

As a member of the House Armed Services Committee and the Science, Space, and Technology Committee, I see how national security and space intersect every day. And as a Floridian, space is something that is absolutely in my DNA.

It is from, of course, Florida's Kennedy Space Center that our astronauts launched to the Moon, and I know that Florida will be a key player when we go back to the Moon once more in 2024 and as NASA, the U.S. military, and American industry work together to maintain American leadership in space. In my district in northeast Florida, we are very fortunate to have companies that once again will assemble the lunar landers to help NASA get back to the Moon.

So looking back on this historic Moon landing 50 years later, I hope we will all remember what an incredible moment this was for our country. Our American values and American ingenuity have taken us to new worlds not just on Earth, but beyond. It is an honor to celebrate these accomplishments here today, and it is absolutely critical that we continue exploring and we continue innovating.

But it is also equally critical that we fully understand that our competitors seek to supplant our leadership role in space, and they are not in line with our values. We cannot and will not allow that to happen.

CELEBRATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LAUNCH OF THE "APOLLO 11"

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Mrs. FLETCHER) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. FLETCHER. Mr. Speaker, this week we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the launch of *Apollo 11*, the spacecraft that sent Americans to the Moon.

On September 12, 1962, before a crowd of 40,000 spectators at Rice University in Houston, President John F. Kennedy announced the ambitious goal of sending Americans to the Moon before the end of the decade.

On July 20, 1969, we got there. Neil Armstrong became the first human to set foot on the surface of the Moon, and 19 minutes later Buzz Aldrin became the second.

More than 600 million people around the world watched Armstrong take his first step live on television. The first words they heard on the Moon were "Houston, Tranquility Base here. The Eagle has landed," followed by the observation, "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."

As a native Houstonian and the Representative of Texas' Seventh Congressional District, these historic words are seared in my mind. The *Apollo 11* mission was more than just an amazing technological advancement, it brought Americans from all backgrounds and beliefs together toward a common goal and a common purpose. It made people a part of something bigger than them-

selves, perhaps bigger than they had ever imagined.

More than 400,000 Americans worked to make the *Apollo 11* mission a success, many of them based at the Johnson Space Center in Houston. From the support crew to the flight directors at mission control, to the space suit designers, to the human computers, engineers, and scientists who designed and built the hardware and software, to the custodial staff who worked in the building to make sure that they had a place to work, and to every small job in between, *Apollo 11* was the result of a historic collaboration across our country.

The resounding success of the Apollo program served to captivate the world's attention and cemented America's status as a leader in scientific discovery and technological innovation, and it taught us what we as Americans can do, what we can accomplish when we work together toward a common goal. What we learned from this mission is that, when we do that, even the sky is not the limit.

AMERICA MUST REMAIN THE LEADER IN SPACE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WEBER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the *Apollo 11* mission.

In his famous 1961 speech at Rice University in Houston, Texas, President John F. Kennedy challenged the Nation to put a man on the Moon by the end of the decade. President Kennedy spoke these now famous words: "We choose to go to the Moon in this decade and do other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard."

President Kennedy understood the importance of American leadership in space. He added: "Whether it will become a force for good or ill depends on man, and only if the United States occupies a position of preeminence can we help decide whether this new ocean will be a sea of peace or a new, terrifying theater of war."

Military professionals will tell you that whoever occupies the high ground in a conflict has the upper hand. Folks, there is no higher ground than space. America must remain the leader in space. It is just that simple.

In 1969, the crew of *Apollo 11* fulfilled that very mission to put a man on the Moon. Today, we honor not only the astronauts Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins, but all of the great NASA men and women who worked tirelessly to make the *Apollo 11* mission a success.

We have learned about the hidden figures of the Apollo program, those behind the scenes. Here are some more.

At the height of the Apollo program, according to one estimate, 1 in 50 Americans were working on some aspect of the program. This included some 400,000-plus full-time employees.

The astronauts knew their lives depended on these people, most of whom they never knew nor would they ever meet, that were performing difficult tasks on a very demanding schedule.

Over 530 million people around the globe watched the telecast of Armstrong's first steps from 250,000 miles away. Not only did *Apollo 11* show the world what America can achieve, but it displayed a beautifully unique ability of human space exploration, its capacity to stimulate, to inspire, and to cause people to reach deep inside to find the very best they had to offer.

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American greatness is a compilation of these things. On that day, we spread our message of American greatness around the globe.

Fifty years ago, the politics of a volatile world order compelled us to the challenge of space competition. The world has changed, and in today's uncertainty, one thing remains certain: the importance of American preeminence in space.

Now, we turn our focus to a new challenge. We will send Americans back to the Moon's surface by 2024, only this time, to stay. It has been a long time since man walked on the Moon. In 2024, we will make history once again when the first woman walks on the Moon.

With our great NASA's lead, the private and public sectors are coming together to accomplish this great and very difficult task. Through their partnerships, American excellence is leveraged across the board. We are building sustainable, reusable systems that will not only take us to the Moon but leapfrog us to Mars.

Our great NASA is bringing Democrats and Republicans together in what I call American togetherness.

Thank God for NASA.

CELEBRATING HIDDEN FIGURES OF "APOLLO 11" MISSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WILSON) for 5 minutes.

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, 50 years ago, the *Apollo 11* mission sent a crew of pioneering women on a journey of incredible significance. All were astronauts.

Symbolically, it was a representation that with enough hard work, dedication, and will, America could achieve the seemingly impossible.

The mission left lasting imprints, from the eternal footprints left on Tranquility Base to the values engraved into an entire generation.

The Moon landing inspired all who watched it to believe in the power of innovation, dedication, and most especially, unwavering courage. But today, I want to draw attention to some of the unseen heroes of the *Apollo 11* mission. I will refer to them as the "hidden figures."

Ms. Katherine Johnson, Ms. Dorothy Vaughan, and Ms. Mary Jackson have