



# AMERICAN ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

Office of the President

April 29, 2015

The Honorable Lamar Smith  
Chairman  
Committee on Science, Space and Technology  
2321 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20515

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Science, Space and Technology  
394 Ford House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Johnson,

On behalf of the over 7,000 members of the American Astronomical Society (AAS), I am writing today to share our views on the funding levels in the draft NASA reauthorization bill that you are marking up tomorrow.

Our top priority for NASA is robust and sustained growth for the Science Mission Directorate (SMD) budget overall since history has repeatedly shown that the astronomical sciences do well when SMD overall does well. While we are pleased to see the move toward a multi-year authorization and the draft bill's acknowledgement of the amazing science and education activities that our members undertake with NASA support, we are deeply concerned by the decreases for SMD in both the "aspirational" and "constrained" scenarios. We find the president's FY 2016 budget request for SMD to be inadequate (and have communicated this to your colleagues on the Committee on Appropriations), so we cannot support a bill that would authorize SMD at 6 or 12 percent below the president's uninspiring proposal.

As the legislative process moves forward in the coming days, we look forward to working with you to ensure the brightest possible future for SMD and thereby the nation's astronomical sciences during these challenging fiscal times. Should you or your staff have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Joel Parriott, the AAS's Director of Public Policy, at (202)-328-2010 or [joel.parriott@aaas.org](mailto:joel.parriott@aaas.org).

Sincerely,

C. Megan Urry  
President

cc: The Honorable Steven Palazzo, Chairman, Subcommittee on Space  
The Honorable Donna Edwards, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Space