

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



For Immediate Release
March 13, 2013

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**Statement of Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)
Hearing on STEM Education: Industry and Philanthropic Initiatives**

Chairman Smith: Since our founding, American innovators have played an important role in our nation's growth and prosperity. Some of the most prominent people in American history were also our nation's greatest inventors.

From Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Edison to the Wright brothers and Henry Ford, American inventors have led the world in innovations for centuries.

But in order to achieve the innovations of tomorrow, we must better educate American students today. We need to empower students with the tools they need to succeed and ensure young adults have the scientific and mathematic literacy to thrive in a technology-based economy.

America lags behind other nations when it comes to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education. American students rank 23rd in math and 31st in science. This is not the record of a great country. And it is not the record of a country that expects to remain a world leader.

We have to invest in STEM education if we want to remain globally competitive in the 21st Century. Currently, the federal government spends about \$3 billion dollars on STEM education activities each year. These programs are found primarily at the National Science Foundation and the Department of Education, but can be in every agency under this Committee's jurisdiction.

Our witnesses today represent organizations that have identified the need to strengthen our workforce by investing in STEM education.

They are organizations that are working to promote STEM education and inspire our next generation of scientists, engineers, entrepreneurs and leaders.

Today we will 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 that we are effectively focusing the resources we do have.

A well-educated and trained STEM workforce undergirds our future economic prosperity. But we have to capture and hold the desire of our nation's youth to study science and engineering so they will want to pursue these careers. I look forward to hearing about the STEM initiatives our witnesses have taken.

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