



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Letter to Protect our Research and Technologies

Dear Colleague:

Please join us in signing a letter urging Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) Conferees to include key language that would protect our most valued research and technologies in our Higher Education Institutions.

In the World Wide Threat Assessment released by the Intelligence Community in January of 2019, the report assessed that ‘China’s intelligence services will exploit the openness of American society, especially academia and the scientific community, using a variety of means.’ In response, a bipartisan group of members worked to include Section 1089, known as the Securing American Science and Technology Act (SASTA), in the House-passed NDAA will help stop foreign intelligence services from exploiting security deficiencies in our academia and scientific communities, while guaranteeing the openness and the free exchange of ideas so critical for the advancement of science. Section 1089 takes a significant step in combating our foreign adversaries’ approach to the strategic acquisition of our technology and research and development.

This critical provision will allow university stakeholders, security professionals, and the federal government to come together and outline best practices designed to protect our research institutions. As our adversaries ramp up their own efforts and multifaceted strategies to steal basic research, it is important that Congress take action. More than 100 universities, scientific societies, and other organizations have signed a community letter of support endorsing the SASTA including the Association of American Universities (AAU) and the Association of Public & Land-Grant Universities (APLU). Click [here](#) for a copy of the community letter of support.

As Congress continues working in conference to finalize the FY2020 NDAA, please join our efforts to bolster our securities in our research institutions and fight back against the foreign theft of our research and technologies in our universities.

To sign onto this letter, please contact Alex Cisneros at Alex.Cisneros@mail.house.gov in Congressman Gonzalez’s office or Clayton Swope at Clayton.Swope@mail.house.gov in Congressman Kilmer’s office.

Sincerely,

Anthony Gonzalez
Member of Congress

Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress

October XX, 2019

The Honorable Adam Smith
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James Inhofe
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Thornberry, Chairman Inhofe, and Ranking Member Reed:

As you finalize the Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), we urge you to include a key provision from the House-passed version of the NDAA to protect our most valuable academic research and development taking place in our Higher Education Institutions from foreign espionage.

Section 1089 of the House-passed NDAA, known as the Securing American Science and Technology Act (SASTA), would improve coordination between the intelligence agencies, security and science agencies, and the university community to bolster protection of university research. Section 1089 establishes an interagency working group to identify security threats, coordinate federal responses, and develop policy guidance for grant-making agencies and universities. The section also creates a new National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine Roundtable to establish a forum where the federal government can engage with the academic community and industry partners to address the theft of research and innovation by foreign actors.

Earlier this year, Federal Bureau of Investigation director Christopher Wray called for the need for a “whole-of-society” response to economic espionage threats, in particular those emerging from China¹. Director Wray went on to say, “more than ever, the adversaries’ targets are our nation’s assets, our information and ideas, our innovation, our research and development, our technology. And no country poses a broader, more severe intelligence collection threat than China.” We see Section 1089 as a call to action by enabling the whole-of-society to implement sophisticated procedures to protect our academic research, while safeguarding the open exchange of ideas and collaboration that is required for the advancement of science.²

¹ <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2019/04/29/fbi-director-discusses-chinese-espionage-threat-us-academic-research> (April 2019)

² AAU-APLU FY20 NDAA Conference Priorities Letter: https://www.aau.edu/sites/default/files/AAU-Files/Key-Issues/9.19.19_AAU_APLU_NDAA_Conference_Letter.pdf (September 2019)

As you work to consider defense priorities for FY 2020, we urge you to include Section 1089 of the House-passed NDAA so we can protect our most valuable research assets from foreign theft and espionage.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,