

Testimony from Congressman Bill Posey (Florida-08)

For the House Commerce, Science & Justice Appropriations Subcommittee

Hearing Day on March 26, 2019

In support of the America's Space Programs

Submitted March 21, 2019

Chairman Serrano, Ranking Member Aderholt and Members of the Committee, thank you for holding this hearing today and thank you for the opportunity to come before you to discuss the importance of maintaining strong support for America's Space Program.

The United States remains the only nation to have landed humans on the Moon and returned them safely to Earth. It was among the greatest achievements in the history of the human race and it has significantly contributed to America's leadership on the world stage.

The Apollo Missions opened the door to other significant accomplishments like building Space Shuttles to test the limits of human space flight, prolonged robotic exploration of Mars, launching a space-based telescope that can see far beyond our solar system, and conducting scientific research on the International Space Station that is benefiting those of us on Earth as well as enabling us to understand and prepare to meet challenges of long-term space missions.

In 2010 Congress authorized construction of NASA's Space Launch System (SLS) as a successor to the Space Shuttle that will be capable of launching both cargo and human crews into space. The idea is to build a powerful rocket that will enable humans to return to the Moon and eventually travel to Mars and other deep space destinations. The SLS and its Orion crew capsule have received strong bipartisan funding support by Congress over the past nine years.

Today I ask you to continue that support in order to keep the SLS program on track and ready for its first mission next year. I respectfully urge you to consider a total funding level of \$2.15 Billion for the Space Launch System for FY2020 – which would preserve the FY2019 approved funding level and avoid the proposed \$400 million reduction in the Administration’s budget request. This funding is necessary to complete the rocket and build the necessary infrastructure on the ground to support its first launch.

Specifically, no less than \$200 million is needed for the Exploration Upper Stage which will make it possible to have both human crews and cargo aboard the same flight. The Orion Crew Capsule will serve as the exploration vehicle that will carry astronauts to space atop the SLS. For FY2020 \$1.5 billion is needed to continue building this cutting edge ORION vehicle, the only capsule currently being designed and assembled which can protect our astronauts beyond low Earth orbit, in Moon orbit and around Mars.

Lastly, we need to continue our efforts to build the infrastructure needed on the ground to support safe and successful launches. Exploration Ground Systems are critical to our space launch capability. Put simply, without strong ground systems, our rockets will go nowhere. I am requesting that the committee keep this mission on track by providing funding of \$590 million for Exploration Ground Systems in FY2020 and an additional \$50 million to continue construction of the second mobile launcher which, when completed, will give us a unique multiple launch capability and further protect our national security. This will also preserve the FY2019 approved funding levels.

Let me also say that I continue to be impressed with the progress and development of the commercial space sector. I’m excited about launching American Astronauts from American soil

in my district aboard both the *Boeing Starliner Crew Vehicle* and *SpaceX Crew Dragon*. These low earth orbit missions are important for sustaining the research being conducted on the ISS, allowing for NASA to plan bold, deep space exploratory missions.

One final point, as I have often said, space is critical to our national security. It is the ultimate military high ground, and whoever controls space, will control the destiny of the free world. That's why it's so important that we maintain America's leadership in space. The Defense Intelligence Agency released a report in January entitled "*Challenges to Security in Space*," which discusses plans by China and Russia to develop their own versions of super heavy lift space vehicles similar to our own SLS. Now is the time to double down on America's space program and commit the resources necessary to keeping America first in space. It would be foolish to relinquish this military high ground to Russia and China who perhaps do not have America's best interest in mind.

I want to again thank you Chairman, Serrano, and Ranking Member Aderholt, and the Members of this Committee for your time today. Space has been one of the truly bipartisan issues here in Congress – I have very much enjoyed working across the aisle on space issues – and our achievements in space have served to unify our nation and the world. I ask my colleagues to join us as we continue to build a foundation for the next decade to be defined by human exploration, scientific discovery and American achievement. Thank you.