

**FLOOR STATEMENT ON THE INTRODUCTION OF THE NASA
AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2005**

July 12, 2005

Mr. Speaker, I am today introducing the “National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2005”. I am joined as cosponsors by all of my Democratic colleagues on the Science Committee, and I hope that other Members on both sides of the aisle will join us once they have had a chance to review the legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation being introduced today provides an authorization for NASA that is credible, practical, and conferenceable. It recognizes that NASA has been, is, and should continue to be a multi-mission agency with significant R&D activities in science, aeronautics, and human space flight. This bill makes it clear that we support the President’s goal of making exploration beyond low Earth orbit the long-term objective of NASA’s human space flight program, and that we believe it is important to move forward aggressively to develop the Crew Exploration Vehicle and its associated launch vehicle. At the same time, it should be clear that we also believe that NASA’s aeronautics R&D program needs to be revitalized because of its benefits to the nation’s economy, national security, and quality of life. Similarly, NASA’s science programs should also be supported because they offer the potential of dramatically increasing our knowledge of the Earth, the solar system, and the rest of the universe, as well as providing the opportunity for applications that can benefit life back here on Earth.

As a result, the legislation recognizes the need to ensure that the productive balance that has existed between NASA’s major program areas is protected. To enforce that balance, the bill provides clear funding guidance, a restructuring of NASA’s accounts into human-space-flight and non-human-space-flight accounts, flexible “firewalls” between NASA’s major accounts, and consultation requirements in the event changes to the existing balance are contemplated.

Let me mention a few of the other main features of the bill. It provides a three-year authorization and funding guidance for NASA’s major programs. Funding guidance contained in the bill includes:

- Funding for a Hubble Space Telescope servicing mission

- Additional funding for the James Webb Space Telescope to compensate for the impact of the delay in selecting a launch vehicle for the mission, as well as for other programmatic challenges, so that this high priority mission can remain on track.
- Funding for university research restored to FY 2005 levels
- Funding for the Earth Science program's Glory mission restored.
- Additional funding for the high priority Earth Science program's Global Precipitation Mission (GPM).
- Additional funding to allow ongoing, scientifically productive spacecraft missions such as Voyager and Ulysses to continue.
- Funding preserved for fundamental, applied, and commercial life sciences and other microgravity research not tied to the human exploration program.
- Aeronautics funding restored to the FY 2004 level and the decline contained in the President's five-year budget for aeronautics reversed.
- Increased funding for Education, including for the National Space Grant program.
- Full funding for the Space Shuttle program.
- Full funding for the International Space Station program.
- Human Exploration funding to allow accelerated development of the Crew Exploration Vehicle (CEV) and its associated launch vehicle as well as for further implementation planning for NASA's human exploration program.
- Funding provided for promoting technology transfer initiatives at NASA.

Some of the policy provisions contained in the bill include:

- Ensuring that if the overall NASA budget is cut, the authorized levels for each of NASA's major programs would be cut proportionately, so no one area would suffer disproportionate cuts.
- Having NASA prioritize its science programs and periodically assess their performance.
- Having NASA develop a plan to ensure the continued health of the critically important Deep Space Network

- Directing NASA to schedule a Hubble servicing mission once NASA has successfully returned the Shuttle to flight.
- Establishing a national policy for aeronautics R&D and initiating technology programs to advance the aeronautical state-of-the-art in key areas.
- Directing NASA to honor its international obligations to the International Space Station program.
- Strongly encouraging NASA to have a goal of retiring the Space Shuttle in 2010 and initiating Crew Exploration Vehicle (CEV) operations, but directing NASA not to retire *all* of the Shuttles until the CEV is operational unless the Administrator determines continued Shuttle operations would not be safe.
- Establishing priorities for NASA's Human Exploration program for the next three years—namely, development of the CEV and its associated launch vehicle, and definition of the overall exploration architecture and prioritized implementation plan.
- Directing NASA to work to improve access to its educational programs by minorities and economically disadvantaged students.
- Directing NASA to seek an independent review of its educational programs and the extent to which they are effective in achieving STEM goals.
- Establishing a prize program at NASA to encourage needed technology developments.
- Encouraging NASA to aid in the development of the commercial space sector.
- Directing NASA to develop a workforce strategy for its civil service workforce, seek input from the affected employees, and not undertake RIFs until Congress has had a chance to review NASA's plans.
- Directing NASA to develop a financing policy for its test facilities that protects key national assets.
- Providing NASA with enhanced use lease authority at its Centers.
- Limiting off-shoring of contracts for the procurement of goods and services.
- Having the Aerospace Safety Advisory Panel (ASAP) take on additional responsibilities, namely monitoring NASA's long-

term compliance with the Columbia Accident Investigation Board's (CAIB) safety recommendations.

- Establishing an independent commission to evaluate the safety of the International Space Station.
- Providing a framework for establishing an independent commission in the event of a future human space flight accident.

Mr. Speaker, as you can see, the bill that we are introducing today is intended to provide clear Congressional direction to NASA with respect to priorities and balance. At the same time, it is intended to be flexible enough to accommodate changing circumstances and emergencies. Not everyone will agree with every provision in this bill—but that's been the case with every significant piece of legislation that I can remember being considered by this body. That is what the legislative process is all about. At the same time, I believe that the NASA Authorization Act of 2005 does provide a credible, practical, and conferenceable vehicle for providing needed guidance to NASA for the next three years.

NASA is an agency that has been committed to excellence in all of its areas of endeavor. It truly is a workforce of "rocket scientists". The legislation I am introducing today provides the policy and funding guidance that will position NASA for a productive and exciting future, and I hope that we can move it towards speedy enactment.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to close by stating a sentiment that I know is shared by all Members. Namely, our thoughts and prayers are with all of the members of the NASA family as they prepare to return the Space Shuttle to flight, and in particular we wish the crew of the Space Shuttle Discovery well on their upcoming journey.

Thank you.