

Tech CONNECT Act of 2026

Overview

The **Congressional Office for Navigating New and Emerging Critical Topics (Tech CONNECT) Act of 2026** would direct Congress to establish an Office of the Congressional Science and Technology Advisor (OCSTA) to serve as a central, nonpartisan hub for science and technology resources across Congressional offices and committees.

Background

The National Security Commission on Emerging Biotechnology (NSCEB) assessed in April 2025 that Congress needs enduring, non-partisan scientific and technical staff support to educate and advise lawmakers on issues at the intersection of biotechnology and national security.

Over the past three decades, Congress has appropriated less and less funding for resources dedicated to Congressional science and technology assessment and advisement. While the Congressional Research Service (CRS) and the Science, Technology Assessment, and Analytics (STAA) Office within the Government Accountability Office (GAO) continue to provide valuable support, no central hub exists to coordinate timely, nonpartisan technical assistance for Congressional offices and committees—a gap the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) has recommended Congress work to close. As lawmakers increasingly vote on legislation to secure U.S. biotechnology leadership, they will need more consistent access to biotechnology expertise to legislate effectively.

Congress should establish an Office of the Congressional Science and Technology Advisor (OCSTA). The OCSTA would serve as a central, nonpartisan hub for Congressional science and technology resources—helping offices identify what resources already exist across CRS, STAA, and other sources, direct their questions to the most relevant offices, and when necessary, conduct supplemental research when a question falls outside the remit of existing offices.

Available for House introduction

Available for Senate introduction

Congress established the National Security Commission on Emerging Biotechnology (NSCEB) to assess biotechnology's national security impact and recommend strategies to ensure American leadership.

Read the NSCEB's April 2025 report at <https://www.biotech.senate.gov/final-report>

Legislative Details

01 Establishment

The bill would create the Office of the Congressional Science and Technology Advisor (OCSTA) within the legislative branch.

02 Appointment

The Speaker of the House and the President pro tempore of the Senate would jointly appoint the Advisor of OCSTA within 90 days of enactment for a renewable term of 5 years. The Advisor would then appoint a Deputy Advisor. One position would come from the Congressional Research Service (CRS) and the other from the GAO's Science, Technology Assessment, and Analytics (STAA) Office.

03 Duties of OCSTA

- Serve as a central point of contact for Members and congressional staff on science and technology questions, coordinating across CRS, STAA, and other existing resources to connect requesting offices with timely, relevant expertise and analysis;
- Convene monthly bipartisan and bicameral off-the-record briefings for Members and congressional staff on the latest innovations and opportunities across disciplines, featuring leading experts from industry and academia;
- Maintain a database of science and technology fellows and fellowship opportunities, including available placements and candidates across both chambers.

Interested in leading or co-sponsoring this bill?

Please contact ideas@biotech.senate.gov

