



## Bill Nelson

NASA Administrator

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Senator Bill Nelson was sworn in as the 14th NASA administrator on May 3, 2021. He is tasked with carrying out President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris' vision for NASA to demonstrate American leadership in air, space, and on Earth for the benefit of all humanity.

Bill has devoted almost five decades of his life to public service.

A fifth-generation Floridian whose ancestors came to Florida in 1829, Nelson represented the state for 18 years in the U.S. Senate and 12 years in the U.S. House of Representatives. He served on key committees, including as ranking member of the Senate Commerce Committee and chairman of the Subcommittees on Science and Space in both the Senate and the House.

During Nelson's three terms as a U.S. senator, nearly every piece of space and science law has had his imprint, including the landmark NASA Authorization Act of 2010 that he authored with Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson (R-TX). This law mapped out a new future for America's space program and set NASA on its present dual course of both government and commercial missions. Additionally, Nelson and Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) authored the NASA Transition Authorization Act of 2017, which expanded NASA's commercial activities in space.

His public service career began in 1972, with his election to the Florida Legislature. During his three terms, he helped enact the nation's first state law to protect consumers from computer fraud and the first local government growth management law.

In 1986, he trained and flew with the crew of the Space Shuttle Columbia, mission STS-61C, the 24th flight of the Space Shuttle. They orbited Earth 98 times over six days and Bill conducted 12 medical experiments, including the first American stress test in space on a treadmill and a cancer research experiment sponsored by university researchers.

In Congress, Nelson was considered the congressional leader for our nation's space program, a strong advocate to combat climate change, and a proponent for career training and education programs in science and technology to create more good-paying American jobs. Nelson's committee assignments covered the breadth of government policy and national security, from defense, intelligence, and foreign policy to finance, commerce, trade, and health care.

Nelson graduated from Yale University and the University of Virginia School of Law. He is a member of the Florida Bar Association. He served on active duty for two years in the U.S. Army, rising to the rank of Captain.

Nelson met his wife Grace Cavert at a Kiwanis-sponsored Key Club convention in 1971. Grace is Bill's partner in public service. Since his first race for elected office, Grace has advised and campaigned with him, knocking on doors and meeting the public face-to-face. Additionally, she convenes leaders to build unity in a divided world. They have two grown children, Bill Jr. and Nan Ellen.