



House Communications & Technology Committee

Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, June 30, 2026
10:00 am
205 Ryan Office Building

10:00am **Call to Order**

Roll Call

Opening Remarks

10:10am **Panel 1: Astronomical and Scientific Research**

- Dr. Jason Wright, Professor of Astronomy & Astrophysics, Penn State University

10:25am **Panel 2: Aerospace and Aviation Perspectives**

- Ryan Graves, Founder/Executive Director, Americans for Safe Aerospace

10:40am **Panel 3: Government Investigations**

- Chris Mellon, Chairman of the Board, The Disclosure Foundation;
Former Deputy Secretary of Defense; and
Former Minority Staff Director, US Senate Intelligence Committee

10:55am **Closing Remarks**

11:00am **Adjournment**



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Dr. Jason T Wright

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Chairman Ciresi, Chairman Ortity and members of the House Communications and Technology Committee, thank you for the invitation to speak with you today on Astronomical and Scientific Research into life elsewhere in the Universe on June 30, 2026.

I'm Jason Wright, Professor of Astronomy and Astrophysics at Penn State, and director of the Penn State Extraterrestrial Intelligence Center (SETI). For most of my career I have worked on a variety of problems related to stars, their planets, and life in the universe. Recently I have focused on searches for technological life elsewhere in the Universe.

Penn State and the Eberly College of Science have been extremely supportive of research in this field. The PSETI Center receives internal support for student training, grant writing, curricular development, and community building within the field. Members of the Center have raised philanthropic and federal grants totaling almost \$1M.

To offer some background on this topic: the modern Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence began around 1960 with the realization that humanity's capability to transmit and receive radio communications had improved to the point that our technology could send and receive signals at interstellar distances. This raised the novel possibility that humans might be capable of detecting other species' communications coming from across the Galaxy.

Over the next few years numerous other methods of detection were proposed, including the use of optical light as a communication medium (much as we use in fiber optic cables and as NASA is exploring with our deep space probes), the search for probes in the Solar System orbiting the Sun (often called "Bracewell Probes"), the use of infrared light to detect the heat of industry or computation (often called "Dyson Spheres"), and the potential detection of atmospheric industrial gases or surface features on other planets (such as the CFCs in our atmosphere). We call these detectable signs of technology "technosignatures."

In the 1970's and '80's NASA proposed and received small amounts of federal funding to pursue the search for radio signals, but deficit hawks in the US Senate found the program to be a ripe target for their grandstanding and the program was cancelled.

NASA would avoid the topic for the next 35 years, and the field was then primarily driven by the philanthropy of large donors such as Bernard

Oliver, Paul Allen, and eventually Yuri Milner, all of whom primarily funded continuations of the NASA radio SETI program, primarily at the SETI Institute, a nonprofit research institution in Mountain View, California, UC Berkeley, and Oxford University.

The tide at NASA began to turn in 2018, when Congress began pushing it to consider more technosignature work. I organized the scientific program for a NASA workshop to consider how NASA could re-enter the field, and shortly afterwards began organizing a series of symposia at Penn State to explore all aspects of the field, including contributions from the social sciences and humanities. We have held three international symposia on the University Park campus so far.

One of the most challenging parts of the field is that it requires us to imagine—to guess really—at the most ostentatious forms of technology that might be out in the Galaxy for us to detect. The easiest signals to find will be those deliberately aimed at Earth—beacons we call them—because these signals should be very strong, and at frequencies that would be easy to guess.

Presumably more common, but presumably harder to detect, would be the “passive” technosignatures of a species “just going about its business.” Today, our radio signals from aircraft and ICBM radars, orbital spacecraft such as Starlink, and even 5G towers send a steady stream of radio signals off into space.

A species living on a planet in the alpha Centauri system wondering if our Sun hosts any life might look for our planet’s biosignatures by building a spacecraft akin to NASA’s planned Habitable Worlds Observatory to search for telltale signs like methane and ozone in our atmosphere. But a simpler and cheaper method may actually be for them to build a large radio telescope, like our planned next generation Very Large Array or Square Kilometer Array, and detect our leaked radio emissions.

In other words, our technosignatures are probably more obvious than our biosignatures, and they might only grow with time. It stands to reason, then, that searches for life in the Universe should include studies of both biosignatures and technosignatures.

Much of our research at the PSETI Center has been focused on novel methods of searching for technosignatures. For instance, we have teamed with the SETI Institute in California to conduct novel radio searches that exploit our knowledge of the orbits of exoplanets to search for planet-to-planet communications in those systems. We have also conducted some of the most sensitive searches ever performed using

archival NASA data for Dyson spheres in the Milky Way and in other galaxies.

We also train a large fraction of all of the new researchers in the field. Our PhD alumna Sofia Sheikh is now a staff scientist at the SETI Institute, and 3 of the 6 PhD theses in SETI in the past 6 years have been by Penn Staters. I have recently completed the first comprehensive upper-level textbook in the field, where it is used in courses for our undergraduate majors and our astrobiology graduate students.

Today, NASA is once again entertaining proposals to search for technosignatures using its fleet of telescopes or via grants to do theoretical work to determine what sorts of technosignatures we are most likely to find. In planning documents and conferences SETI is now mentioned alongside work on biosignature detection as an important part of NASA's goal of finding life elsewhere in the Universe. On the philanthropic side, the Breakthrough Listen project is conducting the most comprehensive search for radio technosignatures ever performed using the largest and most powerful radio telescopes in the world, including the Green Bank Telescope in West Virginia and the Very Large Array in New Mexico.

One common misconception regarding the field is that if we find a signal we will be able to quickly start communing with the other species, asking them questions, exchanging technological breakthroughs, and planning visits. In truth, SETI scientists largely expect that the origin of such a signal will come from many light years away, and unless it is explicitly intended for us will be difficult or impossible to interpret. Even after a signal is detected, the process of discovery may take decades before it is widely agreed to be of alien and technological origin. There is no reason to think they would notice any signal we send towards them, which would take decades, centuries, or even millennia to arrive.

Travel between the stars is even harder—we have no reason outside the plot contrivances of science fiction to think that warp drive is possible, and so any actual physical contact would take hundreds of thousands or many millions of years to undertake. The discovery of alien technology is almost certainly not going to be like it is in the movies.

But this does not diminish my excitement at the fact that we are searching for such technology smarter and more effectively than ever. Penn State remains a major player in this space because of its longstanding strengths across astronomy. Penn State has historical strengths with NASA space observatories including the development of one of the cameras of the Chandra X-ray Observatory, its leadership and management of the Niel Gehrels Swift Observatory, and its prototyping

of the Dragonfly mission to Titan. It has for decades now been at the forefront of the field of astrobiology, being one of only two institutions in the US offering a PhD in this discipline. It also has one of the largest astronomy departments in the world and is contemplating a major effort to expand its excellence further into the field of planetary science.

Today, the Penn State Extraterrestrial Intelligence Center works to serve as the academic hub of the field, attracting graduate students who wish to work in SETI, and securing funding from NASA, the NSF, and philanthropic foundations such as the Templeton Foundation, the Heising Simons Foundation, and the Ultraintelligence Foundation. Penn State undergraduate students maintain a curated bibliography of the SETI literature used by researchers worldwide, and astrobiology PhD students develop novel ways to search for technosignatures.

People often ask me which method of technosignature search is most likely to succeed, or in what form the first definitive sign of alien technology will take. I honestly respond that I really don't know, but if I had to guess I would say it will be in a form we haven't even started looking for yet. Part of the purpose of the PSETI Center is to incubate a new generation of inventive scientists who will expand the search in ways we haven't even thought of yet. I'm excited to see where they take us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason Wright". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jason" and the last name "Wright" clearly distinguishable.

Jason T Wright
Professor of Astronomy and Astrophysics
Director, Penn State Extraterrestrial Intelligence Center



Americans for Safe Aerospace

Washington, D.C. | safeaerospace.org

25 June 2026

House Communications & Technology Committee
205 Ryan Office Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

TRANSMITTED BY ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION

Email: Ngrace@pahouse.net

RE: Informational Hearing on Detecting, Analyzing, and Contextualizing Unexplained Phenomena.

Chairman Representative Ciresi, Vice Chair Representative Ortity, and members of the House Communications and Technology Committee,

My name is Ryan “FOBS” Graves. I am a former F-18 pilot with over a decade of service in the United States Navy, including multiple combat deployments. As a naval aviator, I tracked advanced Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAP) on military sensors firsthand. Today, as the Founder and Executive Director of Americans for Safe Aerospace (ASA), I represent thousands of commercial and military aircrews, law enforcement officers, engineers, and veterans. I also chair the UAP Committee for the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA), leading over 50 PhDs and aerospace engineers analyzing the science behind these anomalies.

Advanced UAP represent a documented gap in domain awareness and an immediate aviation safety risk. The data is clear, the physical presence of these objects is established, and the conversation is no longer about whether they exist. The priority now is to establish the infrastructure at federal and state levels to manage the operational reality, remove the stigma, and protect our airspace.

Operational Realities

In 2012, my squadron, VFA-11, was operating F/A-18F Super Hornets off Virginia Beach as part of a pre-deployment naval exercise that included the USS Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group. Following a significant radar upgrade, we detected unknown objects in our airspace. Initially dismissed as software glitches, we soon corroborated these tracks with infrared sensors and direct visual observation. Sightings became a part of our daily briefs.

A pivotal incident occurred during an air combat training mission in Warning Area W-72, an exclusive block of airspace ten miles east of Virginia Beach. All traffic into the training area goes through a single GPS point at a set altitude. Just at the moment two jets crossed this threshold, one of the pilots saw a dark gray cube inside of a clear sphere. The object appeared motionless against the wind, fixed directly at the entry point. The pilot reported that the object was within fifty (50) feet of the lead aircraft and the jets were flying within 150 feet of each other. The pilots terminated the mission immediately and returned to base. Our squadron submitted a safety report, but there was no official acknowledgement of the incident and no further mechanism to report the sightings.

As a pilot and trained engineer, I have no conventional explanation for what we witnessed – objects demonstrating immediate acceleration to Mach 1, station-keeping in hurricane-force winds, and outlasting our aircraft by operating all-day without visible lift, control surfaces, or thermal propulsion. Simply stated: If UAP originate from a foreign adversary, it is a national security problem. If they represent something else, it is an issue for science. In either case, it is a critical hazard to flight safety.

Americans for Safe Aerospace

Recognizing the need for action and answers, I founded Americans for Safe Aerospace, a military pilot-led, 501(c)(3) advocacy organization dedicated to aerospace safety, national security, and scientific research regarding UAP. ASA provides a secure, confidential mechanism for military personnel, law enforcement, flight crews, veterans, and others to report UAP encounters. The seasoned professionals often begin reports with, "I realize this sounds crazy." The fear of professional ruin is real.

Reporters routinely describe anomalies flying above 40,000 feet, approaching the Karmen Line, executing instantaneous right-hand turns, performing sharp J-hooks, and clustering over highly trafficked commercial corridors—including over the continental United States.

Consider three (3) recent examples of incidents reported to ASA:

- *The Law Enforcement Encounter* - In February 2025, on a clear night in the vicinity of the Prairie Island Nuclear Power Plant in Minnesota, a suburban police sergeant and SWAT Leader, along with three fellow officers, observed a spherical object with rapidly changing multicolor lights low on the western horizon. Over a 90-minute period, the object initially drifted lethargically between 10,000–30,000 feet. The witnesses reported it reacted sharply when a helicopter transited the area, accelerating northward and climbing to approximately 40,000 feet in less than 10 seconds. The object then resumed slow westward movement before a second, similar object was briefly spotted to the north. This incident followed a similar five-minute sighting by the same lead witness two nights prior.

- *The Commercial Encounter* - A Boeing 737 crew departing Houston was ordered into an urgent level-off by air traffic control due to an unidentified target they explained was "popping up all day." The pilot spotted a massive, metallic, morphing oblong spheroid, resembling liquid mercury, which hovered and then instantaneously vanished. The encounter lasted seven seconds but shifted the pilot's perspective; he now urges fellow aviators to report their sightings.
- *The Military Encounter*: In February 2022, a former U.S. Army Special Forces and intelligence officer and four fellow officers at Fort Carson, Colorado, witnessed a 300-foot, translucent-white oval hovering silently about 300 meters above Cheyenne Mountain's antenna array. Its surface consisted of articulating angular panels pulsing irregularly. After two minutes, it vanished without a sound, emission, or environmental effect.

These compelling reports often involve multiple witnesses, sensor systems, and overwhelming supporting documentation. ASA believes these accounts only scratch the surface; more will share their experiences once they believe it is safe and know how and where to report such experiences.

Pathway to Answers & Sustainable Solutions

To effectively manage the operational and societal impacts during a time of emerging technology like UAP a comprehensive framework of training, policy, and structured processes must be established across public safety sectors, critical infrastructure, and local communities. Regardless of the nature or origin of the unknown phenomenon, I believe we must address three core vulnerabilities at the state level:

1. **Support State and Local Law Enforcement.** Law enforcement agencies require structured training, policies, and standardized processes to address UAP. Front-line officers and leadership currently lack defined protocols to handle, document, and evaluate encounters in local airspace. This operational vacuum leads to widespread confusion and a lack of reporting. Without a formal framework, critical baseline data is lost, leaving agencies blind to public safety anomalies and facing unknown operational consequences.
2. **Protect Critical Infrastructure:** Security personnel safeguarding critical infrastructure, such as power plants and grids, urgently need specialized UAP training and policy integration. Tasked with protecting highly sensitive assets, these organizations often operate without guidelines to identify, log, or escalate sightings over restricted zones. Absent dedicated reporting mechanisms and escalation channels, these vital sites remain vulnerable to unmonitored incursions, leaving a glaring gap in infrastructure defense.
3. **Improve Communication with Local Communities:** Communities need transparent communication processes, proactive policies, and public education to manage the

societal impact of UAP events. Historical precedents like the New Jersey flap show that widespread sightings generate thousands of reports, but a lack of structured communication leaves citizens anxious, confused, and vulnerable to misinformation. Establishing clear reporting pipelines and public-facing strategies is essential to mitigate panic, prevent public mistrust, and restore institutional credibility.

Conclusion

Over a decade after my own encounters, flight crews and law enforcement continue to face similar hazards daily. The identity of these objects remains unknown, existing infrastructure is not designed to problem solve, and we still do not have sustainable solutions. Today, I leave you with a fundamental question: *Why are we allowing unidentified objects to operate with impunity in our skies?*

Thank you for your focus and leadership on this critical issue. The aviation community and the public deserve a transparent and data-driven approach to understanding what is operating in our skies.

For questions, please contact Americans for Safe Aerospace (ASA) by emailing us at ryan@safeaerospace.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ryan Graves". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "G".

Ryan Graves
Executive Director
Americans for Safe Aerospace