

**THE HONORABLE VERNON EHLERS, RANKING MEMBER
SUBCOMMITTEE ON RESEARCH AND SCIENCE EDUCATION
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

***MARK-UP
OF***

- ***H.R. 1709, STEM EDUCATION COORDINATION ACT***
- ***H.R. 1736, INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION ACT OF 2009***

**TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 2009
2:00 PM**

OPENING STATEMENT

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased that we have the opportunity to mark-up these two important pieces of legislation today in the Research and Science Education Subcommittee, and I thank you for scheduling it this afternoon. It is good to see that we are following regular order and are giving these matters the appropriate amount of attention they deserve at all levels of the Committee process.

I will reserve a majority of my comments on each individual bill until the appropriate time, but will open by simply stating that I am pleased to be an original cosponsor of both H.R. 1709 and H.R. 1736 and look forward to a productive discussion of both measures.

H.R. 1709, STEM EDUCATION COORDINATION ACT OF 2009

The federal STEM education coordination bill before us today is the result of several hearings and two reports, one from the National Science Board (NSB) and one from the Academic Competitive Council. As the Academic Competitive Council report revealed, there are many federal STEM education efforts, but overall our federal STEM programs suffer from a lack of both evaluation and coordination. Improving this coordination is challenging, but I believe we are taking appropriate steps to do that today, at least with regard to coordination among the federal agencies.

We are taking the recommendation of the National Science Board and creating a Committee on STEM Education within the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC). While there is currently an Education and Workforce subcommittee under the Committee on Science, this issue is important enough that it warrants its own Committee and a higher profile within the Office of Science and Technology Policy.

This is an issue that is near to my heart and that I have been working on for many years. I am pleased to be an original cosponsor of H.R. 1709 along with Ranking Member Hall, Chairman Gordon and you and look forward to advancing this bill to the full Committee.

**H.R. 1736, INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION
ACT OF 2009**

The distinguished witnesses we heard from last week on this topic reiterated what we already know: that the United States has much to gain by having in place a well-organized, focused and sustainable commitment to encourage and support international science and technology cooperation.

Not only do these international science and technology partnerships help to spur U.S. innovation and economic competitiveness, foster collaborative solutions to global challenges, and give U.S. scientists access to facilities and equipment all over the world, but they also serve an important diplomatic role.

Reestablishing a Committee under the National Science and Technology Council of the Office of Science and Technology Policy is a step in the right direction to ensure that these international partnerships continue in ways that are of benefit to the Nation. It is my understanding that we plan to use another Committee's comprehensive bill as the vehicle to advance this measure. I encourage you, Mr. Chairman, that as we move forward, we proceed carefully, making sure that we preserve the jurisdiction of the Science and Technology Committee on this matter.

I look forward to the discussion on the pending amendments and to working with you, Mr. Chairman, on ways to continue improving the bill as we move to the full Committee.