

**Congressman Bill Posey**  
**Testimony before the House Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Subcommittee**  
**February 28, 2017**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking member and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to come before you today as you consider funding priorities for FY2018. I ask for your continued support for our nation's space programs, and particularly our exploration programs, including the Space Launch System, the Orion Spacecraft, and Exploration Ground Systems.

American dominance in space is no longer a given. Rival powers such as Russia and China, continue to develop their space capabilities. Ceding our dominance in space, the ultimate military high ground, to any other nation is unacceptable on both national security and military readiness grounds.

As we look beyond the horizon to the future of American leadership in space, we are reminded of the words of our recently departed friend and colleague Senator John Glenn, the first American to orbit the earth, when he said, "The most important thing we can do is inspire young minds and to advance the kind of science, math and technology education that will... take us to the next phase of space travel."

A refocused NASA, with sites set high on a mission to Mars and with an aim towards establishing a lasting American presence on the moon will invigorate and inspire the entire nation, including the next generation of science, technology, engineering, and math leaders.

Since the retirement of the Shuttle, U.S. commercial space companies have successfully transported cargo to the International Space Station, and — with sufficient support — American commercial crew companies will launch American astronauts from American by 2019. Let's

resolve to keep this on track and break our dependence on the Russians at over \$80 million per seat.

The Space Launch System, the most powerful rocket ever built, is a critical component in taking our nation beyond the moon and on the mission to Mars. Thousands of skilled workers from hundreds of companies in nearly every state across the country are building the hardware and technology for this system. In order to prevent delays to Exploration Mission-2, the first crewed mission of SLS and Orion – set for 2021, SLS requires an FY2018 appropriation of \$2 billion.

With the successful first flight in December of 2014, Orion, humanity's first interplanetary spaceship, is on track for a mission in 2019 aboard the SLS rocket. The Orion spacecraft is key to a manned mission to Mars and beyond, and is the only spacecraft capable of taking humans to multiple destinations in deep space and returning them safely back to earth. Fully developed, Orion will be able to support missions to the moon, Mars, and everything in between. In FY2018, welding will begin on the EM-2 crew module, as well as completion of the design of the crew systems for the first crewed flight. We need an FY2018 appropriation of \$1.35 billion to see this happen.

Along with manned and unmanned spacecraft, ground systems are an indispensable part of the infrastructure of space exploration. However, much of the existing ground systems at Florida's Kennedy Space Center dates back to the Apollo era. Kennedy is hard at work finishing preparation of Launch Complex 39-B, the repurposed shuttle pad, where SLS will launch. The Ground Systems team is on schedule, having completed 80% of structural changes. We need an FY2018 appropriation of \$635 million to keep these activities on track. Modernizing this ground-

based infrastructure is key to continued U.S. dominance in space. As I have been frequently known to say, “NO ground systems means NO launches!”

For over 50 years, United States’ leadership in space has benefited our country's national security, our economy, strengthened our international relationships, advanced scientific discovery and improved life here on Earth. I ask for your continued support for our nation’s space programs as the Committee crafts the FY18 Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

I ask that these issues receive your careful consideration as the committee crafts the FY18 budget resolution. Thank you for your time and the opportunity to testify today.

Sincerely,

Bill Posey  
Member of Congress