

Tech FUTURES Act of 2026

Overview

The **Technology Foresight for Understanding Trends through Unbiased Research, Evidence, and Support (Tech FUTURES) Act of 2026** would codify the Science, Technology Assessment, and Analytics (STAA) Office, within the Government Accountability Office (GAO), as an unbiased resource for science and technology analysis across Congressional offices and committees. Codifying and funding the STAA Office would ensure greater access to rigorous, nonpartisan technical expertise and forward-looking technology assessments across 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. Alongside the Congressional Research Service (CRS), the Government Accountability Office's (GAO) Science, Technology Assessment, and Analytics (STAA) Office continues to provide valuable support, but the STAA Office lacks the stable statutory footing necessary to meet Congress's growing demand for science and technology expertise, including on biotechnology. As lawmakers increasingly vote on legislation to secure U.S. biotechnology leadership, they will need more consistent access to biotechnology expertise to legislate effectively.

To better leverage existing science and technology resources to inform biotechnology legislation, Congress should adopt recommendation No. 141 of the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress's Final Report to authorize the Science, Technology Assessment and Analytics (STAA) Office and make it a permanent part of the GAO. Additionally, Congress should appropriate the funds necessary to build on the STAA Office's existing work and bolster its technology horizon scanning capacity.

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 Codification

This bill would authorize the Science, Technology Assessment, and Analytics (STAA) Office in statute and make it a permanent part of the Government Accountability Office (GAO). The GAO Comptroller General would continue to operate the STAA.

02 Duties of the STAA Office

- Conduct objective, rigorous, and timely analysis of emerging technologies at Congress's request, including evaluating policy options and offering briefings;
- Provide research and analytical support to help committees and Members develop technology assessments and recommendations;
- Notify Members and committees at the start of each new congress of the topics and emerging technology areas the Office is available to analyze on their behalf;
- Conduct horizon scanning for strategic science and technology trends and communicate findings to Members, committees, and other congressional entities;
- Compile data relevant to legislative priorities through concise memos and briefings, classified or unclassified, as requested;
- Regularly recruit specialists, consultants, and technical experts, including in advanced computing, artificial intelligence, automation, biotechnology, and human-machine learning; and
- Establish a science and technology fellowship program within the Office to cultivate a pipeline of technically trained analysts to advise Congress.

03 Appointment

The Comptroller General would appoint the STAA Office Director in consultation with relevant congressional committees.

04 Timeline

The STAA Office would be authorized for 10 years, after which Congress would consider reauthorization.

05 Reporting and Oversight

Before the end of the Office's authorization period, both the Comptroller General and the Director would submit a report to congressional oversight committees evaluating the Office's effectiveness and providing recommendations for reauthorization or modification.

06 Funding

This bill would appropriate \$13,400,000 annually for the duration of the STAA Office's authorization.

Interested in leading or co-sponsoring this bill?

Please contact ideas@biotech.senate.gov

