

OPENING STATEMENT
Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)

House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
Subcommittee on Space
*“60 Years of NASA Leadership in
Human Space Exploration: Past, Present, and Future”*
September 26, 2018

Good afternoon and welcome to all of our NASA witnesses. It is good to have you here.

In concert with our international, academic, and commercial partners, NASA and the nation are closer than we have been in decades to launching the world’s largest heavy-lift rocket, sending crew beyond the Earth’s neighborhood, launching humans to the International Space Station from domestic soil, and developing a shared vision on how to get humans to the surface of Mars.

This is an exciting time in our nation’s space history, and NASA and its workforce are playing an important role in bringing these dreams to reality. So, I’d like to take a moment to thank all of the NASA Center Directors and the workforce they represent who work so hard each and every day to help achieve America’s goals in space.

Last Friday, NASA transmitted the “National Space Exploration Campaign Report” in response to direction in the NASA Transition Authorization Act of 2017. I’m pleased that we have finally received this report. I look forward, Mr. Chairman, to a vigorous discussion of the report’s contents. The report was to provide the necessary plans to enable a human mission to Mars, a national goal enshrined in law.

I also look forward to continuing our discussion of the proposed International Space Station Transition. If Congress decides to end direct financial support of the Space Station at some point during the next decade, we will need a well-thought out transition in place. A repeat of the negative experience that followed the end of the Shuttle program would not be consistent with the goal of a sustainable exploration program.

Before closing, Mr. Chairman, it is important to recognize that today’s space program is not the government program that existed sixty years ago. The expanding number of space actors—both government and non-government—provide increased capabilities that NASA can leverage in meeting our space exploration goals. But it is equally important to recognize that, just as NASA is doing with the International Space Station, we need NASA to provide the leadership required for a successful long-term collaborative partnership to send humans to Mars.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.