



Opening Statement of Chairman Brian Babin

Full Committee Hearing

A Review of the President's Budget Request for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration for Fiscal Year 2027

April 22, 2026

Just three weeks ago, the world watched as Artemis II lifted off from Launch Pad 39B at Kennedy Space Center. Over the course of nearly 10 days, the mission carried four astronauts around the Moon and back—taking them deeper into space than any humans have traveled before.

I was proud to be in Florida for this awe-inspiring launch. I was also honored to be in Houston to welcome the crew home.

This mission was the result of years of planning and was almost flawless in its execution.

For more than two decades, this Committee has advocated for continuity of purpose, specifically to enable NASA to carry out programs of this size and complexity.

In February, this Committee unanimously reported a bipartisan NASA reauthorization bill to the House that maintains that continuity of purpose across the agency. I look forward to working with Ranking Member Lofgren and our counterparts in the Senate to get a bill to the President's desk soon.

Last month, NASA hosted an event called "Ignition," where the agency made several announcements regarding changes to the Artemis architecture and other agency initiatives. Among these announcements was a commitment to develop a crewed base at the Moon's south pole, to significantly increase the cadence of robotic lunar missions, and to conduct a nuclear demonstration mission to Mars.

Several of these initiatives represent an exciting future for our space program. But we would not fulfill our role as authorizers if we did not gain an understanding of the purpose and price of such missions, as well as their impacts on other programs within the NASA portfolio.

During NASA's Ignition event, the agency announced its intention to build and install a new government module on the International Space Station. It would then encourage commercial companies to attach to this new module.

This is a significant departure from the Commercial Low Earth Orbit Development program that NASA has pursued to date. This new proposal must be supported by budget, technical, and policy analysis, as well as discussions with international and commercial partners. We also must

understand the timeline over which this new approach will unfold, and how that impacts NASA's presence in low Earth orbit.

The Office of Management and Budget's proposed budget for fiscal year 2027 requests \$18.8 billion for NASA, roughly a 23% cut from amounts appropriated by Congress in fiscal year 2026. Many of the proposed budget cuts were rejected by Congress previously, and I am confident they will be rejected again.

Both the President and Congress have provided explicit direction for NASA to undertake a range of activities, from exploration and science to aeronautics research. We must ensure that NASA is funded at a level that allows it to pursue those missions.

I simply do not believe this budget proposal is capable of supporting what President Trump has directed the agency to accomplish over the course of his two terms, nor what Congress directed by law.

To be clear, I am a budget hawk. Our nation is nearly \$39 trillion in debt, and we must address this alarming situation soon. But we must be smart in how we do so. Shortchanging NASA is simply not smart.

We face competition from China across all aspects of space activity. China aims to send astronauts to the lunar surface before the end of the decade. If we do not carefully address the future of NASA's activities in low Earth orbit, the Chinese space station could become the only human-tended platform—and the only option for countries seeking to collaborate on microgravity research. China also conducted several impressive science missions and plans for more. We must ask whether this proposed budget maintains United States civil and commercial space dominance, or if we risk ceding that leadership to China.

Only through Congress, our commercial space sector, and the Administration working together can we ensure continued U.S. leadership in space.

I look forward to learning more about the Administrator's plans, including what he discussed at NASA's Ignition event last month.

I thank you for appearing before us today, Administrator Isaacman, and look forward to your testimony.