

COMMITTEE ON
**SCIENCE, SPACE, AND
TECHNOLOGY**
CHAIRMAN LAMAR SMITH



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**Statement of Space Subcommittee Chairman Steven Palazzo (R-Miss.)
Space Subcommittee Markup of Committee Print, NASA Authorization Act of 2013**

Chairman Palazzo: Good morning. I would like to welcome everyone to our mark-up of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2013. We all have different ideas about the best way to prioritize activities at the agency, but we share a common desire for a strong and vibrant space program.

The American people have always believed in pushing the boundaries of our frontier. This country is filled with young men and women who are starving to be on the frontlines of the next big thing, to help redefine the limits on our capabilities. My goal is to ensure that Congress – and this Subcommittee – does everything in its power to support the next generation of explorers and maintain America’s leadership in space. I want to add that I personally believe that American leadership in space is a matter of national pride, but it’s also a matter of national security.

In order to protect the American space legacy, we must make hard choices, prioritize budgets, and give NASA direction for future endeavors. The bill before us today accomplishes those tasks and continues the direction that Congress provided in previous authorization acts in 2005, 2008, and 2010.

This bill ensures the continued development of the next generation of human space flight vehicles by investing in the Space Launch System and Orion crew capsule. It also ensures efficient and effective utilization of the International Space Station, the on-schedule development of the commercial crew program, and continued delivery of supplies with the Commercial Resupply Services program.

Funding authorized for the Science Mission Directorate ensures critical programs will continue on schedule. Over the last five years the Earth Science program has grown by more than forty percent at the expense of other critical missions within the Science Mission Directorate and elsewhere in NASA. There are thirteen agencies throughout the federal government that currently fund climate science research, but only one agency does space exploration and space science. This bill ensures a balanced portfolio of science mission programs by simply scaling back growth in the Earth Science budget from the last five years. It also prevents other agencies from using NASA as a piggy bank for projects they can’t afford, or can’t justify. NASA’s Earth Science Program is more than just climate change. The technologies developed by NASA increase agricultural yields, provide for more efficient land management, monitor resource utilization, and inform the war fighter on the battlefield. This bill allows NASA to focus on its core mission to develop the next generation of sensors and instruments rather than pay for other agencies’ unfunded mandates.

The programs, projects and activities within the Aeronautics Mission Directorate and Space Technology program will continue to receive funding for high priority items, as well as continued guidance for the development of roadmaps and technologies that infuse technologies into commercial markets.

While I feel strongly that it is the job of Congress to provide guidance and leave science to the scientists, this bill addresses two significant yet problematic Administration proposals that are greatly lacking in details and budget justification. Specifically, this bill halts a proposal to consolidate NASA education programs into other agencies and prohibits NASA from beginning work on the Asteroid Retrieval Mission until the Administration can provide more detailed information.

Regarding the proposed Education and Public Outreach reorganization, it is clear that the requisite work for a shift of this magnitude was not completed before the proposal was made to Congress, and very little effort was made to communicate the reasons for this change to Congress. That is why the STEM education program reorganization has drawn criticism from both sides of the aisle.

Additionally, the Administration has proposed a mission to retrieve an asteroid and relocate it to lunar orbit for exploration by astronauts. This Asteroid Retrieval Mission (or ARM) has not been through any type of mission formulation review and, as recently as two weeks ago, NASA was still soliciting ideas on how to do the mission without any clear direction on its purpose, budget, or technical requirements. Further, the hesitation from the scientific community to embrace such a concept should give us reason to pause in these tight budget times. This bill prohibits NASA from doing any work on the project until a report on the proposal and more details are provided to Congress.

In both the case of the STEM education program reorganization and the Asteroid Retrieval Mission, the Administration communicated very little to Congress and failed to address the questions many lawmakers have regarding the proposal. In the future, it is my hope that the agency will work with Congress before announcing major policy shifts and program changes.

Finally, the bill includes several measures to ensure good government practices and transparency within NASA including: reform for the use of Space Act Agreements, changes to termination liability requirements, and stricter cost growth controls.

In 2010 this Committee developed a bipartisan NASA Authorization Act that was summarily ignored by the Senate. I do not want this to happen again. I believe we have much more to offer this debate. This Subcommittee consists of members who are extremely invested in these issues. We are passionate about NASA's future, and the future of American space flight. Given the current budget and political realities, I believe this bill offers some of the most responsible and workable solutions possible. We've gone to great lengths to work with NASA, Members of this Subcommittee, and the scientific community to arrive at this bill. It is my hope that we will be able to draw from our common desire to see NASA succeed, put aside some of our minor differences and move NASA and American space exploration forward.

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