

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 19, 2018

Majority Leader Mitch McConnell  
The United States Senate  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer  
The United States Senate  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator McConnell and Senator Schumer,

After nearly 30 years of service to NASA and his country, Acting Administrator Robert Lightfoot recently announced his decision to retire at the end of April 2018. While we are immensely thankful for the tremendous job he has done as the longest serving Acting Administrator in agency history, his imminent departure makes it all the more critical that the Senate finally confirms Jim Bridenstine, who has twice been nominated to serve as NASA Administrator.

We are keenly aware of how valuable NASA is, not only to our nation, but also the entire world. It would be a travesty to America's space program for it to remain leaderless at this critical time when America's space industry is making rapid advances that will set the course of space leadership for decades to come. This is why it is vitally important that the Senate take up and approve Jim Bridenstine's nomination.

Jim Bridenstine has spent the bulk of his adult life in service to his country. His background is in naval aviation, flying the E2-C Hawkeye in Afghanistan and Iraq, and later the F-18 while also serving as an instructor at the Naval Strike and Air Warfare Center. He has been responsible for coordinating command and control of the battlefield from an airborne platform, with thousands of lives and billions of dollars affected by his decisions. In this service to his nation he has demonstrated both the technical capacity and leadership experience necessary to lead NASA.

As the Congressman from the 1<sup>st</sup> District of Oklahoma, Jim has been an active member of the House Space Subcommittee, distinguishing himself as one of the most engaged, passionate, and knowledgeable members of the Subcommittee. In 2015, SpaceNews named him one of "five space leaders in the world making a difference in space." He authored several provisions in the 2017 NASA Transition Authorization Act and co-authored the bipartisan American Space Commerce Free Enterprise Act.

With many milestones fast approaching, NASA must have a presidentially appointed and Senate confirmed leader in place. The first launch of the SLS and Orion will occur during this Administration and our Commercial Crew partners are working to have their first launches as early as the end of this year. Vital decision points must be addressed soon. The architecture for returning to the Moon and venturing to Mars needs to be developed. Key decisions about the future of the ISS and NASA's role in low earth orbit are quickly approaching. New science missions to study the Earth and the far reaches of our solar system are going to be designed and launched. Now is not the time to leave NASA rudderless. We urge the Senate to confirm Jim Bridenstine swiftly and allow him to lead the world's premier space agency into the next age of space exploration.

Sincerely,



Brian Babin, D.D.S.  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Space



Lamar Smith  
Chairman, Science Space and Technology Committee



Mac Thornberry  
Chairman, House Armed Services Committee



Mike Rogers  
Chairman, Subcommittee for Strategic Forces



Ed Perlmutter  
Member of Congress



Frank D. Lucas  
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer  
Member of Congress



Walter B. Jones  
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Marc Veasey  
Member of Congress



Dana Rohrabacher  
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John Garamendi  
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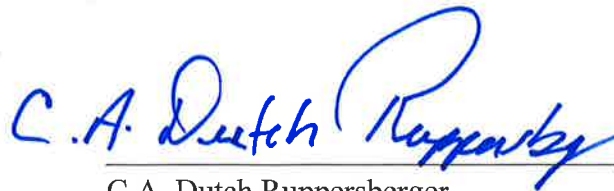
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Donald Norcross  
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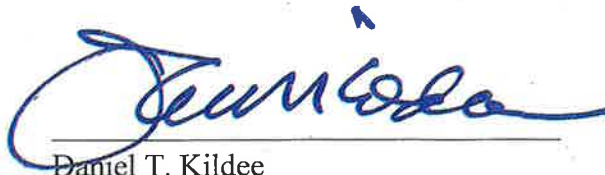
Martha McSally  
Member of Congress



Jim Cooper  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee for Strategic Forces



Bill Posey  
Member of Congress



Daniel T. Kildee  
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Michael R. Turner  
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K. Michael Conaway  
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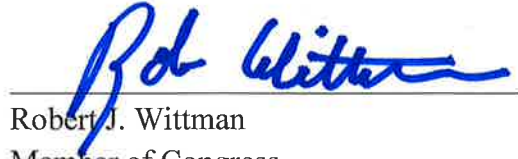
Steve Knight  
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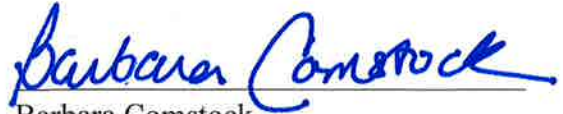
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Andy Biggs  
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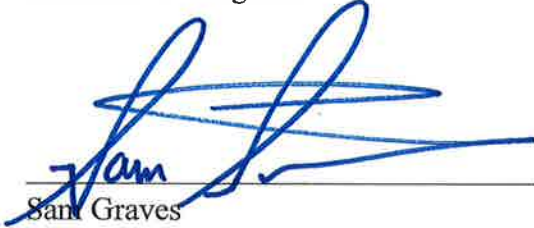
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Bradley Byrne  
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Neal P. Dunn, M.D.  
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Sam Graves  
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Clay Higgins  
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Elise M. Stefanik  
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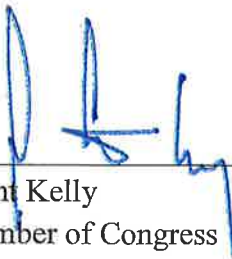
Ralph Norman  
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Steve Russell  
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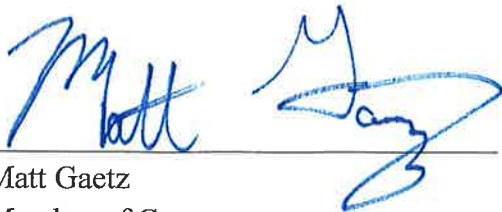
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