

Chairman Jerry Moran Opening Statement
Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related
Agencies

Hearing to Review the FY2019 Budget Request for the National Aeronautics and Space
Administration

May 23, 2018

(As prepared for delivery)

Good afternoon, I call this hearing to order. Welcome to today's Commerce, Justice, and Science Subcommittee hearing on the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Fiscal Year 2019 budget request. Our witness today is the recently confirmed NASA Administrator, James Bridenstine.

Welcome, Administrator. Thank you for coming today to testify about NASA's fiscal year 2019 budget request. Administrator Bridenstine, you have been at the job for almost a month now and this is your first hearing before Congress representing NASA. The Administration has proposed a funding level of \$19.9 billion for NASA in its 2019 request, covering activities on Earth, our solar system and the far distant galaxies of the universe. Notably, this request includes significant changes to NASA's exploration agenda, shifting focus to the moon as its next major step before paving the way for human exploration of Mars.

NASA continues to develop vehicles to take humans deeper into space with the Space Launch System and the Orion crew capsule, and now proposes starting development of the habitat that will enable humans to return to the lunar surface. This lunar exploration effort is exciting and will inspire the next generation of scientists and engineers, and represents NASA's efforts to reach beyond our current capabilities.

While NASA is always associated with space, we should not forget that the first "A" in NASA is aeronautics. In my home state of Kansas, we are proud of our aviation history. Since the early 1900s, general aviation has had a home in Kansas, where a number of aviation companies were founded and continue to thrive today.

Looking to the future, NASA's experimental aircraft and research efforts are helping integrate unmanned aircraft into the nation's airspace. These efforts hold the potential to further grow our nation's economy.

NASA is synonymous with innovation and inspiration, and is one of the most recognized federal agencies because of its many great achievements. Administrator Bridenstine, when we spoke last week, it was clear that we both agree on the important role NASA plays in inspiring students –

the future engineers, mathematicians, scientists and innovators of tomorrow. While you were not confirmed or in your current role when this budget proposal was crafted and released, it arguably sidelines the very programs at NASA that capitalize on its success and benefit involvement in STEM education from kindergarten to graduate students.

NASA education activities such as Space Grant, EPSCoR and the Minority University Research Program have broad support, particularly on this committee. Rather than eliminating opportunities, NASA should find more ways to encourage our future leaders. Earlier this month, hundreds of students, including a team from De Soto, Kansas, participated in the finals of a rocketry competition in our nation's capital. There is no doubt that the missions of NASA fueled these students' desire to do their own rocket science. I hope that we will have the chance to hear your perspective on how NASA can build on the current education-related programs at NASA, which help harness excitement and inspire our future leaders in science and technology.

This committee has had a long relationship of working together with NASA to facilitate exciting discoveries, develop cutting edge technologies and explore the universe. I thank you for coming today, Administrator Bridenstine, and look forward to working with you to ensure NASA has the resources it needs to carry out its important mission and responsibilities.

I now would like to recognize our Senator Schatz for any opening remarks.

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