

That is not where we need to be. But we know what we need to do. Look, this is a very complex piece of legislation. There is no doubt. It is intellectually challenging to try to work through it and try to make sure that you do not have unintended consequences by not fully seeing what a piece of legislation or a sentence may do.

But the fact is, we can do this. This is not that heavy. It is my understanding that the chairman of the Banking Committee plans to bring this bill forward on April 26, maybe a week later. It is my understanding we may deal with some other issues. Maybe it is the first week of May.

What I would say to everybody in this body, and anybody who may be watching, is we can easily reach a bipartisan consensus on this. We have to have the ability to sit down and do that.

I consider it not a good-faith effort to, instead of sitting down with many of the principals who have been involved in this from day one, the chairmen and ranking members on the committees, instead of sitting down and creating a template—it doesn't have to address every single issue but a template on the floor that deals with it—instead of doing that, reaching out and trying to find one person to come over, I don't consider that a good-faith effort. I am sorry. I hope that type of activity will end. That is not what has been stated as to how we can reach a bipartisan bill.

Let me go back to the template. This is complex, this piece of legislation. To me what we need to do is sit down together. We could have it done in a week. We need to sit down together and work through the main issues in this template. Let's deal with derivatives, with consumers. Let's deal with systemic risk and orderly liquidation. There will be issues of Members on our side of the aisle where there is no way we could reach agreement on in our own caucus, and I know there are issues on the other side of the aisle on which their caucus will not be able to reach agreement, having to do with governance, some of the security issues that may exist in title IX. Let's debate those issues on the floor. My guess is that if we did that, there are going to be some amendments adopted that I don't think are particularly good ideas. There will be some amendments adopted that my friends on the other side of the aisle would not think are particularly good ideas. But at the end of the day, we would have come to the floor with a template that on the big issues we have reached bipartisan agreement, and then we could have amendments to debate on the floor, some of the other issues that may delve down into details that don't necessarily change the entire bill but address issues that Members in this body think are important.

I consider it an honor to serve in this body. I have enjoyed this more than any issue we have dealt with, trying to

reach a consensus on this financial regulation bill. There is plenty of fault to go around on both sides that does not need to be rehashed at this moment. The fact is, we are where we are. We are getting ready to deal with a major piece of legislation. There are numbers of people on both sides of the aisle who have spent a lot of time trying to understand the complexities of these issues. I am proud of the work Members on both sides of the aisle have done to try to understand these issues in a real way. Let's get those folks together. Let's sit down and work out the template. Let's bring a real bipartisan bill to the floor, not a bill where they go out and make a deal with one person and bring them over, and maybe there are other things going on at the same time. That is not what I call a bipartisan bill. Let's bring it to the floor. Let's debate it. Let's do what the people all across this country have elected us to do. Let's come to the floor and act like adults. Let's tone down the rhetoric. Let's don't exaggerate the pluses or the minuses.

Let's do what the Senate was created to do. We were supposed to be the cool heads. We were supposed to be the people who took some of the red-hot activities that sometimes come from the other body and sat down with cooler heads and resolved the issues like adults. We can do that. As a matter of fact, I would say, if we cannot do that on financial regulation, an issue that doesn't have any real philosophical bearings to it—there are some differences in points of view, but at the end of the day, we all want to make sure we address financial regulation in an important way, that we do what we can to alleviate risk in the system without stifling innovation.

I think everybody still wants this country to be the world leader in financial innovation. But we want to do so in a manner that doesn't create risk, that doesn't upset our economy, that doesn't have periods of time where we have such risk and instability that people are unemployed. We all want to do that.

I say to my friends on the other side of the aisle, I believe a commitment was made. I took it as a real commitment that after this bill came out of committee, we were going to sit down like adults and reach a bipartisan agreement on a template that would be brought to the floor and debated. I took that as a commitment. I expect that commitment to be honored. I look forward to that process beginning.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

A VISION FOR NASA

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Madam President, later today, President Obama will travel to the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. He will visit with employees and officials there and deliver a speech on his vision for NASA. We have begun to learn the details about some of what the President may be announcing, but so far nothing has been suggested that alleviates the concerns I expressed earlier this week. In fact, I am growing more concerned. I have serious questions about the administration's proposed vision.

For example, the President is proposing to rely on a commercial space launch industry that is still in its infancy. Once the space shuttle is retired, a commercial vehicle would be the only American human spaceflight capability for the foreseeable future. Further, we are about to complete the International Space Station and begin the period of scientific research we have been waiting for. For the past 10 years, we have waited for the space station to be up and running and operable. At the same time that it is now becoming operable, we are beginning to phase out the space shuttle program. That is the only means we have to deliver crew and cargo to the space station. We are nowhere close to having an alternative to the shuttle, whether government operated or commercial operation.

Congress and the President agree we should extend the life of the space station to at least 2020. That only makes sense because we have invested \$100 billion in this space station. Our partners are international. We have contractual commitments to our partners who have also made huge investments in the space station. Yet now we are looking at stopping our shuttle at the end of this year so the alternatives will be limited. We must be certain the space station can be supplied and maintained with the spare parts and equipment it needs to operate for the next 10 years. It may well be that equipment needed to ensure the sustainability of the space station can only be delivered by the space shuttle.

I introduced legislation last month to require NASA to conduct a review of station components and identify anything that might be needed to be delivered to equip it for its research mission. Of course, NASA could do that review right now without legislation. I urge General Bolden, the NASA Administrator, to undertake such a review, particularly in light of the space shuttle not being extended under the President's proposal. It is still possible we could extend the time between the shuttle flights to deliver the necessary materials to the station. That is an option I believe we need to preserve. It would prolong the time we could put our own astronauts into space with our own vehicle that we know is reliable.

That is the key. We don't have to add more into the budget. The budget already provides for two more space shuttles this year, plus one that would

be a contingency. We have this paid for in the budget. If we will only extend these out, it will give us so many more national options that would be in America's best interest. Without a NASA-managed alternative for human access to space, we will be dependent on the Russian Soyuz rockets to take American, European, Japanese, and Canadian crew members to the space station. Today it is a cost of \$56 million per passenger. That price could go up, if we end the space shuttles this year. We don't know what the next contract might have, especially when it is realized that we will have no capability and are shutting down our own capabilities at the time that we would be asking for help from the Russians.

Of even more concern is the possibility that without a shuttle or other alternative, any failure of the Soyuz for any period of time could leave the space station abandoned to become an orbiting example of space debris. What if something happened to the Russian program? What if the commercial industry that is fledgling doesn't come up with an alternative or, worse yet, what if they go out of business? These are the concerns the President is not addressing in his budget for NASA. I hope he will become more willing to look at the long-term consequences of what he is proposing to do, if we are going to retain our leadership position in space, in economics, and in security.

These and other concerns have been expressed by a number of other individuals, editorial boards, and organizations over the past days.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD letters and editorials expressing serious reservations about the President's plan and its adverse impact to our Nation's future leadership in space.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[An Open Letter to President Obama, Apr. 13, 2010]

The United States entered into the challenge of space exploration under President Eisenhower's first term, however, it was the Soviet Union who excelled in those early years. Under the bold vision of Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon, and with the overwhelming approval of the American people, we rapidly closed the gap in the final third of the 20th century, and became the world leader in space exploration.

America's space accomplishments earned the respect and admiration of the world. Science probes were unlocking the secrets of the cosmos; space technology was providing instantaneous worldwide communication; orbital sentinels were helping man understand the vagaries of nature. Above all else, the people around the world were inspired by the human exploration of space and the expanding of man's frontier. It suggested that what had been thought to be impossible was now within reach. Students were inspired to prepare themselves to be a part of this new age. No government program in modern history has been so effective in motivating the young to do "what has never been done before."

World leadership in space was not achieved easily. In the first half-century of the space

age, our country made a significant financial investment, thousands of Americans dedicated themselves to the effort, and some gave their lives to achieve the dream of a nation. In the latter part of the first half-century of the space age, Americans and their international partners focused primarily on exploiting the near frontiers of space with the Space Shuttle and the International Space Station.

As a result of the tragic loss of the Space Shuttle Columbia in 2003, it was concluded that our space policy required a new strategic vision. Extensive studies and analysis led to this new mandate: meet our existing commitments, return to our exploration roots, return to the moon, and prepare to venture further outward to the asteroids and to Mars. The program was named "Constellation." In the ensuing years, this plan was endorsed by two Presidents of different parties and approved by both Democratic and Republican congresses.

The Columbia Accident Board had given NASA a number of recommendations fundamental to the Constellation architecture which were duly incorporated. The Ares rocket family was patterned after the Von Braun Modular concept so essential to the success of the Saturn IB and the Saturn 5. A number of components in the Ares 1 rocket would become the foundation of the very large heavy lift Ares V, thus reducing the total development costs substantially. After the Ares 1 becomes operational, the only major new components necessary for the Ares V would be the larger propellant tanks to support the heavy lift requirements.

The design and the production of the flight components and infrastructure to implement this vision was well underway. Detailed planning of all the major sectors of the program had begun. Enthusiasm within NASA and throughout the country was very high.

When President Obama recently released his budget for NASA, he proposed a slight increase in total funding, substantial research and technology development, an extension of the International Space Station operation until 2020, long range planning for a new but undefined heavy lift rocket and significant funding for the development of commercial access to low earth orbit.

Although some of these proposals have merit, the accompanying decision to cancel the Constellation program, its Ares 1 and Ares V rockets, and the Orion spacecraft, is devastating.

America's only path to low Earth orbit and the International Space Station will now be subject to an agreement with Russia to purchase space on their Soyuz (at a price of over 50 million dollars per seat with significant increases expected in the near future) until we have the capacity to provide transportation for ourselves. The availability of a commercial transport to orbit as envisioned in the President's proposal cannot be predicted with any certainty, but is likely to take substantially longer and be more expensive than we would hope.

It appears that we will have wasted our current \$10-plus billion investment in Constellation and, equally importantly, we will have lost the many years required to recreate the equivalent of what we will have discarded.

For the United States, the leading spacefaring nation for nearly half a century, to be without carriage to low Earth orbit and with no human exploration capability to go beyond Earth orbit for an indeterminate time into the future, destines our nation to become one of second or even third rate stature. While the President's plan envisages humans traveling away from Earth and perhaps toward Mars at some time in the future, the lack of developed rockets and spacecraft will

assure that ability will not be available for many years.

Without the skill and experience that actual spacecraft operation provides, the USA is far too likely to be on a long downhill slide to mediocrity. America must decide if it wishes to remain a leader in space. If it does, we should institute a program which will give us the very best chance of achieving that goal.

NEIL ARMSTRONG,
Commander, Apollo 11.
JAMES LOVELL,
Commander, Apollo 13.
EUGENE CERNAN,
Commander, Apollo 17.

[From the Orlando Sentinel, Apr. 12, 2010]

DEAR PRESIDENT OBAMA, America is faced with the near-simultaneous ending of the Shuttle program and your recent budget proposal to cancel the Constellation program. This is wrong for our country for many reasons. We are very concerned about America ceding its hard earned global leadership in space technology to other nations. We are stunned that, in a time of economic crisis, this move will force as many as 30,000 irreplaceable engineers and managers out of the space industry. We see our human exploration program, one of the most inspirational tools to promote science, technology, engineering and math to our young people, being reduced to mediocrity. NASA's human space program has inspired awe and wonder in all ages by pursuing the American tradition of exploring the unknown. We strongly urge you to drop this misguided proposal that forces NASA out of human space operations for the foreseeable future.

For those of us who have accepted the risk and dedicated a portion of our lives to the exploration of outer space, this is a terrible decision. Our experiences were made possible by the efforts of thousands who were similarly dedicated to the exploration of the last frontier. Success in this great national adventure was predicated on well defined programs, an unwavering national commitment, and an ambitious challenge. We understand there are risks involved in human space flight, but they are calculated risks for worthy goals, whose benefits greatly exceed those risks.

America's greatness lies in her people: she will always have men and women willing to ride rockets into the heavens. America's challenge is to match their bravery and acceptance of risk with specific plans and goals worthy of their commitment. NASA must continue at the frontiers of human space exploration in order to develop the technology and set the standards of excellence that will enable commercial space ventures to eventually succeed. Canceling NASA's human space operations, after 50 years of unparalleled achievement, makes that objective impossible.

One of the greatest fears of any generation is not leaving things better for the young people of the next. In the area of human space flight, we are about to realize that fear; your NASA budget proposal raises more questions about our future in space than it answers.

Too many men and women have worked too hard and sacrificed too much to achieve America's preeminence in space, only to see that effort needlessly thrown away. We urge you to demonstrate the vision and determination necessary to keep our nation at the forefront of human space exploration with ambitious goals and the proper resources to see them through. This is not the time to abandon the promise of the space frontier for a lack of will or an unwillingness to pay the price.

Sincerely, in hopes of continued American leadership in human space exploration.

Walter Cunningham, Apollo 7; Chris Kraft, Past Director JSC; Jack Lousma, Skylab 3, STS-3; Vance Brand, Apollo-Soyuz, STS-5, STS-41B, STS-35; Bob Crippen, STS-1, STS-7, STS-41C, STS-41G, Past Director KSC; Michael D. Griffin, Past NASA Administrator; Ed Gibson, Skylab 4; Jim Kennedy, Past Director KSC; Alan Bean, Apollo 12, Skylab 3; Alfred M. Worden, Apollo 15; Scott Carpenter, Mercury Astronaut; Glynn Lunney, Gemini-Apollo Flight Director; Jim McDivitt, Gemini 4, Apollo 9, Apollo Spacecraft Program Manager; Gene Kranz, Gemini-Apollo Flight Director, Past Director NASA Mission Ops.; Joe Kerwin, Skylab 2; Fred Haise, Apollo 13, Shuttle Landing Tests; Gerald Carr, Skylab 4; Jim Lovell, Gemini 7, Gemini 12, Apollo 8, Apollo 13; Jake Garn, STS-51D, U.S. Senator; Charlie Duke, Apollo 16; Bruce McCandless, STS-41B, STS-31; Frank Borman, Gemini 7, Apollo 8; Paul Weitz, Skylab 2, STS-6; George Mueller, Past Associate Administrator For Manned Space Flight; Harrison Schmitt, Apollo 17, U.S. Senator; Gene Cernan, Gemini 9, Apollo 10, Apollo 17; Dick Gordon, 63, Gemini 11, Apollo 12.

POSTPONE THE SPACE SHUTTLE RETIREMENT

As the Space Shuttle program marches closer to its apparent end, NASA's future is now in jeopardy more than perhaps at any time in history. An underfunded Constellation program has suffered a series of delays which will likely push the first manned flight of Ares I with the Orion Crew Exploration Vehicle back to 2017. The Shuttle is on track to be retired near the end of 2010 after five more missions to the International Space Station (ISS), leaving a gap in US launched manned missions of at least seven years. The US, which has funded approximately \$60 billion of the \$100 billion ISS price tag, will soon find itself in an embarrassing position of buying seats on Russian vehicles to get its astronauts to and from the ISS. Further, and incredibly, the US is currently only funded to operate and maintain the ISS to 2015, just five years after its projected completion date.

NASA's plans to retire the Shuttle in 2010 are intended to redirect money to Constellation, a program which will not only send Orion to the ISS, but also explore beyond low earth orbit (LEO); i.e. go to the moon, Mars, and beyond. The Shuttle retirement, though, would yield sole access to the ISS to Russia for the currently projected seven-year gap. Thus, much of the public is bewildered by our government's desire to spend so much capital on such a crowning achievement, the ISS, and not consider it valuable enough to preserve our own independent access to it. I believe the American public's thirst for US leadership of manned space exploration will ultimately support NASA's desires to explore beyond LEO; however, Americans will be cautious in their support by first demanding we be good stewards of their current 60-billion-dollar investment. To do that, we need to extend the operational life of the ISS, guarantee our access to it by flying Shuttle through the gap, and robustly fund science research aboard the ISS.

Some insist we need to retire the Shuttle as soon as possible for safety concerns. I disagree. For sure, the Shuttle fleet is aging, as indicated by the fact that Endeavour, our newest Shuttle, first flew in 1992. Still, it is my personal belief that every Shuttle mission continues to be safer than the previous

one. While components on board the Shuttle are aging, the redundancy designed into the system is remarkable. Every day we get better at understanding the hazards associated with the mission, as indicated by our inspection techniques, repair procedures, external tank foam improvements, etc. NASA mission management teams give me great confidence that we are getting better at this business each and every mission. If we are comfortable with flying the currently remaining five missions (and I am quite certain we are), then I argue we should not be afraid to continue to fly the Shuttle through the gap.

Others argue that commercial alternatives exist to ferry our astronauts to and from the ISS. Not quite yet. Our commercial industry is indeed getting closer to attaining the ability to send unmanned spacecraft to the ISS as resupply ships. Ultimately, these companies may produce spacecraft safe enough for human travel to LEO. However, I would not bet the future of the ISS on commercial access for crewmembers happening much sooner, if at all, than Orion is capable of flying to the ISS in 2017. Thus, this option cannot be considered a viable "gap filler" at this point.

So, our choice is to accept a seven-year gap (or more) of no dedicated US access to the ISS or continue to fund the Shuttle through this gap. It will cost three billion dollars per year to maintain the Shuttle infrastructure and support at least two resupply/crew rotation missions per year. Thus, we need approximately an additional 20 billion dollars to fill the entire gap with Shuttle flights. An extra 20 billion dollars is a substantial amount of money. However, in the context of today's trillion-dollar annual deficit and 800-billion-dollar stimulus package, an extra 20 billion dollars spread over seven years is a bargain for what the Space Shuttle brings to our country. Not until Orion or a commercial alternative is indeed ready and capable of transporting our astronauts to and from the ISS, should we consider retiring the Space Shuttle. I believe our best approach to convince the public to ultimately support our exploration beyond LEO is to first deliver significant scientific payback with the ISS, and guaranteeing this payback requires we maintain our own, uninterrupted, access to it. The future of NASA and our manned exploration of space must include flying the Shuttle through the gap, whatever that gap may be.

LEE ARCHAMBAULT.

[From the Washington Times, Apr. 13, 2010]
LOSING IT IN SPACE

Pity poor NASA. Rather than reaching toward the stars, America's premier scientific organization has settled its sights on studying shrimp schools beneath the Antarctic ice cap and sticky accelerators on Toyotas. Such is the scope of hope and change in President Obama's universe.

In his 2011 budget, the president zeroed out NASA's Constellation project, the package of launch and landing vehicles that were to replace the aging space shuttle fleet to carry Americans into space. As a candidate, Mr. Obama said he "endorses the goal of sending human missions to the moon by 2020, as a precursor in an orderly progression to missions to more distant destinations, including Mars." The O Force changed its mind. Killing the Constellation project means billions wasted while space-flight hardware collects dust. "Yes we can" has become "mission impossible."

This is not a cost-cutting move. The agency is budgeted to receive \$19 billion next year, and Mr. Obama wants to throw an additional \$6 billion at it over five years. The hitch is he wants to shift its mission toward climate research and airplane design. Anx-

ious to stay relevant, NASA agreed to research the cause of Toyota's sudden-acceleration problem.

NASA administrator Charles Bolden said Thursday that federal money is budgeted for fostering the growth of the commercial space industry, including the development of space taxis. But if the results of the president's stimulus are any indication, command economic policy is an inefficient generator of jobs.

Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, Texas Republican, has argued that the most practical move would be to keep funding the space shuttle program until a replacement vehicle is ready. That way, the nation would maintain the continuity of space travel and avoid further erosion of its faltering space program.

As NASA's wings are clipped, our competitors soar. The U.S. space agency even had to sign a \$340 million deal with Russia on April 6 to transport astronauts to the International Space Station through 2014. By then, China intends to conduct an ambitious schedule of flights with its Shenzhou spacecraft. It doesn't take much imagination to envision the day when NASA must pay its Asian competitor large sums for American astronauts to ride into orbit as passengers. Thanks to Mr. Obama, the United States will be dependent on Russia and China for space travel.

The space program is a great symbol of the American spirit of achievement. The day this nation cedes the conquest of space to others is the day we admit that we have forfeited our competitive exceptionalism. Earth-centric activities like the study of the Antarctic shrimp ecosystem and automobile anomalies should be left to others. A less-costly NASA should be relieved of extraneous responsibilities and allowed to retain its core mission—one that no other agency can accomplish—the exploration of space.

On behalf of all Americans, Floridians should make certain the president gets the message loud and clear when he hosts a conference about the agency's future on Thursday in the Sunshine State: Let NASA be NASA.

[From the Wall Street Journal, Apr. 14, 2010]

FEUD OVER NASA THREATENS AMERICA'S
EDGE IN SPACE

(By Andy Pasztor)

After dominating space for a half century, the U.S. is mired in a political fight that threatens its leadership role and ambitions for manned exploration.

President Barack Obama travels Thursday to the Kennedy Space Center to try to salvage his plans to re-energize the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, but experts say U.S. manned space travel will likely be grounded for years longer than previously expected.

The Florida summit comes amid an escalating battle between the White House and Congress over the fastest and least expensive way to revitalize the space program. Mr. Obama has been pushing ambitious plans for start-up companies to ferry astronauts into space on private rockets. Congress, meanwhile, is bent on defending NASA's traditional rocket and spacecraft programs, which the Obama administration wants to kill.

The White House believes NASA's current projects are too expensive and will take too long to deliver. Mr. Obama is betting that private enterprise can fill the gap—carrying astronauts and cargo to the space station—until a resurgent NASA can deliver more advanced space vehicles.

But lawmakers, industry officials and scientists say they fear that for the first time

since the glory days of the Apollo moon landings, the U.S. will end up without a clear plan, destination and timetable for sending astronauts deeper into the solar system.

At stake is more than national pride. Losing the lead in space has national-security and industrial consequences. Such industries as shipping, airlines and oil exploration depend on orbiting satellites to gather and send essential data. TV signals, cell phones, ATMs, some credit card machines and many Internet connections rely on space technology. Recent estimates peg global civilian and military spending on space and space-related technologies at more than \$260 billion annually.

At the same time, the Pentagon views space as a frontier where foes will try to undermine U.S. security.

The importance of space has drawn the European Union and more countries into the race. Russia, China, India and Brazil all have, or are determined to create, robust space programs. By 2016, China aims to develop and test a heavy-lift booster capable of blasting five tons of cargo into orbit—a timetable far more ambitious than anything on NASA's drawing board.

With retirement of the space shuttle in a few months, the U.S. was already facing the prospect of hitching rides for up to five years on Russian spacecraft to reach the international space station.

Some experts say the current political fight could leave the U.S. with no way to blast astronauts deeper into space until close to 2020. Initial optimistic hopes of returning U.S. astronauts to the moon by the end of the decade could be delayed another ten years or more, these experts say.

Neil Armstrong, the first astronaut to walk on the moon, Apollo 13 commander Jim Lovell and Gene Cernan—the last human to walk on the moon—warned in an open letter this week that the president's plan “destines our nation to become one of second- or even third-rate stature.” Buzz Aldrin, another icon of U.S. space travel, has supported the president's plan.

Burt Rutan, the aerospace engineer who was the first person to send a privately built and designed craft into space, warned that NASA could be crippled within a few years, allowing international rivals to take the lead.

The retirement of the space shuttle program initiated a chance to chart a new course for the U.S. space program, said experts, but instead triggered conflict that is as much political as technological.

Congress wants to save NASA's existing exploration program, called Constellation, which was expected to produce 25,000 jobs and more than \$60 billion in contractor revenue over its lifetime.

As originally conceived, Constellation was a \$100 billion project to take astronauts into orbit, and later to deploy next-generation rockets and landers to explore the moon and, eventually, pave the way for manned exploration of Mars.

The White House believes the Constellation program will take too long and that a fresh approach is required. Lawmakers say they are skeptical of the president's plan to entrust core functions of the space program to untested start-up companies.

NASA chief Charles Bolden, a former astronaut, said Mr. Obama's visit to Florida would persuade doubters that “he is dedicated to exploration and human space flight” and “committed to a vibrant future” for NASA.

The president also plans to provide details on a few concessions, such as retaining a small portion of the Constellation program, as well as announcing that workers who lose their jobs when the space shuttle retires will

be eligible for retraining and other benefits, according to people familiar with the matter.

Those involved in talks over the future of the U.S. space program say the most likely outcome is a compromise that may satisfy politicians but probably won't provide enough funding for either program to get off the ground quickly. “That just drags out the pain and slows everything down for a long time,” said Brewster Shaw, head of Boeing Co.'s space-exploration division.

Mr. Obama, who often recounts watching NASA launches as a youngster perched on his grandfather's shoulders, says he hopes to lead the agency through a historic shift.

To chart a new course, he selected Mr. Bolden and Lori Garver, a former NASA policy official and proponent of commercial space travel, as advisers. Ms. Garver, now the No. 2 official at NASA, headed the administration's transition team for the agency.

One of the first things Ms. Garver said she did was to “look under the hood” of the Constellation program. She didn't like what she found. The program was years behind schedule and over budget, and she said she had doubts about its long-term viability.

Ms. Garver also played a big role in naming a presidential panel to assess NASA. Led by former Lockheed Martin Corp. Chairman Norman Augustine, the panel released a report in October that was critical of the agency. The study concluded that without a substantial infusion of new money and ideas, Constellation would wither and NASA would become increasingly irrelevant.

A small group of administration officials, including White House science chief John Holdren and his chief of staff Jim Kohlenberger, set out to begin dismantling the Constellation project.

“The fact that we poured \$9 billion into an un-executable program really isn't an excuse to pour another \$50 billion into it and still not have an executable program,” Mr. Kohlenberger later said of the project. The money would be better used, he and his colleagues concluded, on commercial space transportation.

The White House aides envisioned a bevy of space taxis—designed, built and operated by private enterprise—that could take astronauts to and from the space station. This earth-to-orbit job would rely on young companies and relatively untested technologies.

Space Exploration Technologies Inc., started by 38-year-old PayPal founder Elon Musk, for example, only had about 40 employees in 2004. Its largest rocket is still waiting for its first test flight, but SpaceX has a good chance of ending up as a key part of NASA's plans to transport both astronauts and cargo to the space station. Another entrant is Orbital Sciences Corp., a midsize NASA supplier that hopes to parlay its commercial efforts into securing a prime contract for manned programs.

Big contractors such as Lockheed Martin Corp. and Boeing Co. would also play a role but wouldn't be as intensely involved.

Supporters say the president's approach would create thousands of high-tech jobs and game-changing technologies. It would also free up NASA to deal with more difficult, longer-term projects, such as developing powerful boosters and in-orbit refueling systems making it possible to reach distant planets.

But the administration failed to persuade lawmakers and didn't make it easy for its staff. Mr. Bolden said he didn't get final numbers from the White House about the impact of Constellation's proposed demise until hours before the budget was released in February. Only then, he said, did “we really know what the budget was going to be.”

Hours after announcing that NASA was betting on a group of entrepreneurs to deliver pioneering technologies, Mr. Bolden said he felt more comfortable with the agency's traditional contractors. “I would be lying,” he acknowledged in an interview, “if I said I don't have some greater comfort with a Boeing” than a fledgling company.

Ms. Garver was also slow to disclose the proposed project cancellations to NASA's biggest suppliers, such as Boeing, Lockheed Martin and Alliant Techsystems Inc.

Even the Florida summit sparked friction. White House aides initially encouraged lawmakers to organize the event, but then decided to do it themselves. Aides to Mr. Obama then promised to reserve tickets for any members of Congress who wanted to attend, according to legislators and staffers. But invitations were later limited, according to a White House email this week that blamed Democratic Congressional leaders and apologized for “any misunderstanding.”

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I will highlight a number of quotes from these documents. Let me start with a letter by three of our Nation's renowned astronauts, true American heroes: Neil Armstrong, the first man to set foot on the Moon, commander of Apollo 11; James Lovell, commander of Apollo 13; and Eugene Cernan, commander of Apollo 17.

In an open letter to the President, these space pioneers state that although some of the President's proposals have merit, “the decision to cancel the Constellation program, its Ares 1 and Ares V rockets and the Orion spacecraft, is devastating.”

They say:

America's only path to low Earth orbit and the International Space Station will now be subject to an agreement with Russia to purchase space on their Soyuz (at a price of over 50 million dollars per seat with significant increases expected in the near future) until we have the capacity to provide transportation for ourselves. The availability of a commercial transport to orbit as envisioned in the President's proposal cannot be predicted with any certainty, but is likely to take substantially longer and be more expensive than we would hope.

It appears that we will have wasted our current \$10-plus billion investment in Constellation and, equally importantly, we will have lost the many years required to recreate the equivalent of what we will have discarded.

For The United States, the leading space faring nation for nearly half a century, to be without carriage to low Earth orbit and with no human exploration capability to go beyond Earth orbit for an indeterminate time into the future, destines our nation to become one of second or even third rate stature. While the President's plan envisages humans traveling away from Earth and perhaps toward Mars at some time in the future, the lack of developed rockets and spacecraft will assure that ability will not be available for many years.

Without the skill and experience that actual spacecraft operation provides, the USA is far too likely to be on a long downhill slide to mediocrity. America must decide if it wishes to remain a leader in space. If it does, we should institute a program which will give us the very best chance of achieving that goal.

That is all from the letter signed by Neil Armstrong, James Lovell, and Eugene Cernan.

In another letter to President Obama, 27 space experts, including astronauts, former NASA Administrators, and program managers make the following points:

America is faced with the near-simultaneous ending of the Shuttle program and your recent budget proposal to cancel the Constellation program. This is wrong for our country for many reasons. We are very concerned about America ceding its hard earned global leadership in space technology to other nations. We are stunned that, in a time of economic crisis, this move will force as many as 30,000 irreplaceable engineers and managers out of the space industry. We see our human exploration program, one of the most inspirational tools to promote science, technology, engineering and math to our young people, being reduced to mediocrity. NASA's human space program has inspired awe and wonder in all ages by pursuing the American tradition of exploring the unknown. We strongly urge you to drop this misguided proposal that forces NASA out of human space operations for the foreseeable future.

For those of us who have accepted the risk and dedicated a portion of our lives to the exploration of outer space, this is a terrible decision. . . .

America's greatness lies in her people: she will always have men and women willing to ride rockets into the heavens. America's challenge is to match their bravery and acceptance of risk with specific plans and goals worthy of their commitment. NASA must continue at the frontiers of human space exploration in order to develop the technology and set the standards of excellence that will enable commercial space ventures to eventually succeed. Canceling NASA's human space operations, after 50 years of unparalleled achievement, makes that objective impossible.

One of the greatest fears of any generation is not leaving things better for the young people of the next. In the area of human space flight, we are about to realize that fear; your NASA budget proposal raises more questions about our future in space than it answers.

That is all from the letter that was signed by 27 people who have dedicated their lives to America's space exploration.

In an open letter by astronaut Lee Archambault, who was a pilot of *Atlantis* in 2007 and *Discovery* in 2009, he says:

As the Space Shuttle program marches closer to its apparent end, NASA's future is now in jeopardy more than perhaps at any time in history. . . .

The Shuttle retirement . . . would yield sole access to the International Space Station to Russia for the currently projected seven year [U.S. human spaceflight] gap. . . .

Others argue that commercial alternatives exist to ferry our astronauts to and from the International Space Station. Not quite yet. Our commercial industry is indeed getting closer to attaining the ability to send unmanned spacecraft to the International Space Station as resupply ships. Ultimately, these companies may produce spacecraft safe enough for human travel to low Earth orbit. However, I would not bet the future of the International Space Station on commercial access for crewmembers happening much sooner, if at all, than Orion is capable of flying to the International Space Station in 2017. Thus, this option cannot be considered a viable "gap filler" at this point. . . .

Not until Orion or a commercial alternative is indeed ready and capable of trans-

porting our astronauts to and from the International Space Station, should we consider retiring the Space Shuttle. . . . The future of NASA and our manned exploration of space must include flying the Shuttle through the gap, whatever that gap may be.

Finally, this week, in an editorial from the Washington Times entitled "Losing It in Space," the editorial from the Washington Times says:

Pity poor NASA. Rather than reaching toward the stars, America's premier scientific organization has settled its sights on studying shrimp schools beneath the Antarctic ice cap and sticky accelerators on Toyotas. Such is the scope of hope and change in President Obama's universe.

The editorial goes on to say:

In his 2011 budget, the president zeroed out NASA's Constellation project, the package of launch and landing vehicles that were to replace the aging space shuttle fleet to carry Americans into space. . . .

This is not a cost-cutting move. The agency is budgeted to receive \$19 billion next year, and Mr. Obama wants to throw an additional \$6 billion at it over [the next] five years. The hitch is he wants to shift its mission toward climate research and airplane design. Anxious to stay relevant, NASA agreed to research the cause of Toyota's sudden-acceleration problem.

NASA administrator Charles Bolden said Thursday that federal money is budgeted for fostering the growth of the commercial space industry, including the development of space taxis. But if the results of the president's stimulus are any indication, command economic policy is an inefficient generator of jobs.

It goes on to say:

As NASA's wings are clipped, our competitors soar. The U.S. space agency even had to sign a \$340 million deal with Russia on April 6 to transport astronauts to the International Space Station through 2014. By then, China intends to conduct an ambitious schedule of flights with its Shenzhou spacecraft. It doesn't take much imagination to envision the day when NASA must pay its Asian competitor large sums for American astronauts to ride into orbit as passengers. Thanks to Mr. Obama, the United States will be dependent on Russia and China for space travel.

The editorial goes on:

The space program is a great symbol of the American spirit of achievement. The day this nation cedes the conquest of space to others is the day we admit that we have forfeited our competitive exceptionalism. Earth-centric activities like the study of the Antarctic shrimp ecosystem and automobile anomalies should be left to others. A less-costly NASA should be relieved of extraneous responsibilities and allowed to retain its core mission—one that no other agency can accomplish—the exploration of space.

On behalf of all Americans, Floridians should make certain the president gets the message loud and clear when he hosts a conference about the agency's future on Thursday—

Today—

in the Sunshine State. Let NASA be NASA.

That is the editorial from the Washington Times earlier this week.

Let me remind my colleagues that the Augustine Committee, which the Obama administration asked to review the Nation's human space flight activities, used a subtitle for its report which proposed a set of options for a

space program "worthy of a great nation." The items I have submitted for the RECORD reflect the thoughts and feelings of many of those who gave us a space program that was worthy of greatness. I believe their words represent a challenge that Congress and the President must meet.

In a few hours, President Obama will share the details of his latest vision for our Nation's future space program. I still remain hopeful the President will come away from this visit today with a deeper understanding of what is at stake in our Nation's history of space exploration. I renew my offer to work with the President and my congressional colleagues to come up with a plan that makes sense for America.

The principles necessary to bridge the gap between the President and Congress have been set forward by the bipartisan legislation I have introduced and has also been introduced on the House side. All that is needed to align these principles with the President's goals and existing budget realities is a willingness to take the same risks that have been hallmarks of our Nation's commitment to space exploration.

Some people would say we have to cut the budget somewhere. Why not here? The answer is, this does not cut the budget. The President's proposal does not cut the budget. It increases the budget. It turns the money over to private companies that are as yet unproven to try to do something we have already made a \$10 billion investment in and cut it off. When it is cut off, we will lose all that has been gained. The engineering, the science, the research that has gone into the space station will be lost. Those people will go into other areas. We will not be able to recreate it. But yet we have not cut the budget a penny. What we have done is squander the capability for America to continue to be the leader of the world in innovation, in creativity, and most certainly in taking the risk to explore the heavens, which has produced so many results in our country.

It has produced results for national defense capabilities. We are using satellites to put bombs into windows from miles out so we will not have collateral damage and hurt innocent people. We learned that by exploring the heavens. We now have Velcro. We have MRIs. We have health benefits that we could never have had without the research we did to go into space.

Now we have a \$100 billion investment in a space station that will specialize with NIH and other agencies in doing research that cannot be done on the ground because of the microgravity conditions. Yet we are stopping the capability, at the end of this year, for Americans to go into space under our own auspices. This is not sound policy for our country. I am urging the President to listen to people such as Neil Armstrong and Eugene Cernan and Jim Lovell and former administrators who have knowledge that is beyond mine or his about what we can do for the future.

We need to rethink the position that is being announced today and remember that America's greatness is dependent on our creativity and our entrepreneurial spirit. Stopping midtrack and turning everything over to private companies that are in their fledgling stage is not the answer.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arizona.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to extend morning business for up to 10 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank the Chair.

TAX DAY

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, today is April 15, perhaps the most dread day of the year for the American taxpayer. At some point today, millions of people will engage in a painful, complicated, and uniquely American exercise: filing their Federal tax returns.

According to the Tax Foundation, Americans worked well over 3 months this year—over 3 months; from January 1 to April 9—before they had earned enough money to pay this year's tax obligations at the Federal, State, and local levels. Congress has succeeded in establishing a pattern of taxing and spending to the point that the average American must work a full 99 days of the year just to pay their taxes.

Sadly, while we continue to spend and spend and spend here in our Nation's capital, the tax burden carried by the average American gets heavier and heavier and heavier.

On September 12, 2008, in Dover, NH, then-candidate Obama said this:

I can make a firm pledge. Under my plan, no family making less than \$250,000 a year will see any form of tax increase. Not your income tax, not your payroll tax, not your capital gains taxes, not any of your taxes.

Another interesting quote from then-candidate Obama.

According to data released yesterday by the House Ways and Means Committee, since January of 2009, President Obama and the congressional Democrats have enacted into law gross tax increases totaling more than \$670 billion or more than \$2,100 for every man, woman, and child in the United States of America. A list of tax increases includes at least 14 violations of the President's pledge not to raise taxes on Americans earning less than \$200,000 for singles and \$250,000 for married couples.

For example, there is a new tax on individuals who don't purchase government-approved health insurance. There is a new tax on employers who fail to fully comply with government health

insurance mandates. There is a new 40-percent excise tax on certain high-cost health plans. There is a new ban on the purchase of over-the-counter drugs using funds from FSAs, HSAs, and HRAs. There is an increase from 7.5 percent to 10 percent of income, the threshold after which individuals can deduct out-of-pocket medical expenses. There is a new \$2,500 annual cap on FSA contributions. There is a new annual tax on health insurance. There is a new annual tax on brand-name pharmaceuticals. There is a new 2.3-percent excise tax on certain medical devices. There is a new 10-percent tax on indoor UV—ultraviolet—tanning services. There is a new tax on insured and self-insured health plans, and it is double the penalty for nonqualified health savings accounts distributions. There is a tobacco tax increase. There are Federal unemployment surtaxes which have been extended through 2011, and there are more and more on the list.

In addition to the financial burden associated with all of the tax increases heaped upon the American people in the past year, taxpayers face the added anxiety of a complicated, antiquated, and oversized Tax Code. Let's look at what Americans go through every year in order to meet the April 15 deadline as reported by National Review Online.

As April 15 approaches like an incoming monsoon, millions of Americans brace for the pain of writing checks to the IRS. Even worse, this annual discomfort begins even earlier, as taxpayers generate a cyclone of documents just to calculate their tax liability. America's excruciatingly complex tax-compliance regime deepens the aggravation of sending hard-earned cash to Washington for virtual incineration by Congress.

Completing tax reforms required 7.75 billion hours of human labor in the 2008 fiscal year, according to the latest reginfo.gov data. That roughly equals 3.7 million people—or everyone in Los Angeles—filling out IRS forms for 40 hours every week, all year, without vacations.

That involves more workers than those at the Fortune 500's five biggest employers—

The National Taxpayers Union's David Keating concludes in a forthcoming report—

more than everybody at Wal-Mart, UPS, McDonald's, IBM and Citigroup combined.

Keating also found that:

Individual taxpayers would devote some 2.3 billion hours grappling with the income tax in 2010 at an equivalent labor cost of \$71.4 billion. Add to this the \$31.5 billion that individual taxpayers will cough up for tax software, accounting services, photocopying, and other compliance-related expenses. All told, individual taxpayers will spend \$103 billion to determine how much more money they must pump into the Beltway.

Meanwhile, the IRS Web site now offers 1,909 different documents, which is up from 1,770 last year. These include the riveting form 8833: Treaty-Based Return Position Disclosure Under Section 6114, or 7701(b). And don't miss Form 990-W: Estimated Tax on Unrelated Business Taxable Income for Tax-Exempt Organizations. This year's basic 1040 tax return includes 76 lines and 174 pages of instructions, up from 68 lines and 52 pages in 1985.

Last year, the National Taxpayers Union calculated that U.S. corporations spent \$159.4 billion on tax compliance, equal to 54 percent of corporate income tax revenue. In 2008, General Electric's tax returns droned on for some 24,000 pages.

It is abundantly clear we are on a path to fiscal disaster. David Walker, the former head of the Government Accountability Office and current president and CEO of the Peter G. Peterson Foundation and one of the most respected budget experts in the Nation, recently said:

The financial condition of the United States has deteriorated dramatically in recent years. Importantly, our primary fiscal threat is not today's deficit and debt levels, but the structural deficits and escalating debt burdens that will occur after the economy has recovered, unemployment is down, the "wars" are over, and the recent crises have passed. These large and growing structural deficits and the tens of trillions in unfunded federal government promises that drive them serve to threaten the future of our country and our families. We must begin to take steps now to put our Federal financial house in order. In addition, we must achieve some meaningful reforms within the next three years in order to help avoid a "crisis of confidence" that could have much worse economic consequences for America, Americans, and the world than the recent housing and financial crisis.

Today, all over America, there will be people demonstrating at tea parties, at gatherings, at organizations, at coffee shops, at restaurants, at places of business at the water cooler. People all over America will be talking today about this incredible, complex, difficult, burdensome system we have laid on the American people. It is fundamentally unfair and fundamentally incomprehensible to average citizens.

Most citizens, after they file their tax returns, will now live in some concern, if not grave concern, that they may have made a mistake because of this incredibly complex document from the agency we call the IRS and the tax bills we have. These American citizens can't be positive—even if they have gone to an accountant—that they will not be audited and then subject to further penalties.

We need to clean up the Tax Code. We need to stop the spending. We need to restore the confidence of the American people. There is a veritable uprising going on out there. It is a peaceful one. It is all over America. On a day like today, when they see their taxes have increased by some \$670 billion just in the last year, this will fuel the fire that is spreading across America and will culminate this coming November.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COBURN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.