



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

Opening Statement

Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)

America in Space: Future Visions, Current Issues
March 13, 2019

Good morning and welcome. I especially want to welcome our distinguished witnesses.

I have often said that this Committee is about the future, and I commend to you the words on the wall behind me: “For I dipped into the future, far as human eyes could see. Saw the world and all the wonder that would be.” I cite them because they, like outer space, capture the child-like wonder and hope for the future that are shared by young and old. This morning’s hearing, “America in Space: Future Visions, Current Issues” allows us to contemplate the visions, the wonder, and the possibilities for our nation’s future in civil space. And I hope we don’t lose touch with that sense of wonder as we look ahead.

This year we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Apollo moon landing. It was a monumental event in human history. Our astronauts have continuously occupied the space station in low Earth orbit for almost 20 years and carried out research there, while learning to live and work in space. Our scientific spacecraft have visited every planet in the solar system, and they continuously monitor our own planet’s health. Our commercial space sector is growing, offering innovative capabilities and potential new services.

What will our future in space look like 10, 20, or 30 years out? Where are we going to be with human exploration in 2050? What would the discovery of life beyond Earth mean for humanity here on Earth? What will the roles and relationships of government and commercial space actors be? What will our response to the increasing number and capabilities of other nations in space be?

Multiple studies and commissions have wrestled with these and other questions. Today we’re fortunate to have renowned leaders in space science, human exploration, and international security to share with us their perspectives. I look forward to hearing their testimonies. I know they will help inform our future oversight and legislative activities in the 116th Congress.

A few days ago, the Administration released its Fiscal Year 2020 budget proposal. Relative to the Fiscal Year 2019 enacted appropriation, NASA’s budget would be cut, and it would not keep pace with inflation in the outyears. I will have more to say about the budget in future hearings, but for now, I will just note that I’m not sure how much vision fits into a budget that shrinks in real terms each year.

If we want America to lead with a visionary and effective space program, we must be willing to commit the resources and funding stability to achieve it.