



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

For Immediate Release
February 25, 2016

Media Contact: Laura Crist
(202) 225-6371

Statement of Space Subcommittee Chairman Brian Babin (R-Texas)
The Space Leadership Preservation Act and the Need for Stability at NASA

Chairman Babin: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Good morning. It is a pleasure to be here today and with our esteemed colleague and our first witness, Representative John Culberson.

I represent the 36th district of Texas, the home of the Johnson Space Center (JSC). I have had the privilege of visiting JSC on a number of occasions. Every time I stop by, I am reminded of the truly extraordinary accomplishments we've made as a nation. I am also inspired by the potential that exists at NASA to continue expanding our horizons deeper into space. It is truly an awe inspiring mission that is pursued with dedication by NASA's personnel and its contractors.

Space exploration and science captures Americans' interests, it inspires us to pursue extraordinary goals, and keeps us on the forefront of scientific achievement. It is a challenging endeavor that distinguishes the United States as a global leader, supports innovation and economic growth, and inspires the next generation to build, explore, and discover.

The missions that NASA should be focused on are complex, they are expensive, and they are long term. Unfortunately, the last eight years have been characterized by turmoil, upheaval, and uncertainty. We cannot change our program of record every time there is a new President. We cannot speed up development or change course overnight. Space exploration requires stability and unwavering dedication.

Make no mistake; space exploration is a worthwhile investment for the taxpayer and our nation. It inspires the next generation of explorers to pursue science, technology, engineering, and math; advances U.S. soft power and international relations; reinforces our aerospace industrial base; increases economic competitiveness; and advances our national security interests.

There is a great deal of promise in the future of space. But if we fail to provide stability for NASA's space exploration programs, we may well lose our leadership in space. And other nations will happily step up. Losing U.S. leadership in space will significantly undermine our national interests, erode our industrial base, undermine our international influence, and cause the loss of a skilled workforce. I, for one, don't want that to happen on my watch.

Mr. Culberson's "Space Leadership Preservation Act" offers us an opportunity to review many of the challenges facing our nation's space agency. There may be many ways to achieve the goals of this legislation, so I have an open mind. Presidential elections offer not only challenges, but opportunities.

That is why it is imperative that our colleagues in the Senate consider the bipartisan NASA Authorization Act that passes via unanimous consent over a year ago. NASA would be well served by the guidance that legislation provides. It would provide stability of purpose in an uncertain time. All they would have to do is update the funding levels to match the recently passed Omnibus Appropriations levels for NASA.

I look forward to hearing the testimony of Representative Culberson and our other distinguished witnesses, and thank them for appear today.

###