



June 4, 2021
Washington, D.C.

Dear Members of the U.S. Senate:

I write today in opposition to the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act (S. 1260), better known as the Endless Frontier Act, in the sincere hope you will reevaluate consideration of this bill. While the legislation is ostensibly designed to make America more technologically competitive, particularly against our adversaries in communist Beijing, myriad provisions within it actually undercut America's technological edge and pose significant national security risks.

As you know, S. 1260 establishes a new Directorate for Technology and Innovation at the National Science Foundation (NSF). This initiative, in theory, would partner with various industries and institutions to award grants in an effort to accelerate advanced technologies in ten key areas. However, a [2019 report](#) released by the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee highlighted deep concerns regarding the National Science Foundation's grant-making process. Specifically, that the process at NSF has few, if any, real vetting protocols and that hostile foreign actors on the receiving end of these grants are able to access and benefit from our own taxpayer-funded grants. This security gap remains largely unaddressed in S. 1260 and poses a direct threat to the very purpose of the legislation.

And while the legislation does attempt to prohibit foreign governments from accessing or gaining access to the grants awarded by the new directorate at the NSF, the legislation leaves open a massive loophole regarding institutions who receive grants. Specifically, the bill leaves the onus on recipients to do the actual vetting and specifically says such vetting should be done "to the extent practicable" in Section 2303 of the bill. This is wholly insufficient and a dangerous provision that exposes the entire process to espionage, intellectual property theft, and would in fact aid communist China's efforts to maintain technological parity with the United States.

Furthermore, S. 1260 expands the National Science Foundation's role in areas such as A.I. and quantum computing. These areas are already under the purview of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), an entity under the Department of Defense. The security protocols at DARPA provide far greater protection from hostile foreign actors like communist China whose [espionage efforts](#) to steal U.S. technology continue to accelerate.



Additionally, the legislation authorizes the Department of Commerce to promote and oversee the production of new technologies through the Manufacturing USA Program. However, the initiative allows a waiver process by which China can still be approved to participate in the program, leaving the door open for bureaucrats within U.S. agencies to approve communist China's participation in programs designed to benefit American manufacturers.

Lastly, the legislation fails to tap into the quintessential American spirit that has long been our response to adversaries. Instead of enacting policies that encourage entrepreneurial innovation and technological iteration in the private sector, S. 1260 mirrors the very central-planning philosophy of China that animates their authoritarian behavior by constraining development to ten bureaucrat-approved areas. As He Weiwen, a former senior Chinese trade official [stated approvingly](#), "The U.S. Endless Frontier Act is like a copy of what China is doing in developing its sci-tech sector, although the U.S., especially the former Trump administration, strongly dislikes China's industry policies."

This bill fails from the very outset to achieve its alleged objective. The new directorate is redundant to already existing technological development efforts being performed at DARPA. The security protocols in place at the NSF are inadequate to protect from guaranteed intellectual property theft and espionage on the receiving end of these grants. And the mindset underpinning S. 1260 is fundamentally at odds with the American spirit that has made our republic a marvel of mankind.

The Senate should take this opportunity to pause, reevaluate whether the provisions in S. 1260 match its laudable purpose, and craft a smarter, more innovative legislative response that actually empowers the entrepreneurs in our industries to beat our adversaries in communist China while ensuring that their hard work and tax dollars do not flow into the coffers of those who would seek to dominate us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Vought'.

Russ Vought
President