

2014 Citizens for Space Exploration D.C. Trip - May 20-22, 2014

Trip Summary

The 2014 DC Trip was a success and helped advance support for human space exploration and demonstrate a large, grassroots constituency for space exploration. The 23rd annual trip included 104 travelers (up from 97 last year) representing 31 states (up from 28 states last year) who conducted 354 congressional office visits. The diverse group of travelers included elected officials, 34 university students majoring in engineering or related technical fields of study, industry representatives and community leaders. The Congressional reception was well attended and included remarks from 9 Members of Congress and attended by over 60 staffers.

A few interesting statistics from our surveys:

- 81% House visits, 19% Senate.
- 91% were “very engaged” in the meeting.
- 83 staffers had visited a NASA center and /or seen a launch.
- 74% of staffers were “very knowledgeable” or “somewhat knowledgeable” about NASA’s exploration programs.
- 82% of staffers were “very knowledgeable” or “somewhat knowledgeable” about the benefits derived from the space program – Education was mentioned in 71% of meetings, economic benefits in 51%, spinoffs in 41%, and defense in 31%.
- Major concerns discussed were competing budget demands and geopolitical issues (Russia and China).
- 57% of visits were considered “very supportive” and 30% “somewhat supportive” of human space exploration.
- Very few expressed a preference between an asteroid or lunar approach to a Mars mission.

Visits overview

Each team consisted of a leader and 2-3 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
- The NASA Elements of Human Space Flight 1-pager
- ISS Spinoffs 1-pager
- NASA budget pie chart
- State-specific document with NASA funds spent in that state
- March 21st House letter to President Obama supporting space exploration

Key Messages included support for NASA’s human space exploration portfolio, and NASA’s role in supporting American leadership, education, innovation, health care, and quality of life for less than half

of one percent of the budget. Talking points also included concern about Russia and the increasing importance of a well-funded NASA in uncertain geopolitical times.

Team members focused their specific reason for support – for example:

- Student: why education is important to inspire students and get them into STEM careers
- Industry: What is happening in space exploration and why it is important to the economy and to business
- Elected officials: Why NASA is an important investment and important to communities, the spinoff benefits, etc.
- Community leaders and economic development officials: a wide variety of reasons for supporting including leadership, education, spinoffs, etc.

Kick-Off Reception – Tuesday, May 20, 2014

Brian Freedman emceed the program in his role as the trip chairman. Speakers including Richard-Duane Chambers from the Senate Commerce Committee, Dan Tani, Astronaut (ret.) and Orbital Executive, Joe Mayer, Chairman of CSE National, and David Braun, the trip coordinator. Topics covered included CSE history, Hill do's and don'ts, a legislative update, ISS spinoffs, 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 21, 2014

The Citizens for Space Exploration hosted a Congressional Reception for Members of Congress and their staff. Nine Congressional Members spoke at the reception and approximately 60 staff from both Congressional personal offices and committees attended. Congressional speakers were:

- Steve Stockman (R-TX-36)
- Pete Olson (R-TX-22)
- Gene Green (D-TX-29)
- Alan Nunnelee (R-MS-1)
- Bill Posey (R-FL-8)
- Ami Bera (D-CA-7)
- Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX-18)
- Steven Palazzo (R-MS-4)
- Doug Lamborn (R-CO-5) attended but did not speak.

Feedback

Some key takeaways, based on feedback received from the teams:

- Strong bipartisan support for NASA. There was more understanding of NASA's space exploration programs than in previous years.
- Response to our platform of ISS, Orion, SLS, and Commercial Crew/Cargo was very positive.
- Continued interest in NASA's Commercial Crew and Cargo efforts in low earth orbit and the associated companies.
- Generally agreed that Mars was the ultimate destination for human exploration; did not state a definitive preference for lunar vs. asteroid mission options for accomplishing this long-term objective.
- The budget is always a challenge.
- NASA and industry will have to continuously make the case for the value of spaceflight.

- Recognition of the importance of Space Launch System and Orion to support deep-space exploration.
- Many staffers asked to be contacted when a specific vote or action was needed.

Local Elected Officials Attending the Trip

- Texas State Senator Sylvia Garcia
- League City Mayor Tim Paulissen
- Nassau Bay Mayor Mark Denman
- Houston Councilmember Dave Martin
- League City Councilman Andy Mann
- Nassau Bay Mayor Pro-tem David Braun
- Friendswood Councilmember Carl Gustafson
- Seabrook Councilman Mike Giangrosso
- Seabrook Councilman Robert Lorente
- Seabrook Councilman Thom Kolupski