

The President Wants to Make NASA Great Again

In his weekly address—see the video above—President Donald Trump devoted his time to discussing the NASA Transition Authorization Act, which he signed into law earlier in the week.

“My fellow Americans, this week, in the company of astronauts, I was honored to sign the NASA Transition Authorization Act right into law,” he said. “With this legislation, we renew our national commitment to NASA’s mission of exploration and discovery. And we continue a tradition that is as old as mankind. We look to the heavens with wonder and curiosity.”

The first comprehensive NASA authorization passed by Congress in more than six years, the bill:

- authorizes the development and execution of a long-range plan for deep space human exploration;
- invests in robust science, technology and aeronautics portfolios;
- endorses the NASA’s successful efforts to nurture a new commercial market that will boost our economy and create more jobs; and
- guarantees vastly improved health care for the Americans who risk their lives in the exploration of space.

“With this legislation, we support NASA’s scientists, engineers, astronauts and their pursuit of discovery,” the president said at the bill signing ceremony. “America’s space program has been a blessing to our people and to the entire world.”

He was joined at the signing ceremony by:

- Vice President Mike Pence

- Acting NASA Administrator Robert Lightfoot
- Acting NASA Deputy Administrator Lesa B. Roe
- NASA Chief of the Astronaut Office Christopher Cassidy
- NASA Astronaut Tracy Dyson
- Sen. Ted Cruz, sponsor of the bill
- Sen. Bill Nelson, co-sponsor of the bill
- Sen. Marco Rubio, co-sponsor of the bill
- Sen. Luther Strange
- Rep. Kevin McCarthy, House Majority Leader
- Rep. Lamar Smith, Chairman of House Committee on Science, Space and Technology
- Rep. Frank Lucas, Vice Chair of House Committee on Science, Space and Technology
- Rep. Robert Aderholt
- Rep. Brian Babin
- Rep. Jim Bridenstine
- Rep. Mo Brooks
- Rep. John Culberson
- Rep. Neal Dunn
- Rep. Steve Palazzo
- Rep. Bill Posey
- Rep. Martha Roby

“Almost half a century ago, our brave astronauts first planted the American flag on the moon,” the president added. “That was a big moment in our history. Now this nation is ready to be the first in space once again. Today we’re taking the initial steps toward a bold and brave new future for American space flight.”

President Barack Obama had shifted NASA’s mission to combating “climate change” and to “Muslim outreach” during his administration, but had tasked the agency with pursuing deep-space exploration while deeply scaling back its funding. The law Trump signed this week, combined with his budget framework released earlier this month—which proposes a \$19.1 billion NASA budget—reaffirm that NASA should “remain a multi-mission

agency with a balanced set of core missions in science, space technology, aeronautics, human space flight and exploration, and work to inspire the next generation of explorers,” the White House said.

Lightfoot thanked the president on behalf of NASA for his “unwavering support” and Congress for its “bipartisan” and “thoughtful” consideration of NASA’s future.

“We are grateful for the longstanding support and trust of the American people,” he said. “NASA stands ready to meet the challenge of pioneering new frontiers in space.”

In his weekly address, the president concluded:

“NASA’s greatest discoveries teach us many, many things. One lesson is the need to view old questions with fresh eyes. To have the courage to look for answers in places we have never looked before. To think in new ways because we have new information. Most of all, new discoveries remind us that, in America, anything is possible if we have the courage and wisdom to learn.

“In the span of one lifetime, our nation went from black-and-white pictures of the first airplanes, to beautiful images of the oldest galaxies captured by a camera in outer space. I am confident that if Americans can achieve these things, there is no problem we cannot solve.

“There is no challenge we cannot meet. There is no aim that is too high. Whatever it takes and however long it will be, we are a nation of problem-solvers—and the future belongs to us. We are truly a great place to be. I love America.” {eo}