

## OPENING STATEMENT

Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)  
Subcommittee on Space  
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

*“An Update on the Space Launch System and Orion: Monitoring the Development of the Nation’s Deep Space Exploration Capabilities”*  
Space Subcommittee Hearing

December 10, 2014

Good morning. I’d like to join my colleagues in welcoming our witnesses to today’s hearing. We have much to discuss, so I will be brief in my opening remarks.

Last week, NASA achieved an important milestone with the successful EFT-1 flight test of the Orion crew capsule, and I want to congratulate you, Mr. Gerstenmaier, and the entire NASA and contractor team on a very impressive achievement.

I look forward to hearing more about EFT-1 and the significance of what you are learning from it. Equally importantly, I want to hear what lies ahead for the nation’s human exploration program, because EFT-1 demonstrates that NASA’s exploration program is no longer simply something NASA would *like* to do—it’s now a *reality*, with hardware being built, facilities being prepared, and vehicles being tested.

Yet there is much more that will need to be done to achieve the long-term goal of landing humans on Mars. As we prepare for the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress, I think we need to heed the words of the distinguished National Academies panel that testified before us earlier this year. At that hearing, former Governor of Indiana and co-chair of the panel, Mr. Mitch Daniels, stated the panel’s consensus view that the goal of sending humans to Mars “*justifies the cost, risk, and opportunities*” of doing so.

However, Mr. Daniels also made clear that the panel believed that “*any pathway that could successfully land humans on the surface of Mars would require funding above constant dollars.*” That is pretty clear guidance. And yet, to date we have asked NASA to achieve its exploration goals on a budget that doesn’t even keep pace with inflation.

We in Congress have the ability to correct that deficiency if we have the will to do so. I want to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in the next Congress to provide the funding that NASA will need to carry out a robust human exploration program *as well as* its other important tasks in science, aeronautics, and technology development.

It is our choice as to whether we will do so, and I hope we will choose wisely. As I said after last week’s successful EFT-1 mission, EFT-1 demonstrates that America’s best days in space exploration still lie ahead of us. NASA and its contractor team are working hard to achieve challenging goals—we in Congress need to do the same.

Thank you, and I yield back.