



## Stability of the NASA Exploration Program is Critical to the U.S. Strategic Aerospace Capability

The Aerospace Industries Association of America represents 300 aerospace manufacturing companies and a U.S. workforce of more than 635,000.

Our nation's space industry generates over \$41 billion dollars a year.

U.S. aerospace and aviation industries represent approximately 10 percent of the GDP.

### BACKGROUND

**Continued support for NASA's Exploration program is critical to provide the stability needed to maintain U.S. human spaceflight and strategic workforce capabilities.**

To select the Ares launch vehicle architecture, NASA performed an extensive review of legacy, new, and emerging concepts. While the Ares architecture was driven by launch performance and minimal development costs, it promoted the preservation of strategic US capabilities.

NASA is currently making significant progress on Ares/Orion development and has initiated the transition of the Space Shuttle workforce in support. Preliminary efforts are underway for the Ares V heavy launch vehicle for cargo and a lunar lander.

NASA's Exploration program has created a renewed attraction of students to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math curriculums. These students represent the future workforce for aerospace capabilities in support of U.S. human exploration, science and National security needs.

### ISSUES

- The Ares I architecture has been thoroughly vetted, and the Ares/Orion programs are making sound progress. Reconsiderations would create cost and schedule issues.
- NASA's Exploration program plan enables critical skill preservation, but requires continued Congressional support in the form of stable and predictable funding.
- NASA's workforce transition after Space Shuttle retirement is highly dependant upon

the scheduled start of the Ares V and lunar lander programs. Program delays would severely impact the current workforce and disenfranchise students from entering the aerospace field.

- NASA's ability to obtain International cooperation for Exploration is directly tied to the stability of the program.

### RECOMMENDATION

**Congress should continue providing leadership and adequate funding for NASA's Orion, Ares launchers, and lunar lander programs. Maintaining these programs consistent with NASA's Exploration schedule will provide the continuity necessary to preserve the current workforce and attract the next generation to preserve the US strategic aerospace capability.**



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