

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.

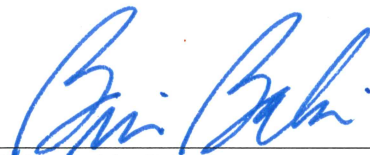
We are keenly aware of how valuable NASA is, not only to our nation, but also the entire world. It would be a travesty to America's space program for it to remain leaderless at this critical time when America's space industry is making rapid advances that will set the course of space leadership for decades 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.

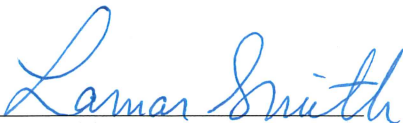
As the Congressman from the 1st District of Oklahoma, Jim has been an active member of the House Space Subcommittee, distinguishing himself as one of the most engaged, passionate, and knowledgeable members of the Subcommittee. In 2015, SpaceNews named him one of "five space leaders in the world making 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,



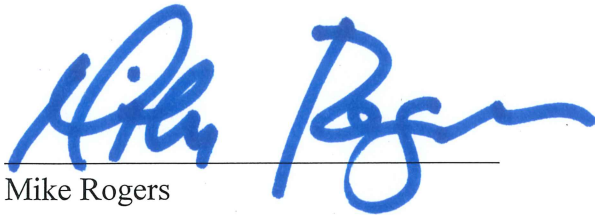
Brian Babin, D.D.S.
Chairman, Subcommittee on Space



Lamar Smith
Chairman, Science Space and Technology Committee



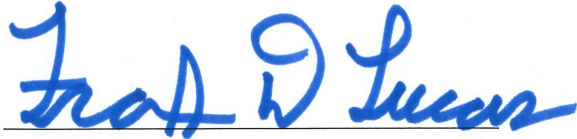
Mac Thornberry
Chairman, House Armed Services Committee



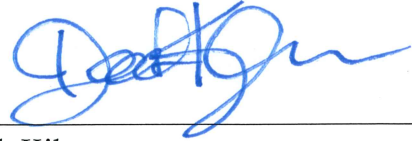
Mike Rogers
Chairman, Subcommittee for Strategic Forces



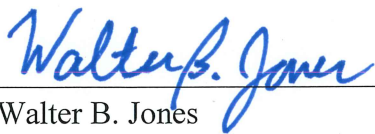
Ed Perlmutter
Member of Congress



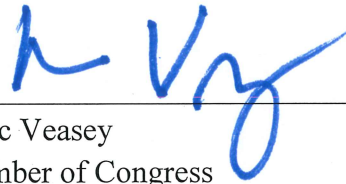
Frank D. Lucas
Member of Congress



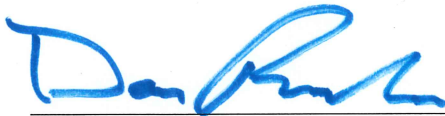
Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress



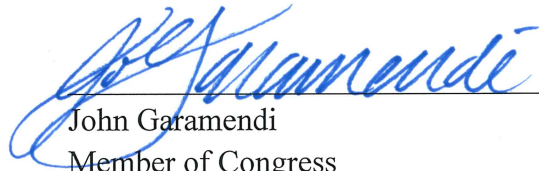
Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress



Marc Veasey
Member of Congress



Dana Rohrabacher
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



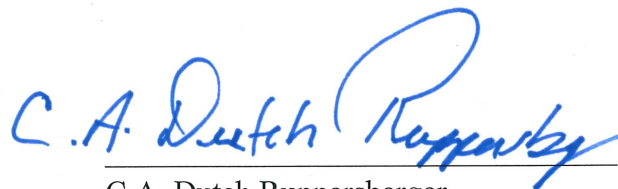
Joe Wilson
Member of Congress



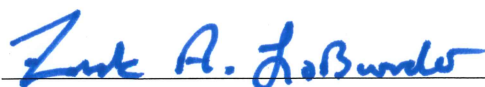
Matt Cartwright
Member of Congress



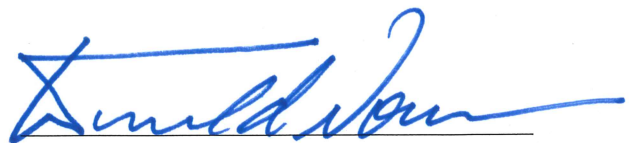
Mo Brooks
Member of Congress



C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger
Member of Congress



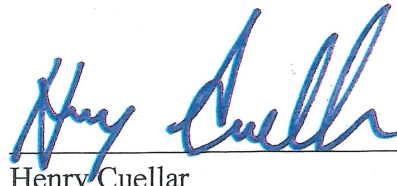
Frank A. LoBiondo
Member of Congress



Donald Norcross
Member of Congress



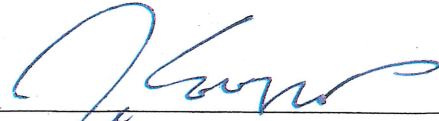
Randy Hultgren
Member of Congress



Henry Cuellar
Member of Congress



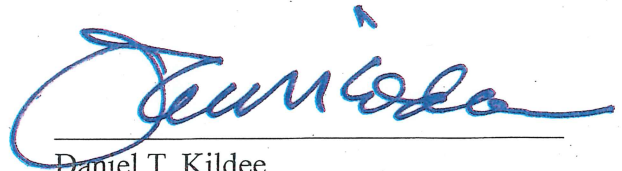
Martha McSally
Member of Congress



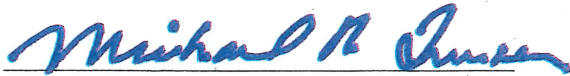
Jim Cooper
Ranking Member, Subcommittee for Strategic Forces



Bill Posey
Member of Congress



Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress



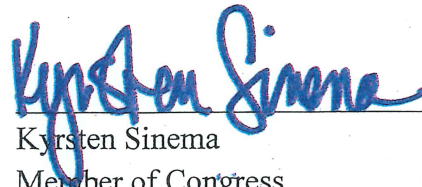
Michael R. Turner
Member of Congress



Dave Loebsack
Member of Congress



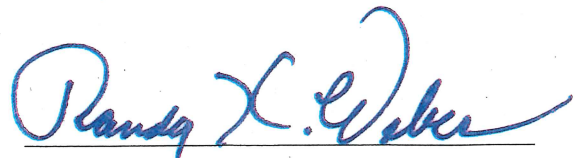
Thomas Massie
Member of Congress



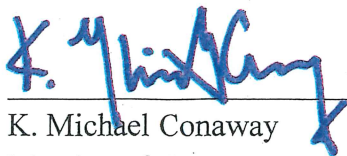
Kyrsten Sinema
Member of Congress



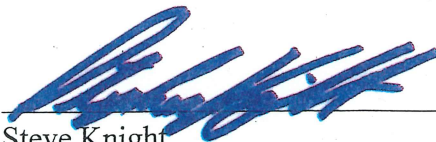
Bill Shuster
Member of Congress




Randy K. Weber, Sr.
Member of Congress



K. Michael Conaway
Member of Congress



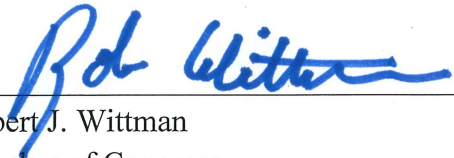
Steve Knight
Member of Congress



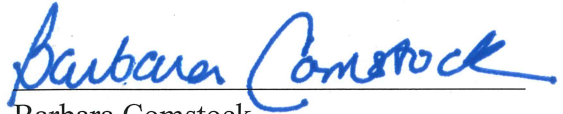
Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress



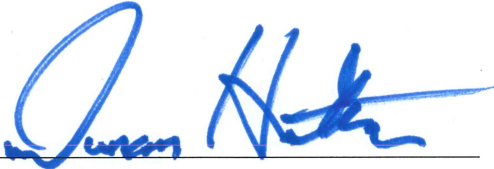
Rob Bishop
Member of Congress



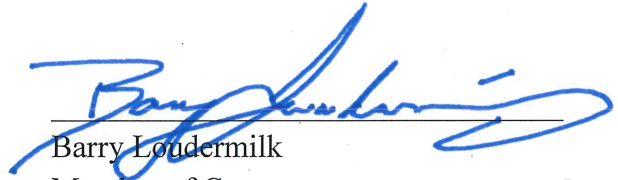
Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress



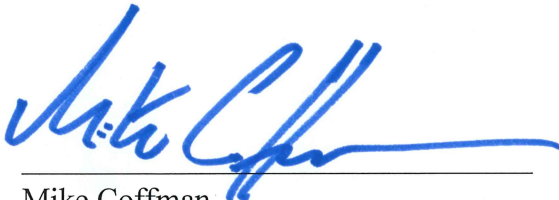
Barbara Comstock
Member of Congress



Duncan Hunter
Member of Congress



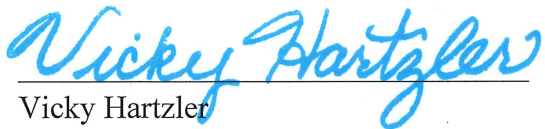
Barry Loudermilk
Member of Congress



Mike Coffman
Member of Congress



Ralph Abraham, M.D.
Member of Congress



Vicky Hartzler
Member of Congress



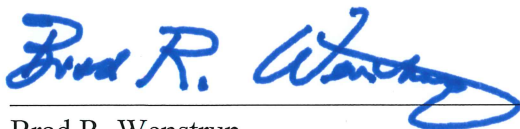
Daniel Webster
Member of Congress



Austin Scott
Member of Congress



Jim Banks
Member of Congress



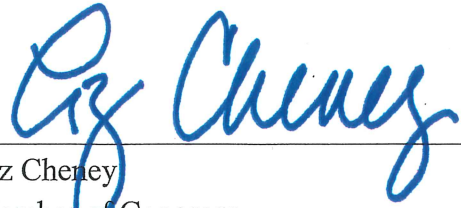
Brad R. Wenstrup
Member of Congress



Andy Biggs
Member of Congress



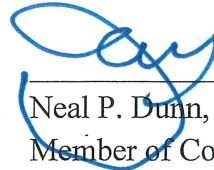
Roger W. Marshall, M.D.
Member of Congress



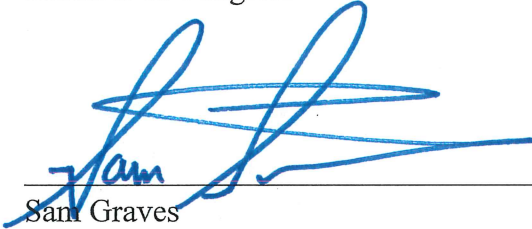
Liz Cheney
Member of Congress



Bradley Byrne
Member of Congress



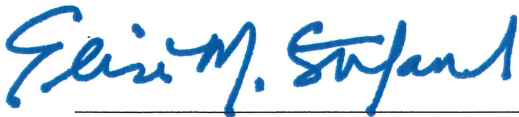
Neal P. Dunn, M.D.
Member of Congress



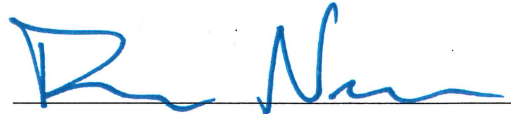
Sam Graves
Member of Congress




Clay Higgins
Member of Congress



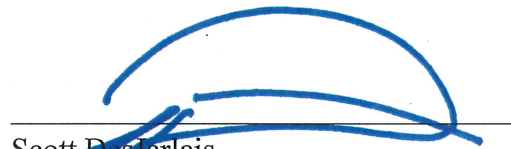
Elise M. Stefanik
Member of Congress



Ralph Norman
Member of Congress



Steve Russell
Member of Congress



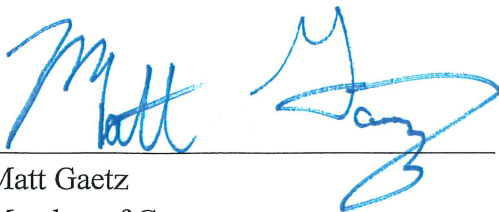
Scott DesJarlais
Member of Congress



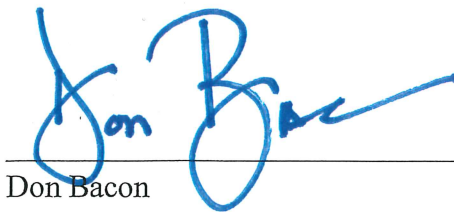
Trent Kelly
Member of Congress



Mike Gallagher
Member of Congress



Matt Gaetz
Member of Congress



Don Bacon
Member of Congress


Jody B. Hice
Member of Congress


Paul Cook
Member of Congress