



NASA Budget Talking Points

(In order to present a unified message, the following is provided for your review.)

I am concerned about the president's proposal to cancel NASA's human space exploration program (Constellation). My concerns are primarily the following:

National and Johnson Space Center (JSC) Leadership: Human space exploration is fundamental to the future leadership, national security and economic vitality of America. JSC is the centerpiece of NASA's human space exploration mission and needs to continue in that role. Cancelling the Human Space Flight Program "Constellation" jeopardizes America's and JSC's leadership role in human space exploration. The country that leads in space leads the world.

Jobs and Workforce Transition: The Constellation Program would help the JSC workforce (civil servant and contractor) to transition effectively as the shuttle is retired from active service following the completion of the International Space Station assembly in 2010-2011. Without Constellation, JSC could lose anywhere from 4000 to 7000 high-tech jobs making a potentially devastating impact on this community and the region. Lost business volume could total \$560 million – \$1 billion annually.

STEM Education & Careers: Human space exploration inspires future generations. The excitement of missions to the moon, Mars and other destinations should be part of the national education effort to revitalize a commitment to excellence in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Thirty-five percent of the industry team working on the Orion Crew Exploration Vehicle program that is managed by JSC is comprised of young professionals (those under 35 years of age). If the Constellation Program is cancelled, will young people be encouraged to commit themselves to STEM education when they see their career opportunities shrinking rather than expanding?

Quality of Life: Human space exploration drives technology that makes this nation more competitive, but it also enhances the world's quality of life. Life sciences research with astronauts has spurred technological breakthroughs that have advanced medical care in detection and prevention related to cancer, heart disease and osteoporosis. Fetal monitors, developed as an application of NASA's ability to monitor astronaut health, have resulted in the preservation of life for thousands of infants. The Texas Medical Center is a standing testament to Houston's leadership in partnering with NASA and applying space-based research and technologies.

Bottom-line: Congress, the administration, the contractor community and the American people must engage to develop a forward-thinking plan for America that ensures its continued leadership, protects jobs and small businesses, inspires America's children to pursue science and math related careers, and allows Americans to continue to enjoy a quality of life second to none.

Background: The Constellation Program was part of The Vision for Space Exploration. It was to provide the means for developing new launch vehicles and spacecraft capable of travel to the moon, Mars and other destinations. NASA JSC had the lead to manage Constellation and several of its major elements, including the Orion Crew Exploration Vehicle and the Altair Lunar Lander. The president's FY2011 budget proposes the cancellation of Constellation (including the Orion Crew Capsule, Altair, and the Ares I and Ares V rockets).