

Compete Connect

April 1 2025 Edition

From the CEO's Desk



Deborah L. Wince-Smith
President and CEO
Council on Competitiveness

Dear Council Community,

The Council team and I remain grateful for your vision, leadership, and support. With you, we are building an incredibly robust action agenda for 2025 – and we are well underway in executing our most ambitious year ever.

First: our engagement and outreach around the flagship National Commission on Innovation and Competitiveness Frontiers – and its report, *Competing in the Next Economy: Innovation in an Age of Disruption and Discontinuity* – is strong. And to help you – and policymakers – engage even more on the report's key policy pillars and strategic recommendations, we have launched a new landing page, which you can explore by [clicking here](#).

Second: we continue to expand our successful set of [Competitiveness Conversations Across America](#). We launched 2025's first edition on March 10-11 in [San Antonio, TX](#), where I had the chance to host alongside University of Texas at San Antonio President and UT Health San Antonio Acting President Dr. Taylor Eighmy for a look at city and region's emergent best practices in critical infrastructure security - a timely lens, as our water, energy, communications, transportation, and financial systems now integrate across physical and digital realms. While there, we learned about the pro-business political environment that supports the cybersecurity and critical infrastructure firms growing up in and moving to the region. The importance of integration also emerged as a pervasive theme: across companies large and small; amongst research organizations and military entities; and even across the Texas and Mexican border. The Conversation was a deeply engaging look into an often under appreciated innovation frontier, and you can expect a full summary report soon.

And over the past three days, from March 30 to April 1, I co-hosted 2025's second Competitiveness Conversation in [Boulder, CO](#) with: Dr. Ed Seidel, President of the University of Wyoming; Dr. Justin Schwartz, Chancellor of the University of Colorado Boulder; Dr. Martin Keller, Director of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory; Mr. Mike Freeman, CEO & PI of Innosphere Ventures and the CO-WY Engine; and the leadership team from Elevate Quantum. Here, we explored the flourishing I-25 Innovation Corridor, spanning Wyoming, Colorado, and New Mexico, and supporting a growing innovation ecosystem for climate resilience and quantum sciences/technologies. We had more than 250 leaders planning to be with us – including Colorado Governor Polis; the Mayor of Boulder; the CEOs of the Denver and Boulder Chambers; 5+ university presidents; 1 national lab director; Gallup's head of global analytics; the National Science Foundation's Assistant Director for TIPS; the CEOs of MITRE and Quantinuum; and many more key public and private sector leaders.

Following our activities in Colorado, we are headed to [New Mexico](#), May 5-6, and [New England](#), June 5-6, before finishing the year in Salt Lake City, September 18-19 and Pittsburgh, October 19-21. And we're already in the process of lining up our 2026 roster of Conversations. If you would like to explore hosting an edition of our "Competitiveness Conversations Across America," let me and Chad Evans (cevens@compete.org) know.

Third: we have a major development with our longstanding [TLSI](#) - Technology Leadership & Strategy Initiative. Tomorrow, on April 2, just down the road in Littleton, CO, we will host our Spring 2025 TLSI Dialogue at the Lockheed Martin Deer Creek Campus, home of their space enterprise. There, we will finalize the Council's next major policy report, the *Compact for America*, which focuses on bolstering America's innovation ecosystem and creating a more agile defense-industrial base. We will deliver this call to action to leaders in the Administration and beyond. The report will paint a path toward a national policy regime that prioritizes innovation as one of the country's cornerstones for productivity growth and prosperity. Be on the lookout for this groundbreaking release in Q2.

Fourth: we continue to enlarge and engage our university presidents in the [University Leadership Forum](#). ULF members met virtually on March 28th - in preparation for a major Fall 2025 future of higher education summit.

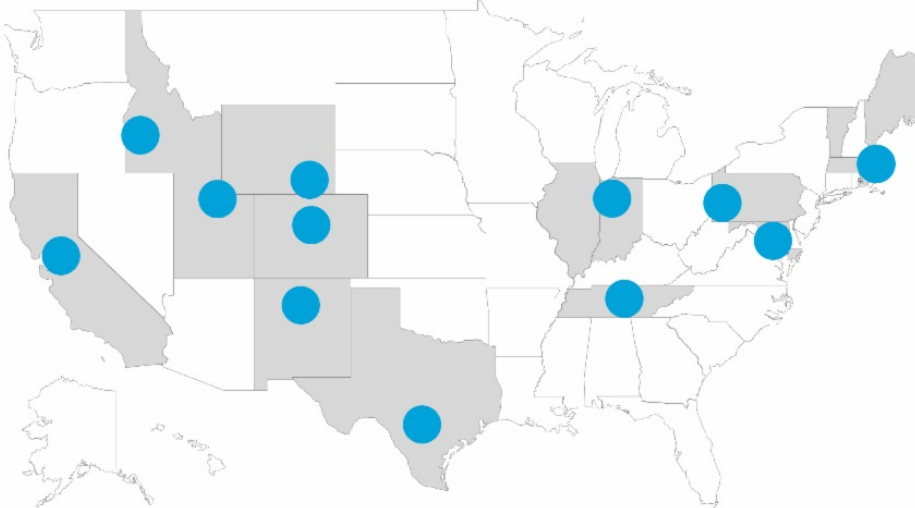
My fifth and final update: this summer, the Council will launch a new phase in its U.S.-Australia Innovation Partnership, by leading a distinguished membership delegation to engage with peer leaders across Australia, July 21-25. In high-level public and private sector conversations, representatives will explore how to create, finance, and grow strategic, bilateral, innovation partnerships in: aerospace and aviation, next generation energy (including nuclear), transformational computing, precision agriculture, finance, advanced manufacturing, and healthcare. For more details on how to join and participate in this effort, please contact [Chad Evans](#).

I encourage all of our Members and broader community to join us in these activities, imbuing our work with your creative spirit.

Sincerely,
Deborah L. Wince-Smith
President and CEO
Council on Competitiveness

Council News

National Commission on Innovation & Competitiveness Frontiers
Competitiveness Conversations Across America




2022 Conversation
Jun. 21-22 Laramie, WY

2023 Conversation
Mar. 27-28 Davis, CA

2024 Conversations
Apr. 25-26 Nashville, TN
Aug. 6-8 Boise, ID
Sep. 9 West Lafayette, IN

2025 Conversations
Mar. 10-11 San Antonio, TX
Mar. 30 - Apr. 1 Boulder, CO
May 5-6 Santa Fe, NM
Jun. 5-6 Boston, MA
Sep. 18-19 Salt Lake City, UT
Oct. 19-21 Pittsburgh, PA

2026 Conversations
Jan. (TBA) Baltimore & College Park, MD



The Council is excited to host six Competitiveness Conversations Across America this year. [Find out more about previous and upcoming Conversations here.](#)

**First Edition of the 2025 “Competitiveness Conversations Across America”
Convenes in San Antonio**

The 2025 series of [Competitiveness Conversations Across America](#) kicked off on March 10 in San Antonio, TX. Council President and CEO Deborah Wince-Smith and University of Texas at San Antonio President and UT Health San Antonio Acting President Taylor Eighmy hosted this two-day exploration of the burgeoning critical infrastructure security ecosystem in Texas and the San Antonio area. A full summary report is forthcoming, but some takeaways include:

- At every level from local to regional, there is a strong emphasis on fostering a pro-business environment.
- The densification and co-location of diverse partners with aligned goals encourages collaborations, grows the cybersecurity and critical infrastructure ecosystem, and enhances the capabilities of private businesses, governments, universities, and national security enterprises. This collaborative ethos transcends the border with Mexico.
- The region's focus on workforce development – spanning the region's educational institutions and the businesses – supports regional economic momentum.

The impact of the Texas Competitiveness Conversation will continue. A full summary report is in the works, and video will feature on the Council's YouTube channel and website.



From left to right: Dr. Taylor Eighmy, President, University of Texas at San Antonio and Acting President,

UT Health San Antonio, Dr. Rubén Minutti Zanatta, Consul General of Mexico in San Antonio ; The Hon. Deborah L. Wince-Smith, President and CEO, Council on Competitiveness; Lt. Gen. (R) John Evans, President and CEO, Evans Strategic Solutions, LLC; Mr. Adam Hamilton, President and CEO, Southwest Research Institute; The Hon. Peter Sakai, Judge, Bexar County, Texas; Mr. Drew Scheberle, Executive Director, National Security Innovation Council



Council on Competitiveness President and CEO the Hon. Deborah Wince-Smith presents the Council's National Competitiveness Award to University of Texas at San Antonio President and UT Health San Antonio Acting President Dr. Taylor Eighmy.

The Governor of Colorado Keynotes the Mountain West Edition of the Competitiveness Conversations Across America

The second edition of the 2025 [Competitiveness Conversations Across America](#) series, "The Mountain West—Pioneering Climate Resilience & Quantum Innovation," winds down March and kicks off the Council's April action agenda.

This Conversation, based in Boulder from March 30 to April 1 – united leaders across the I-25 innovation corridor – Wyoming, Colorado, and New Mexico – as well as from across the nation, to explore emergent innovation ecosystems supporting growth in quantum science and technologies, and climate resilience. We will hear from a range of leaders – including Colorado Governor Jared Polis, United States Senator John Hickenlooper, Quantinuum CEO Rajeeb Hazra, Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce President and CEO J.J. Ament, and many more.

[Visit the Conversation's landing page to learn more.](#)



Conversation Cohosts: Dr. Ed Seidel, President of the University of Wyoming; Dr. Martin Keller, Director of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory; Mr. Mike Freeman, CEO & PI of Innosphere Ventures and CO-WY Engine; Dr. Justin Schwartz, Chancellor of the University of Colorado Boulder; Mr. Zachary

Join us in Santa Fe to See How New Mexico Is Securing Innovation in Energy, AI, and Cybersecurity



[REGISTER NOW](#)

Join the Council May 5-6 in Santa Fe, NM, alongside Los Alamos National Laboratory and Sandia National Laboratories, for the year's third Competitiveness Conversation: "Securing Innovation in New Mexico." There, we will learn how innovators in the Land of Enchantment are meeting the pressing challenges and opportunities that will drive New Mexico's prominence as a leader in energy, AI, cybersecurity, space, and other innovation-driven sectors that underpin U.S. national security. [Visit the Conversation's landing page to learn more.](#)



Conversation Co-hosts: Dr. James Peery, Director, Sandia National Laboratories; Dr. Thom Mason, Director, Los Alamos National Laboratory; The Hon. Deborah Wince-Smith, President and CEO, Council on Competitiveness

Council Prepared for the Launch of a New *Compact for America*



The Council will convene its 31st Technology Leadership and Strategy Initiative (TLSI) Dialogue on April 2 at the Lockheed Martin Deer Creek Campus in Littleton, CO. The TLSI community will finalize and discuss the pending release of the *Compact for America*, the TLSI's strategic set of recommendations to position the United States for tech and innovation leadership in the coming decades. The *Compact* will provide actionable recommendations under five pillars:

1. Promoting technology's role in national competitiveness,
2. Accelerating dual-use innovations,
3. Speeding up commercialization,
4. Establishing global tech leadership, and
5. Expanding U.S. innovation ecosystems.

More to come soon on the release of the *Compact for America*. For more information, contact Council EVP and COO [Chad Evans](#).

President Trump Nominates Paul Dabbar as Deputy Secretary of Commerce



President Donald Trump has nominated Bohr Quantum Technologies Co-founder and Council on Competitiveness former Distinguished Fellow Paul Dabbar to serve as the 20th Deputy Secretary of Commerce at the U.S. Department of Commerce. Dabbar previously served as Under Secretary of Energy for Science, where he oversaw the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)'s scientific research enterprise, including the U.S. DOE National Laboratories. Prior to that, he worked in finance and served as a nuclear submarine officer in the US Navy. [Read the announcement here.](#)

Council CEO's Latest Forbes.com Piece Highlights Critical Business Climate Recommendations from the National Commission's *Competing in the Next Economy* Report



Creating The World's Most Competitive Business Climate For Innovation

By [Deborah Wince-Smith](#), Contributor. ⓘ I write about manufacturing, competitiveness and innovation. [^](#)

Mar 17, 2025, 03:40pm EDT

How do we create the world's most competitive business climate? In her March Forbes.com article, Council on Competitiveness President and CEO Deborah Wince-Smith argues pro-growth and pro-innovation policies are needed now more than ever. By cutting the deficit, rewarding investment in R&D and production, and focusing heavily on data-driven policymaking, the United States can unleash the innovative potential of its private sector. [Read the full article here.](#)

[Council Responds to White House Request for Information on Artificial Intelligence](#)

Public Comment Invited on Artificial Intelligence Action Plan

The White House

February 25, 2025

AI is going to have a dramatic impact on our society and economy. But how – and when – are less clear. That’s why, in response to President Trump’s invitation for public comments on his administration’s upcoming AI Action Plan, the Council on Competitiveness recommends the establishment of a bi-partisan National Commission on Artificial Intelligence. This Commission will develop future scenarios to show leaders the possible paths AI could take, giving them the tools to make policy ready for whatever tomorrow’s AI landscape looks like. [Read the Council’s full response here.](#)

Council Community News

[University of Pittsburgh Announces New Global Innovation Center to Reduce Gender Health Disparities](#)



Pitt Chancellor Joan Gabel and Senior Vice Chancellor for the Health Sciences Anantha Shekhar present plaques to Vishnu Vardhan and his mother, Vijayalakshmi, for whom the center is named.

The University of Pittsburgh recently announced the launch of a global innovation center to reduce health disparities for women — the [Vijayalakshmi Innovation Center in Women's Health Analytics and Research \(VIHAR\)](#). VIHAR will be the first global innovation center to bridge women's health research data with advanced AI and analytics. [Read more here.](#)

The University of Virginia and Virginia Tech Open New Satellite Campuses in Northern Virginia



Over the past month, The University of Virginia President Jim Ryan and Virginia

Tech President Tim Sands both opened satellite campuses in response to the growing demand for advanced degrees in the Washington, D.C. metro area. The University of Virginia Fairfax campus will offer advanced degrees in public service, healthcare, and technology, while Virginia Tech's Innovation Campus Academic Building One will serve as a hub for its business and computer science graduate programs. Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin, who attended both openings, called it an "...exciting day for the commonwealth...and an exciting day for students who will find opportunity they never dreamed of right through those doors." Read more about the [University of Virginia Fairfax campus](#) and the [Virginia Tech Innovation Campus Academic Building One](#) openings.

OpenAI Invests \$50 Million in New Research Consortium with Council Universities

To support the next generation of researchers, OpenAI has invested \$50 million in a new "NextGenAI" consortium designed to give students access to AI resources to enhance and accelerate research. These funds will contribute to both research in AI itself and to the deployment of AI to assist in research in digital health, advanced therapeutics, manufacturing, energy, mobility, and agriculture. Among the founding universities of the Consortium are Council Members University of Georgia, University of Michigan, and the Ohio State University. [Read more here.](#)

National Laboratories Participate in "AI Jam Session"



Secretary of Energy Chris Wright, OpenAI President and Co-founder Greg Brockman, 1000+ scientists, and nine U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) National Laboratories – including Council on Competitiveness National Lab Partners Argonne National Laboratory, Berkeley Lab, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Idaho National Laboratory, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Los Alamos National Laboratory, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and Pacific Northwest National Laboratory – participated in a nationwide "AI Jam Session" to test how AI models could accelerate U.S. scientific discovery. According to Secretary Wright: "Like the Manhattan Project, which brought together the world's best scientists and engineers

for a patriotic effort that changed the world, AI development is a race that the United States must win.” [Read more here.](#)

Senior Fellow Dona Crawford Explores the History and Future of High-Performance Computing in Interview with SC25



To celebrate Women’s History Month, the team behind the International Conference for High Performance Computing, Networking, Storage, and Analysis, interviewed the former Associate Director for Computation at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and current Council Senior Fellow Dona Crawford to get her perspective on the evolution of computing. Crawford described the incredible promise of high-performance computing, especially when combined with AI for the advancement of fields like medicine and materials science. [Read the full interview here.](#)

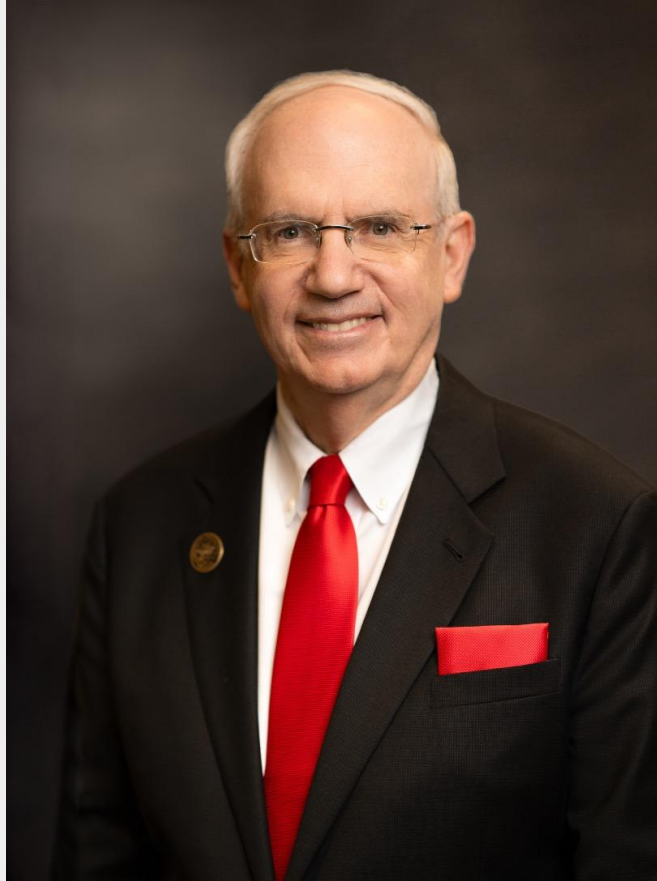
University of South Florida to Open New AI, Computing and Cybersecurity School with \$40 Million Gift



Left to right: USF cybersecurity student Brianna Deaubler; USF Provost Prasant Mohapatra; USF Foundation CEO Jay Stroman; Arnie and Lauren Bellini; USF President and Council on Competitiveness Member and National Commissioner Rhea Law; USF Board of Trustees Chair Will Weatherford

The University of South Florida is establishing the Bellini College of Artificial Intelligence, Cybersecurity and Computing, to combat the growing shortage of 700,000 cybersecurity workers in the United States. The new college will be dedicated to the convergence of cybersecurity and AI. With the creation of this college, the University of South Florida hopes to solidify the cybersecurity leadership of the Tampa Bay area, or “Cyber Bay.” University of South Florida President and Council National Commissioner Rhea Law noted, “We are at a pivotal moment in history where AI and cybersecurity must evolve together. This college will produce the talent and innovation needed to meet the escalating challenges of the digital era.” [Read more here.](#)

University of Nebraska System President Jeffrey Gold Testifies in Support of the “CHIP-IN for Veterans” Act



University of Nebraska System President Dr. Jeffrey Gold testified before the House Veterans' Affairs Committee's Subcommittee on Health in support of legislation to make permanent the "CHIP-IN for Veterans" program. Established in 2016 as a pilot program, "CHIP-IN for Veterans" allows the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to partner with private and philanthropic institutions to create new facilities to meet the medical needs of veterans. The University of Nebraska has been an active participant in the program, creating nationally recognized veteran's care facilities."

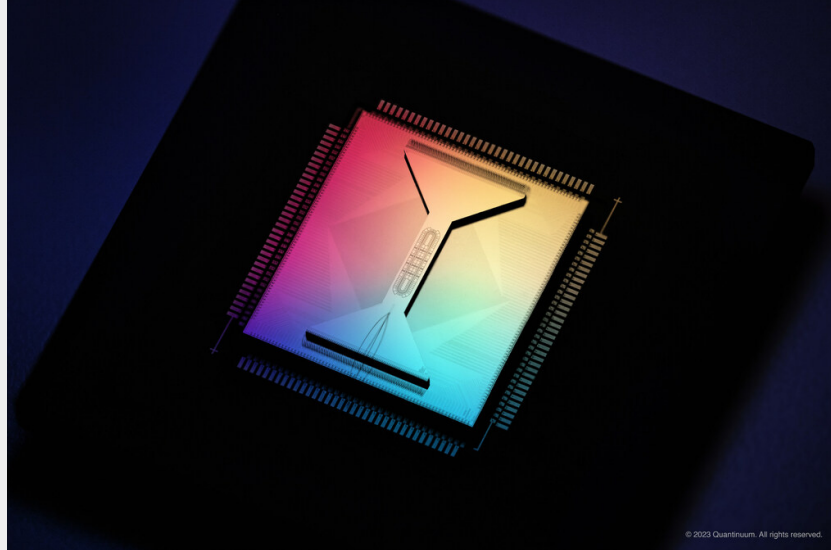
[Read his full testimony here.](#)

Quantinum Joins Accelerated Quantum Research Center as a Founding Collaborator

Quantinum is a founding collaborator for the NVIDIA Accelerated Quantum Research Center, leveraging its industry-leading systems and quantum breakthroughs. Quantinum President and CEO and Council Member Rajeeb Hazra has high hopes for the partnership, and believes it will massively accelerate AI research. "By combining ... differentiated solutions ... we're ... accelerating Generative Quantum AI's adoption across diverse markets."

[Read more about Quantinum's partnership here.](#)

Quantinum, Argonne National Laboratory, and Oak Ridge National Laboratory Demonstrate "Certifiable Randomness" as the First Commercial Application for a Quantum Computer



A Quantinuum quantum computer has demonstrated "certifiable randomness" in a breakthrough for the commercialization potential of quantum technology. In partnership with Argonne National Laboratory and Oak Ridge National Laboratory, as well as other partners, Quantinuum demonstrated their computer could generate truly "random" seeds using a fraction of the computational cost of traditional methods. Quantinuum President and CEO and Council Member Rajeeb Hazra called it "... a major milestone in quantum computing, demonstrating a solution to a real-world challenge using a quantum computer beyond the capabilities of classical supercomputers today." [Read more here.](#)

Competitiveness News

Senator Todd Young (R) Makes the Case for U.S. R&D Investment as a Competitiveness Driver

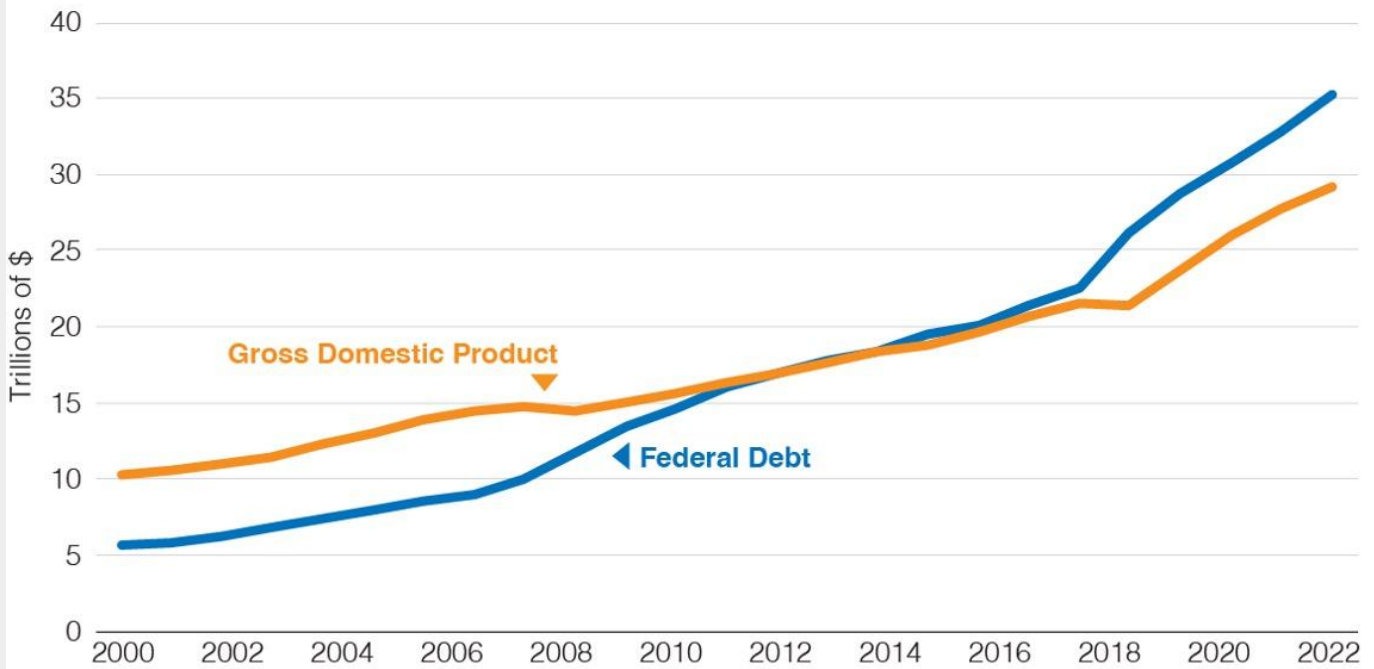
Senator Todd Young (R) argues the United States must increase federal investment in scientific research to maintain its technological edge, particularly as China expands its own R&D efforts. The op-ed emphasizes America's public funding in research underpins the nation's innovation success, and investments in R&D are key to national security and global economic leadership. [Read more here.](#)

Council Insight

U.S. Debt - On an Unsustainable Path?

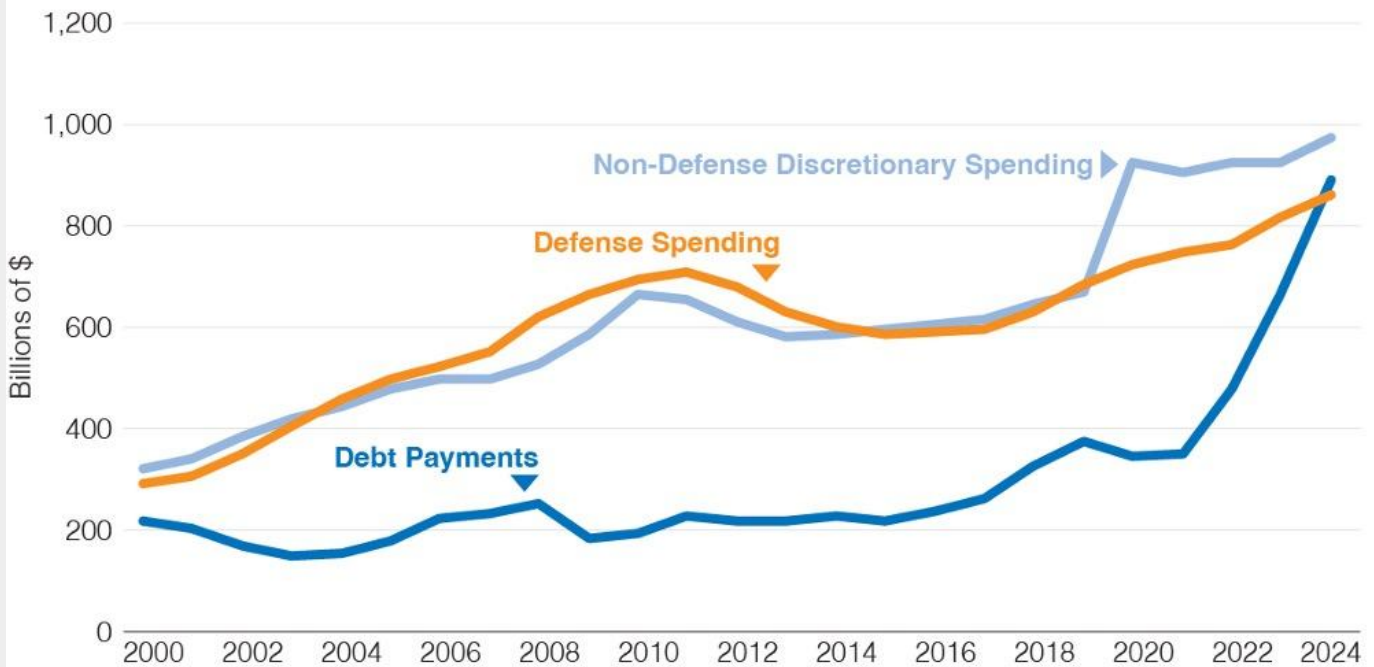
Federal Debt Growth Outpaces GDP Growth

Source: Federal Reserve Economic Data (FRED), St. Louis Fed.



Federal Debt Payments Eclipse Defense Spending

Source: Congressional Budget Office.



The United States' national debt is the highest of any nation in the world, standing at \$36.22 trillion, according to the Senate Joint Economic Committee.

Put another way, the U.S. national debt now stands at 121 percent of GDP, the highest it has since WWII and one of the highest levels of any advanced economy. While U.S. GDP growth has been strong, nearly tripling since 2000, it has not kept pace with the ballooning debt, which has increased nearly sevenfold over the same period.

As this burden mounts, pressure on federal budgets has as well. Federal outlays for servicing debt this year have surpassed defense spending for the first time in history and may soon surpass non-defense discretionary spending as well. This would make debt servicing the largest single non-entitlement expenditure of the federal government, spending from which the country receives no future benefit aside from maintaining the federal credit rating.

Going forward, a rising debt burden will further unbalance the federal account sheet if there is not a strategy in place either to raise revenues significantly or to cut expenditures dramatically, leaving open the worrying possibility of a debt spiral for the world's largest debtor. While taking on debt to invest in productive infrastructure and long-term research that will yield future gains is sound fiscal strategy, it must be done prudently. That is why one of the recommendations from the Council's report, [*Competing in the Next Economy: Innovating in the Age of Disruption and Discontinuity*](#), is to reduce the deficit from the current seven percent of GDP to the historically sustainable 3.7 percent, allowing gains in GDP to offset debt growth.

New to the Community



Dr. Laura Locascio
President and CEO
American National Standards Institute (ANSI)

Dr. Locascio joins as a General Member and a member of the Executive Committee.



Dr. Johnathan Alger
President
American University

Dr. Alger joins as a General Member.



Dr. Justin Schwartz
Chancellor
University of Colorado Boulder

Dr. Schwartz joins as a General Member.

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