

## OPENING STATEMENT

Ranking Member Donna Edwards (D-MD)  
Subcommittee on Space  
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

Full Committee Hearing  
*“Pathways to Exploration: A Review of the Future of Human Space Exploration”*

June 25, 2014

Good Morning, and welcome to our panel of witnesses. Mr. Chairman, thank you for calling this hearing on the “Pathways to Exploration: A Review of the Future of Human Space Exploration”.

While many in this country were not born at the time, history books remind us that almost 52 years ago this September, a young President challenged this country to dare to be great. President Kennedy’s famous words, *“We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard”* has become part of our Nation’s fabric. These words launched NASA onto a path of space exploration and discoveries that few could have foreseen in 1962.

Today, I cannot deny that the world we live in is much different from when President Kennedy spoke at Rice University. Yet, the very basic tenets of why we embarked on that journey to the Moon in 1962 have not changed, regardless of how the world has.

President Kennedy said on that day *“We set sail on this new sea because there is new knowledge to be gained, and new rights to be won, and they must be won and used for the progress of all people”*.

Today, we will hear from the co-chairs of the latest National Academies review of human spaceflight. While some may shrug off this effort as just another in the line of blue ribbon panel reviews, I think they are mistaken. The observations, findings, and recommendations of the panel, ably led by Governor Daniels and Dr. Lunine, lay out a key challenge to us as a country.

The panel is telling us that if we are to have a human space exploration program, then it must be worthy of the considerable cost to the nation and great risk of life. The panel is also telling us that there is no single rationale that is uniquely compelling to justify such investment and risk. Rather, the panel is saying that human space exploration must be done for both pragmatic and aspirational reasons.

I am heartened that the detailed findings and recommendations from the panel mirror many of the key aspects of the NASA Authorization Bill recently passed by the House. Both identify Mars as a goal, the NRC panel calling it *the* horizon goal and both call for a specific sequence of intermediate accomplishments and destinations of increasing difficulty and complexity leading to the goal of a human mission to Mars.

Both recognize that it will be a highly complex and technologically challenging endeavor. And both recognize the risks, such as space radiation, to our astronauts. Having converged on the *what*, the task at hand is determining *how*.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to hearing from our witnesses, particularly how we can galvanize this great country into making the sustained commitment necessary to enable a human mission to Mars.

Thank you, and I yield back.