

**Chairman Richard Shelby Opening Statement
Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and
Related Agencies**

**Hearing to review the FY2016 funding requests and budget justifications for the National
Aeronautics and Space Administration**

April 16, 2015

Welcome to the Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee's hearing on the President's proposed Fiscal Year 2016 budget for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. I want to welcome General Bolden who will testify today about NASA's 2016 budget request.

This Committee has been very supportive of NASA and has worked to maintain a healthy funding level for NASA while preserving a balanced and productive space program.

NASA's work is exciting, inspiring and educational. From the photos of new galaxies captured by the Hubble Space Telescope to the future of humans traveling to Mars, NASA has captured the imagination of school children and citizens across the globe and inspired generations of scientists and engineers.

The country, however, has limited resources, which requires us to prioritize our spending. NASA spending is not an exception.

The NASA budget proposes a total funding level of \$18.5 billion, an increase of \$519 million above the 2015 level. Such a significant increase should represent balanced funding for NASA's priorities.

Instead, there is sizable growth in programs, like Commercial Crew and Space Technology, while other programs, such as Science missions and Exploration Systems Development have significant reductions. The cuts to Exploration are especially concerning. The successful test of the Orion capsule last December showcased NASA's innovative plans for the future.

This budget could have been an opportunity for NASA to boldly support human exploration, after years of budget requests in which it was shortchanged. Instead, NASA's budget cuts funding to Orion and the Space Launch System – or SLS – limiting our reach in human exploration.

A 20 percent cut to SLS during its critical phase of development risks important investments that have been made in communities across the country. It also risks the success of the entire program.

This budget makes it impossible for NASA to make efficient and cost effective decisions for the long-term development of a launch system that is being built to achieve the Nation's human exploration goals.

While NASA is good at creating charts and talking about moving human exploration beyond our current capabilities, NASA has yet again failed to propose a budget that can accomplish what the agency claims is one of its top priorities.

General Bolden, I am troubled by the overall priorities included in this budget. Requiring key development programs to operate with insufficient funding is irresponsible.

While the proposed funding level of \$18.5 billion is a good start, there is much more work that must be done to develop a balanced budget that achieves NASA's core missions and its future goals.

I look forward to working with you to address some of these concerns.

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