

PREPARED STATEMENT
OF
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NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION
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Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Nelson, and members of the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation. It is an honor to appear before you today as the nominee for the Deputy Administrator of NASA. I will begin by thanking the President and Vice President who have put their trust and confidence in me - as well as Administrator James Bridenstine, who has gone out of his way to be helpful - providing very wise counsel. If you decide that I should be confirmed, I look forward to serving and working with you, Administrator Bridenstine, and the very talented NASA professionals.

The Senators of this Committee are well aware of the many challenges that NASA faces. I support the President's refocus on America's space program - on human exploration and returning astronauts to the Moon for long-term exploration and use. It is all part of setting the table for NASA and its partners and eventual missions to Mars and beyond. The Moon is a stepping stone.

I also support the study of the Earth and space sciences. If confirmed, I will support the scientific community's priorities that are shown in the decadal survey recommendations. In addition to the above-mentioned exploration missions, NASA must carry out Earth Science, Planetary Science, Heliophysics, Astrophysics research. Also, NASA must continue to make critical contributions in aeronautics by performing basic research that can open up new economic and commercial opportunities.

The commercialization of Low Earth Orbit is the beginning of the logistics tail for materials and supplies going to the Moon. This growing industrial base will promote our economic freedom and promote United States leadership in space. To accomplish these goals, NASA must establish a vision with a flexible step-by-step plan containing all critical components.

There are five main strengths I bring to that table. The first is that throughout my career, I have respectfully challenged the status quo, done things differently, and had the courage to "think outside the box." One year when I was the Appropriations Staff Director, only two appropriations bills were expected to be signed by the President. We worked on both sides of the aisle and, together, all thirteen bills were enacted. To do so, it took a complete command of the federal budget and legislative processes. That was a feat then, and it remains one now.

The second is that, over and over again, I created an atmosphere of teamwork that turned those visions and goals into reality. Getting those bills done required attaining consensus of Democrat and Republican members and staff, agencies, the Congressional Budget Office, the House of Representatives, the Office of Management and Budget, and White House. It was necessary to be adaptive, resilient, and a quick study of the ever-changing fabric of the Executive and Legislative Branches.

The third is that I am able to focus on moving forward in situations that continually tend toward disorder. That goes from managing most of the Senate's operations to quickly reacting to cyber-security threats. My positions on the Senate Appropriations Committee also provided opportunities to apply my skill sets to a myriad of agencies' procedural and budgetary processes, coupled with oversight and funding responsibilities.

The fourth is that I have spent my career attracting, mentoring, and retaining talent. The NASA team is blessed with the most extraordinary and energized people who serve all of us. To lead us into the future, they must be appreciated and their visionary ideas and talents must be allowed to flourish.

Also, I have established functioning financial mechanisms, and clear chains of command - while still being transparent. The President has called for successful NASA programs that are under budget and on time. I have attained similar goals during every phase of my career. To do so, valuable NASA resources will need to be leveraged with public/private partnerships.

Finally, and most importantly, on all levels and at all times, the safety of every member of the entire NASA team is absolutely critical. On a daily basis, I am charged with the responsibility of helping run the majority of Senate operations - including making sure the proper processes are working to ensure the security of all Senators, staff, visitors and the Capitol complex.

I believe transformational leadership and the empowerment and strength of partnering, will ensure a new era for America's space programs, advance scientific knowledge for the Earth, and inspire a new generation to enter the STEM fields. If confirmed, it would be my highest honor to help NASA in these endeavors. This is the time.

I recognize that it is only with the advice and consent of the Senate that I can be confirmed.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Nelson, and members of the Committee thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts with you.