

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



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

**Chairman Palazzo:** Good morning everyone. I would first like to thank Chairman Smith for his kind words about the bill before us today and his unwavering commitment to our nation's space program.

We've tried to lead this process in the most open and transparent manner possible, with a commitment to working with all the stakeholders. I truly feel this is a model for other committees. In preparing a bill that could be marked up at the full committee today, we held multiple hearings regarding the future of NASA, provided a discussion draft with a full week notice before a legislative hearing, conducted a subcommittee mark on a committee print that was provided to all members a full week in advance, and we are now once again providing an opportunity for amendments today. While I wasn't around for the 2010 Authorization bill, it is my understanding that this year's process has been much more inclusive and transparent. That has certainly been my goal.

The bill before us ensures sustainability of purpose and budget for high-priority programs and gives direction to NASA on future endeavors. It continues the direction that Congress provided in successive Authorization Acts in 2005, 2008, and 2010. This bill properly invests in the continued development of the next generation of human space flight systems 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 such as the James Webb Space Telescope will continue on schedule. 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. The programs, projects and activities within the Aeronautics Mission Directorate and Space Technology program infuse valuable technologies into our commercial markets. That is why we continue to provide funding for high priority items, as well as continued guidance for the development of roadmaps and technologies.

As has been stated many times on both sides of the aisle, the proposed consolidation of education programs into other agencies is poorly conceived and lacks any coherent strategy. This bill prohibits the reorganization at NASA. Additionally, the Administration requested funding for an Asteroid Retrieval Mission, or ARM. Once again, members on both sides of the aisle have echoed the concerns expressed by the scientific and engineering communities regarding this poorly defined mission. This bill prohibits NASA from doing any work on the project until a report on the proposal and more detail can be produced.

In both the case of the STEM education program reorganization and the Asteroid Retrieval Mission, the Administration communicated very little to Congress before announcing the initiatives. In the past, Congress and NASA had a great working relationship and regularly discussed large changes or proposals at the Agency. Yet in recent years, NASA has proposed policy shifts time and again without doing the requisite outreach and technical work. It is in the best interest of the Nation for the Administration to do a better job of preparing these proposals before bringing them to lawmakers for funding.

I want to take a moment now to address some of the issues that arose last week at the subcommittee mark up, when several members expressed interest on working together to improve specific sections of the bill before us today. I am happy to say that we have worked diligently over the last week to work out these differences and come to agreements and compromises on the provisions in question, many of which have been included in the manager's amendment we will take up later.

There is one issue that my friends on the other side of the aisle cannot seem to see past, and that is the funding levels of the bill, which are commensurate with the Budget Control Act. We continue to hear from the minority that the Budget Control Act does not limit Authorizations. The Budget Control Act, however, does limit actual spending. I would also like to point out that this bill provides room for NASA funding to grow should a budget agreement be reached.

I have the utmost respect for our friends in the minority, and I am glad they weighed in with an alternative proposal. However, I don't understand why an Authorizing Committee would pass a bill that authorized funding levels above what is legally allowed, knowing that such actions would make this bill dead on arrival in both the House and the Senate. I also find this particularly interesting, since more minority members of this committee voted for the Budget Control Act than majority members. While it is safe to say everyone on this Committee would like to see more funding for NASA, we must do the best with the hand we've been dealt. To do otherwise would be an abdication of leadership, and of our responsibility as authorizers.

It is imperative that we pass the bill before us today. It directs NASA to develop a roadmap for human exploration; fully funds the next generation of exploration vehicles; preserves funding for robotic exploration; ensures that the next generation of space telescopes are launched on time; allows for the full utilization of the International Space Station; and develops U.S. capabilities to access low earth orbit. Conversely, the minority proposals would continue our dependence on Russia to access the International Space Station; allow the Administration to continue its reorganization of NASA's highly successful outreach programs despite bipartisan concerns; and support an Asteroid Retrieval Mission that NASA's own advisory committees have called into question.

Today this Committee has an opportunity to come together at a crucial time in our nation's history, and deliver another bipartisan Authorization Act that gives NASA the guidance and stability it desperately needs. The good men and women who serve their country at NASA and who have devoted their lives to pushing the boundaries of human knowledge deserve no less and neither do the American people. Mr. Chairman, I support the bill with the manager's amendment as filed with the Full committee and urge by colleagues to do so as well.

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