

2018 Citizens for Space Exploration Congressional Visits Report (May 15-17, 2018)

Trip Summary

The 2018 CSE Congressional visits were a success and helped advance support for human space exploration and demonstrate a large, grassroots constituency for space exploration. The 27th annual trip included 91 travelers, representing 26 states, who conducted 396 Congressional office visits. The diverse group of travelers included elected officials, 33 students studying engineering or related technical fields, industry representatives, and community leaders. The Congressional reception was well attended by over 70 staffers, and 5 Members of Congress.

A few interesting statistics from our meeting feedback surveys include:

- Visits included 77% of House offices and 70% of Senate offices. Members were present at 16% of the meetings.
- 77% were “very engaged” in the meeting.
- 100 staffers had visited a NASA center.
- 77% were “very knowledgeable” or “somewhat knowledgeable” about NASA’s exploration programs.
- 83% of staffers were “very knowledgeable” or “somewhat knowledgeable” about the benefits derived from the space program – Education was mentioned in 62% of meetings, economic benefits in 45%, spinoffs in 42%, and exploration/discovery in 32%.
- 78% of visits were considered “very supportive” and 15% “somewhat supportive” of human space exploration.
- 24% of offices said they would support additional funding for the space program.
- Specific concerns focused around the ISS and the continuity of funding the program.

Visits overview

Each team consisted of a leader and 3-4 other travelers including at least one student. The teams visited Congressional offices of their home states, discussed the exploration programs, and solicited feedback from the office concerning the value and direction concerning America’s space exploration program.

Teams also provided folders that included:

- Citizens for Space Exploration overview document
- Deep Space Exploration Incremental Approach 1-pager
- ISS Research 1-pager
- Launch Vehicle Comparison
- Jeff Bingham Space Launch Vehicle Op-Ed
- NASA budget pie chart
- State-specific document with NASA funds spent in that state

Key Messages included continuity for NASA human space exploration programs, funding of the missions set forth in the 2017 NASA Authorization Act, and NASA’s role in supporting American leadership, education, innovation, health care, and quality of life for half of one percent of the budget. Talking points also included concern about challenges to U.S. leadership in space, support for the continued

utilization of ISS beyond 2024 and the importance of restoring U.S. space launch capabilities to support human space flight.

Team members discussed their specific personal reasons for support for America's space program. For example:

- A healthy space program is important to inspire students and get them into STEM careers.
- What is happening in space exploration and why it is important to the economy and to business.
- NASA is an important investment and provides a wide range of spinoff benefits.
- Additional reasons such as leadership, education, technological innovation and competitiveness.

Kick-Off Reception – Tuesday, May 15, 2018

Brian Freedman emceed the program in his role as the trip chairman. Speakers included J.T. Jezerski (Senator Capito R-WV), Mary Lynne Dittmar (Dittmar Associates, Executive Director, Coalition for Deep Space Exploration), Joe Rice (CSE Colorado), and Kelly Page (Texas Team Coordinator). Topics covered included CSE history, Hill do's and don'ts, a space industry update, a legislative update, and a run-through of the drop-off materials and key messages. Following the meeting, each team met, strategized and planned for the following two days of visits.

Congressional Reception – Wednesday, May 16, 2018

The Citizens for Space Exploration hosted a Congressional reception for Members of Congress and their staff. Five Congressional Members and over 70 staffers attended the reception. Four Congressional speakers made remarks to the group, including:

- Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX)
- Rep. Brian Babin (R-TX-36)
- Rep. Pete Olson (R-TX-22)
- Rep. Mike Coffman (R-CO-6)

Feedback

Some key feedback received from the teams:

- Continued strong bipartisan support for NASA. There was more understanding of NASA's space exploration programs than in previous years (similar to last year) and support for Mars as the ultimate destination with the Moon as our stepping stone.
- There was strong support for NASA to stay the course on the human space programs.
- Strong enthusiasm for 2018 Authorization language and FY19 Appropriations marks. Growing expectation of performance based on that support.
- Numerous offices expressed their concerns about a 2024 end date for the ISS and wanted to extend its mission.
- NASA's education budget was a concern of many offices.
- There was a noticeable lack of confusion as to what NASA's mission was, that had been present in previous years.
- Response to our platform of ISS, Orion, SLS, and Commercial Crew/Cargo was very positive. Programs must perform on budget and schedule.
- Questions about the NASA Administrator and excitement about his confirmation.