



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

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Statement of Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)

Markup of H.R. 6076, H.R. 6066, and H.R. 5829

Chairman Smith: The first bill, H.R. 6076, the “TREAT Astronauts Act,” establishes an occupational healthcare and enhanced monitoring program for former American astronauts.

This bill ensures that our courageous men and women who venture into space receive support for medical issues associated with their service. It also allows NASA to get more data on the effects of human spaceflight.

I thank Space Subcommittee Chairman Brian Babin for introducing this first-of-its-kind legislation.

Since NASA selected the first group of astronauts in 1959, more than three hundred American astronauts have ventured into the cosmos as explorers.

In an age when spaceflight has come to seem almost routine, it is easy to overlook how dangerous it is and how little we know about the long-term health effects of spaceflight.

Today, through its Lifetime Surveillance of Astronaut Health program, NASA screens and monitors astronauts for occupational related injury or disease.

This program contributes to our scientific knowledge of long-term health effects and assists participating astronauts in monitoring for spaceflight related illnesses and disease.

However, this program does not provide for diagnosis or treatment of those no longer serving. It also does not include retired and “management” astronauts because NASA is not explicitly authorized to provide such services.

Current astronauts receive full medical treatment. Former astronauts benefit from the Federal Employee Claims Act. And ex-military astronauts are afforded even more services.

This legislation will fill any potential gaps to ensure that our country fulfills its obligation to care for medical conditions that may be associated with human spaceflight.

Filling those gaps for former astronauts will encourage their expanded participation in the data research, evaluation, and assessment program.

The “TREAT Astronauts Act” is also fiscally responsible. It establishes NASA as a secondary payer to existing obligations of the United States or any third party.

I again thank Chairman Babin and urge my colleagues to support the TREAT Astronauts Act.

The second bill we will consider this afternoon is H.R. 6066, the “Cybersecurity Responsibility and Accountability Act of 2016.” I thank the sponsor, Congressman Ralph Abraham, for taking the initiative on this legislation.

During this Congress, the Science Committee has held close to a dozen hearings related to oversight, policy and budgetary aspects of federal cybersecurity issues.

The hearings included the examination of data breaches at the Office of Personnel Management, the Internal Revenue Service and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

These hearings have underscored a need for accountability, responsibility and transparency within these agencies and within the federal government as a whole relative to the cybersecurity of information and information systems.

The Science Committee's jurisdiction over the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has broad and meaningful potential for improvement of federal government IT security.

The Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002 (FISMA 2002) and the Federal Information Security Modernization Act of 2014 (FISMA 2014) task NIST with establishing cybersecurity standards, guidelines, and associated methods and techniques for use by the federal government through research and development.

The hearings held by this Committee have identified several shortcomings by agencies in fulfilling FISMA requirements. Dr. Abraham's bill serves an important purpose and addresses these shortcomings through more research, agency-head accountability, and Office of Management and Budget enforcement.

I thank Dr. Abraham for his work and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 6066.

The final bill we will consider is H.R. 5829, the ADVISE Now Act. This bill requires the EPA to finally create an already authorized Agriculture Committee to its Science Advisory Board (S-A-B) within 30 days of enactment.

If the EPA fails to meet the deadline, the authority is transferred to the Secretary of Agriculture who then has 15 days to appoint members to the EPA S-A-B Agriculture Committee.

The establishment of the EPA Agriculture Science Committee will provide farmers with an important and strong voice in the federal rule-making process and gives them a seat at the table.

The EPA has a history of advancing regulations that impact the agriculture community without proper input from those who are directly affected by the EPA's regulations. The ADVISE Now Act is an important first step to help remedy this situation.

I thank my colleagues, Agriculture Committee Chairman Michael Conaway and Congressman Rodney Davis, for their work on the bill. I support it and urge my colleagues to support it as well.

Committee approval of these three bills will advance America's future security through increased space activity, hardened information infrastructure, and an expanding food supply.

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