



COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY
Lamar Smith, Chairman

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Statement from Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)

60 Years of NASA Leadership in Human Space Exploration: Past, Present, and Future

Chairman Smith: The recently released National Space Exploration Campaign report shows we are truly in an exciting time for our nation and NASA.

Our witnesses today include the head of NASA's human spaceflight programs and the directors of three NASA centers who carry out major human spaceflight responsibilities.

Together, they are responsible for implementing and carrying out much of this Campaign and we are fortunate to have them before us.

With clear Congressional direction, strong White House leadership, and NASA's tremendous expertise we have all the resources available to make significant progress in human space exploration.

I'm pleased that NASA has delivered a human exploration roadmap as required by the 2017 NASA Transition Authorization Act.

The National Space Exploration Campaign lays out a bold and achievable plan for human exploration that includes low-Earth orbit, the Moon, Mars, and beyond. The report also specifies key critical decision points for future human space exploration.

By laying out an open architecture with key decision points, off ramps, and deadlines, the Campaign demonstrates resilience, constancy, and sustainability.

We cannot always predict which ambitious projects will succeed or what future missions may discover, but this Campaign builds in opportunities to capitalize on successes while mitigating misfortunes.

I believe this report also clarifies the Administration's policy on the International Space Station and its future. Clearly, NASA and the Administration do not intend to abandon America's presence in low-Earth orbit.

This Campaign lays out some of the first details about how the U.S. can preserve its leadership in low-Earth orbit, while extending its reach outward to the Moon, Mars, and beyond.

At the same time, I note that Subcommittee Chairman Babin has introduced his Leading Human Spaceflight Act, which builds on the ISS Transition Report and the ISS policy laid out in the National Space Exploration Campaign report and provides forward-leaning Congressional leadership as we move into the next phase of low-Earth orbit utilization.

I am sure that Mr. Gerstenmaier will agree that all of NASA's Centers play an important and vital role in our nation's space program. Each Center is an incredible technological asset and engine of economic development.

The goals and tasks laid out in the National Space Exploration Campaign will provide many opportunities for each center to bring their unique capabilities to bear.

Three of those Centers are represented here today to tell us how they intend to contribute to this Campaign and what it means for their workforces and their communities.

As we near the end of this Congress, I cannot tell you how pleased I am with our progress in space over the last six years. We are on the verge of one of the most ambitious eras in space that this country has ever seen. I hope the testimony we hear today will shed additional light on these exciting times.

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