bill not only increases the NSF budget, it increases DOE's budget and increases the Defense Advanced Research Program Agency's funding as well by \$17.5 billion.

So it is saying, yes, basic research is still very important. But it is also saying, for the first time, we need to get more out of the research that we do, and we need to have more translational science, that is, taking the basic research and applied research and actually using the applications of that in a more robust way so that we can translate more of that into actual science and manufacturing.

Why is this so important? Because we know that our competitiveness as a nation is suffering from the fact that people are looking at our own research and development. They are looking at our teachings and our publishing at universities and actually going and implementing this. So we need to do better on tech transfer.

This underlying legislation not only helps us do that by helping to help universities who are our No. 1 research partner with Federal dollars, it allows those universities to help us with more tech transfer in innovative ways, that universities not just do the research, but help commercialize it. It also makes investments and helping them protect the patenting of that critical information, so no longer having that patentable information used in other places around the globe, but actually capitalizing on the jobs here in the United States.

It also makes a huge investment in STEM, the science, technology, engineering, and math jobs that we need for the future. And clearly, you can't make a major investment in research and development if you don't have the workforce to carry it out. And we need a workforce to carry it out. So this underlying legislation helps us not only diversify our workforce by a major investment in STEM, going from an annual budget of about \$1 billion in the year 2020 to about \$4 billion a year by 2026. So we are going to get a more diversified STEM workforce with women and minorities participating.

And we are also trying to distribute more of our engineering and science capacity around the United States. Our colleagues, Senators SCHUMER and YOUNG, were adamant that we also look at innovation infrastructure happening in more regional places in the United States, where they may not currently have the R&D capability of some of our major institutions.

So this legislation promises 20 percent of the research and investment dollars go to those EPSCoR states, Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research, an already identified landmark in how we distribute research dollars, that tries to grow the regional research infrastructure in

more places in the United States. Again, I thank my colleagues Senator WICKER for leading the charge on that and helping us make that investment. And it also triples the Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program, so that we get more out of manufacturing workforce training and resiliency of our supply chain for the future.

As I mentioned before we left, it also includes an authorization for NASA and the Artemis mission and making sure that we are staying competitive. As Senator Nelson said in a House hearing on our mission and challenges, as China has made it clear, they are going to Mars, we are going back to the Moon to ready ourselves to go to Mars, and we think that it, too, deserves the funding and support to make us competitive.

I think the bottom line here is that we know that American innovation drives the economy of the future. In a lot of ways, in passing this legislation today—and just so our colleagues know, we will have a couple of votes here before we get to a final passage—we really are doing our part.

People hopefully will support this legislation enthusiastically, well past the majority of Members, because you believe in the history of the United States research and development that we have achieved innovation goals—whether that was what we did with the internet, whether that was what we have done on biosciences, even on some of our issues as it relates to energy. We have achieved big breakthroughs.

So today's vote is about investing in that innovation economy of the future. I am pretty confident because I have met some of these innovators across the United States. I don't know if everything that we have done so far will be absorbed by universities, our researchers, and our labs, but literally, we are trying to dust off R&D skills and make them more competitive for today.

I guarantee you, though, these dollars that reach American entrepreneurs, who reach American innovators, they are ready and willing to take up this challenge. Give them those collaborative research resources through innovation at universities, through tech hubs, through more collaboration on workforce training, through investments in semiconductors, and I guarantee you these entrepreneurs in America will innovate our economy and create the economies of the future.

And what is at stake? If my colleagues have a better idea, I am willing to hear it. But I know this: Americans want us to lead on their regional economies, on the U.S. economies, and on global economies. They do not want to get left behind. They look at this time and era as a challenge to the leadership we have provided in the past.

So settling for Federal investment being near their lowest point as a percentage of GDP in 60 years won't cut it. What cuts it is making an investment

in R&D and empowering those entrepreneurs so they will create those future economies.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON RODRIGUEZ NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all postcloture time is expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Rodriguez nomination?

Ms. HASSAN. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 72, nays 28, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 222 Ex.]

YEAS—72

Baldwin	Hassan	Reed
Bennet	Heinrich	Romney
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Booker	Hirono	Rounds
Brown	Hoeven	Rubio
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Sanders
Cantwell	Kaine	Schatz
Capito	Kelly	Schumer
Cardin	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Carper	King	Shaheen
Casey	Klobuchar	Sinema
Collins	Leahy	Smith
Coons	Luján	Stabenow
Cornyn	Manchin	Tester
Cortez Masto	Markey	Tillis
Cramer	Menendez	Toomey
Duckworth	Merkley	Van Hollen
Durbin	Murkowski	Warner
Ernst	Murphy	Warnock
Feinstein	Murray	Warren
Fischer	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Padilla	Wicker
Graham	Peters	Wyden
Grassley	Portman	Young

NAYS—28

Barrasso	Hagerty	Paul
Blackburn	Hawley	Risch
Blunt	Inhofe	Sasse
Boozman	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Braun	Lankford	Shelby
Cassidy	Lee	Sullivan
Cotton	Lummis	Thune
Crapo	Marshall	Tuberville
Cruz	McConnell	
Daines	Moran	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

ENDLESS FRONTIER ACT—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session to consider S. 1260, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1260) to establish a new Directorate for Technology and Innovation in the National Science Foundation, to establish a regional technology hub program, to require a strategy and report on economic security, science, research, innovation, manufacturing, and job creation, to establish a critical supply chain resiliency program, and for other purposes.