



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON  
**SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY**

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## Opening Statement

**Ranking Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)**

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

Thank you, Chairman Babin, for holding today’s hearing to review the Fiscal Year 2027 budget request for NASA. I want to give a special welcome to Administrator Isaacman, who is still newly minted in his role after only four months. I appreciate the passion and vigor you are bringing to your service, and I look forward to today’s discussion on NASA’s future.

With the thrilling Artemis II mission still fresh in our minds, NASA gave us a taste of an inspiring, bold, and bright future for the agency. I want to congratulate you, Administrator, and ALL OF NASA and its industry and international partners, on Artemis II’s success, a proud and uplifting moment for America. At least from the outside, everything appeared to go smoothly, an outcome that rests on the grit, blood, sweat, and likely tears of thousands of employees. These workers sacrificed attending children’s birthday parties, anniversaries, and family vacations to put in the demanding work required to prepare Artemis II for its lunar journey. The Exploration Ground Support team deserves a loud shout-out and our thanks!

However, on day 3 of their mission while *Integrity’s* crew were 99,900 statute miles from Earth, preparing for their lunar science observations, the President and Russ Vought released the FY2027 budget request. Like the FY2026 request, OMB once again tries to argue that NASA and the United States will continue to lead in space and Earth science, human exploration, aeronautics, and space technology while all but exploration would see draconian cuts. Cuts totaling \$5.6 billion or 23% from the FY2026 enacted level. These reductions do not exactly send a welcome home message to the Artemis II crew or to the NASA workforce for that matter.

The FY2027 request for NASA may have been largely locked down before you, Mr. Administrator, assumed your position, but it should come as no surprise that we have concerns. Exploration would see disproportionate increases under this proposal; the rest of NASA would not. Slashing space and Earth science, aeronautics, and space technology while our society increasingly depends on space assets and services to function is not a winning strategy. After all, the aerospace and aviation industry contributed a \$74 billion positive manufacturing trade balance in 2024, yet the request would cut aeronautics by 35%. And attempting to zero out the Office of STEM Engagement—which is authorized in law by the way—when we have this golden opportunity to build on the inspiration of Artemis II to engage students in STEM

education and careers makes no sense. I fully expect Congress to reject this request as we did in FY2026.

Yet, as our Democratic staff report issued last week describes in great detail, NASA did not wait for Congress to act. NASA took premature and misguided actions to implement the FY2026 request before Congress acted on a full-year appropriation. I hope today's discussion affirms the importance of respecting Congress's role in shaping the agency's direction and abiding by the decisions Congress makes about how appropriated funds are spent.

While today's hearing is primarily on the budget proposal, that is not the only question about NASA's future. In late March, just about a month ago, NASA unveiled an extensive array of new initiatives titled "Ignition" to include,

- a Moon base,
- changes to the Artemis architecture,
- a potential new approach for low Earth orbit operations following the end of ISS,
- a series of new science initiatives, and
- a nuclear-powered spacecraft to Mars.

I hope to hear more about these activities, because while they certainly sound interesting and ambitious, I am not aware that we have seen any plans, or cost and schedule estimates for them, nor were they included in NASA's FY2027 budget request.

With that, I look forward to hearing the Administrator's testimony.

And Mr. Chairman, before I yield, I would like to request unanimous consent to enter into the record our Democratic staff report titled, *Mission Aborted: How NASA Illegally Implemented the President's Budget Request Without Congressional Approval*.

Thank you.