

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



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**Statement of Space Subcommittee Chairman Steven Palazzo (R-Miss.)
Hearing on Mars Flyby 2021: The First Deep Space Mission for the Orion and Space Launch
System?**

Chairman Palazzo: Thank you Mr. Chairman and thank you for holding this hearing today. The future of human space exploration is one that is personal to me.

As other space-faring nations expand their programs and look to destinations such as the Moon and Mars, I consider American leadership in space as a matter of national pride but also national security. This Committee has been consistent in its commitment to human exploration. Yet, over the last decade, the human exploration program at NASA has been plagued with instability from constantly changing requirements, budgets, and missions. We cannot change our program of record every time there is a new President.

My Subcommittee and this full Committee passed a NASA Authorization Act last year that calls on NASA to develop a stepping stone plan to Mars. We must ensure that future exploration endeavors lay the groundwork for an eventual human landing on Mars.

This Committee must also maintain strong support for the next generation deep space vehicles: The Space Launch System and Orion crew capsule. I've visited Marshall Spaceflight Center, which is leading development of the SLS rocket, and I've had the opportunity to see SLS engine tests firsthand at Stennis Space Center in my own backyard in South Mississippi. I believe we are on the right track. But we must remain budget-focused and mission-vigilant.

I look forward to hearing what our witnesses have to say today. Thank you Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

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