



Minimizing the Gap for U.S. Human Access to Space is Critical

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 \$38 billion dollars a year.

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

BACKGROUND

The U.S. faces a critical human spaceflight gap between the 2010 retirement of the space shuttle and the initial Orion-Ares I launch in late 2015.

Maintaining our capability to send humans and cargo into earth orbit (and beyond) is essential to our national and economic security, space preeminence, and full utilization of the International Space Station (ISS). A gap in U.S. capability to put humans in space from 2010 to 2015 would therefore harm the national interest. Current inadequate funding levels may also increase this gap. The projected gap in time between the shuttle's retirement and the functionality of new spacecraft must be minimized.

Current law recognizes the importance of a robust spaceflight program. The NASA Authorization Act of 2005 (P.L. 109-155) states: "It is the policy of the United States to possess the capability for human access to space on a continuous basis."

ISSUES

- Maintaining an independent means for sending human beings and cargo into earth orbit must be considered a national priority by Congress.
- A lapse in U.S. human spaceflight risks eroding critical workforce and industrial base skills by atrophy and attrition, thereby impacting future national space endeavors.
- The United States will be wholly dependent on foreign nations for human and ISS cargo space transportation for several years, a

situation that compels NASA to procure services from abroad rather than from American industry.

- NASA must be able to continue encouraging innovative concepts such as the Commercial Orbital Transportation Services (COTS) program to supplement the U.S. space access to the ISS.

RECOMMENDATION

Congress should continue to provide leadership and sufficient funding support to NASA's Orion, Ares, and COTS programs to ensure impacts from the U.S. human spaceflight gap are minimized.



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