the best of a bad situation. He always put others before himself, and did so with a smile on his face and a kind word for those around him.

Garrett's mother, Michelle, shared with me a powerful story she learned about her son after his death. She was told that when he was a freshman in high school, he took it upon himself to call the mother of a student he knew to tell her that he was worried about her son. He was concerned that her son was headed down a bad path, and he wanted her to know. Garrett never told his mom that he did that, but it made a difference in the life of another young man.

How many times have each of us had an opportunity to make a difference? Do we always seize that opportunity? Garrett Gamble not only acted on those opportunities, but touched the lives of everyone around him.

This is posted on a Facebook page dedicated to Garrett and speaks to his character. ''Whether in Sugar Land, Jacksonville, or Helmand, Lance Corporal Garrett W. Gamble approached life with enthusiasm. He was caring, kind, and fun to be around, but he took his job as a U.S. Marine very seriously.

''Garrett spent a lot of time 'outside the wire,' and yesterday, that's where he laid down his life so that we may live in liberty. Thank you, Garrett, for the precious gift of freedom. May you rest in peace with our Lord, and may God's angels surround your family until you are reunited. Sincerely, Pat.''

I'd like to close by reading a poem that Garrett's family and friends say epitomizes who he was. It's called ''Ode to a Marine, Dedicated to all Marines, Past and Present.'' It's by Jeannie Salinski.

In a crowd you're bound to spot him,
He's standing so very tall
Not too much impresses him;
He's seen and done it all.
His hair is short, his eyes are sharp,
But his smile's a little blue.
It's the only indication
Of the hell that he's gone through.
He belongs to a sacred brotherhood,
Always faithful 'til the end.
He has walked right into battle
And walked back out again.
Many people think him foolish
For having no regrets
About having lived through many times
Others would forget.
He's the first to go and last to know,
But never questions why,
On whether it is right or wrong,
But only do or die.
He walks the path most won't take
He's lost much along the way,
But he thinks a lot of freedom,
It's a small price to pay.
Yes, he has chosen to live a life
Off the beaten track,
Knowing well each time he's called,
He might not make it back.
So, next time you see a Devil Dog
Standing proud and true,
Be grateful for all he's given;
He's given it for you.
Don't go and ask him
What's it like to be in a war;
Just thank God that it's your country
He's always fighting for.
And thank him too for all the hell
He's seen in that shade of green,
Thank him for having the guts
To be a United States Marine.

Mr. Speaker, America cannot repay the debt we owe Garrett Gamble. But we can say thank you for his selfless commitment to serve our Nation and thank you to his family for raising such a strong, wonderful Marine. Lance Corporal Garrett Gamble is a true American hero—an ordinary American who did extraordinary things with a short life. A grateful Nation says thank you, Semper Fi, and God bless.

FUTURE OF AMERICAN SPACE EXPLORATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. I appreciate the opportunity of being here this morning on one of the days when obviously our time management skills are not perhaps the greatest, but it still is nonetheless an opportunity to speak on this floor before you, Mr. Speaker, on a couple of issues that are significant. I appreciate also that I will be joined by my good friend from Texas, who just spoke so eloquently about one of those who has given his all for all of us and how grateful we are for this family and this particular individual.

I think we're going to be hitting several different themes this evening as we talk about the future of this country, especially as it deals with space. And here, once again, I'm grateful the gentleman from Texas is here because Mr. OLSON has indeed been a leader in this particular issue in charting the future of America as far as space policy will be.

It is very easy in this environment to try and focus, first of all, on jobs. I think we will. Because, indeed, as this particular administration is going to begin their summer of recovery tour in which they will be touting the kinds of jobs that will be created to try and change the economic future this country is currently in, it seems almost ironic that administrative policies, especially with NASA, are going to create a vast amount of unemployed individuals—up to 30,000 individuals who will receive their pink slips and be unemployed specifically because of policies initiated by this administration and the current leadership in NASA. It's at least ironic, but we will be talking about that. However, we want to go beyond that because if you're dealing with simply jobs, that can be a very parochial issue. We're also dealing with the future of space and the importance of space. And, clearly, if indeed this administration and the leaders of NASA today seem to be de-emphasizing the role of space in our future, other nations are not. The Russians, the Chinese, even the Indian government and the Japanese government have a unique interest in taking our position in the leadership role of space exploration. That's another issue I think we will be talking about.

I also want to make sure that we illustrate how sometimes there are unintended consequences in our actions. This administration and, once again, NASA's leadership did not take into effect the consequences of their program changes and the consequences that would have specifically related to our military preparedness, for indeed one of the things we have to realize is that the component pieces that go into the missiles that shoot somebody to the Moon are the same component pieces that go into missiles that shoot down rockets from our adversaries Iran or North Korea, and that if you harm the industrial base that creates one program, you harm the industrial base that creates the other program, and that gives us some pause to think what we're doing on the defense side of this country, which is clearly one of the few roles specifically given to Congress in the Constitution. Finally, I think I'd like to talk some about a communique that came out from the administration today as to their future in space, and say that some of the platitudes that are very nicely written in this communique are contradictory to the actions that indeed take place.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I think if the gentleman from Texas is prepared to lead off, I would like to turn over as much time to Mr. OLSON from Texas, who, as I said, has for quite a while been the organizer and the leader of this effort to try and explore what this administration is doing, and maybe make some corrections, as is the role and responsibility of Congress dealing with space. Then I will be happy to make some remarks after the gentleman from Texas has completed.

Mr. OLSON. I want to thank my colleague from Utah for allowing me to speak a little bit on an incredibly important issue to our Nation's future. Five months ago, the Obama administration proposed NASA's budget for fiscal year 2011. The proposal included surprisingly drastic decisions just out of the blue to cancel the Constellation program, NASA's follow-on to the space shuttle. Constellation will provide a means and a service to utilize the International Space Station for as long as it needs to—plus, to go beyond low Earth orbit, go to the Moon and beyond. I believed at the time that such a dramatic reversal risks ceding American leadership in human space flight for the future. A lot has transpired since those 5 months, but I still believe canceling the Constellation presents more risks than rewards, creates more challenges than solutions, and raises more questions than it provides answers.

The fact that NASA and the administration cannot or will not provide cogent, comprehensive details related to such a radical policy change should alarm every Member of Congress. My colleagues and I are mainly concerned about our ability to maintain and utilize the international space station; the impact on the aerospace industrial base and our highly skilled workforce, as my colleague from Utah alluded to; and the financial, programmatic, and crew-safety risk of reliance on unidentified commercial crew vehicles. These concerns have not been adequately addressed by the administration. And I've long supported a balanced program that combines Constellation with an increasing role for the commercial sector, beginning with cargo flights to the space station and, over time, evolving to crewed missions. And I will continue to do so.

I'm not alone in advocating this balanced approach. As the heralded Augustine Commission report, when it was released, said that over time, within the aerospace community—even they, even the Augustine report, did not advocate canceling the Constellation. I still believe that this balance exists between government and commercial space. It can exist. And within the budget that's been proposed. Both of these sectors have experienced tremendous successes over the past months—notably the Orion pad abort test in May and the Falcon 9 launch just last month. Yet, rather than focus on the vital elements to maintain American leadership in space, the administration and NASA are distracted with programs that seem to spend money on anything but space.

Many of us are astonished by the misplaced priorities within NASA's budget. Instead of building and testing flight hardware, NASA proposes spending $1.9 billion to cancel Constellation contracts. Even now, NASA's selective enforcement of a termination liability provision for Constellation contracts is prematurely triggering layoffs across the country. It's been determined that somewhere between 20,000 and 30,000 jobs could be lost nationwide as a result. And we're not just losing jobs. We're losing American know-how. We're losing capabilities and expertise that will be difficult and costly to get back if and when our Nation decides that it wants to explore again. Our space program does not employ people; it invests in them. And, by doing so, we strengthen our Nation's security and our economic well-being.

As if to add insult to injury, last Friday the administration came forward with a request to transfer $100 million of NASA's already limited resources to the Labor and Commerce Departments to funds an interagency task force to spur ''regional economic growth and job creation.'' Our Nation's best and brightest engineers and technicians don't want or need an interagency task force. They'd much rather be retained and put to use with the critical skills building and flying American-built spacecraft. The administration claims to have focused on jobs, jobs, jobs. Yet it fails to recognize the destructive impact of canceling Constellation and shifting $100 million to the Labor and Commerce Departments.

So as we look forward to the next 6 critical months, there are some things we must do. We must get answers from the administration. We in Congress must recognize the impacts on our workforce and our infrastructure. We must pass an authorization bill. And, perhaps most importantly, we must ensure that the final flights of the space shuttle and the continuous operation of the space station are done safely and successfully.

□ 1830

I am both humbled and inspired that while men and women in our human space flight programs watch us debate and question whether jobs will exist, they continue to excel and drive our Nation towards new achievements in space. Their focus, their sacrifice, their dedication and that of the men and women who came before them have enabled the United States to be the global leader in human space flight. Let us work to keep it that way.

If my colleague from Utah would let me, I would like to read this just to show you how important it is to the American people and some of the people that are opposed to the administration's plan. This is the letter that ran in the Orlando Sentinel prior to the President's speech in Florida on April 15. And I think it's worth reading because our Nation's experts and heroes in human space flight, this is how they feel about this administration's budget proposal:

''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 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 the hopes of continued American leadership in human space exploration.'' The letter was signed by approximately 37 astronauts who span all of our main human space flight programs, from Mercury, Gemini, Apollo, Skylab, Apollo-Soyuz, shuttle station. This is a powerful argument, my friend, as to what we're doing, and what we're doing here is wrong for our country's future. We need to develop the Constellation. We need to get beyond low Earth orbit; and we need to explore, explore like Americans have been doing ever since our forefathers left their homes to come to this country.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. I appreciate the gentleman from Texas, the points that he made and especially the poignant letter that came out and illustrating how the overwhelming majority—in fact, I would say almost all but one—of our retired astronaut core feels very strongly that Constellation was the right approach for this country to do and that we should continue on with that particular approach.

I would like to go back to a couple of points. I hope I am not redundant, but I think they are significant enough that even if we say them a second time,

it's important. And I would hope the gentleman from Texas would stay here and try to fill in the blanks where I miss those, if we could.

There was quick mention, once again, as I said, on the jobs that we are talking about here. The Vice President recently sent out a press release, announcing that he was going on his summer tour to tout the ''Summer of Recovery.'' Now, amongst the bullet points that they put in that press release was that this administration would be proposing programs to build up to 30,000 miles of new roads, up to 2,000 new water programs, up to 80,000 homes that might be weatherized, 800 jobs here, some there, asking this country to add a nongermane issue to the military supplemental to try to protect government worker jobs.

And I just find that so ironic, as was mentioned, that at the same time we were doing that, the policies of this administration with regard to NASA contract jobs would take between 20,000 and 30,000 people who are part of the private sector, who are doing these jobs well—many of them being scientists and engineers—and they're basically giving them the pink slip at the same time we talk about how we're trying to build jobs in some other way. It simply does not compute that that is the way we're doing it.

I readily admit, some of these jobs that have been threatened and have been lost are personal friends and neighbors of mine. I shared a picture with General Bolden, who is the head of NASA, at one of our committee hearings of a personal friend who has spent 26 years dealing with procurement issues at one of the companies, who is just in his mid-fifties and was just released simply because this is the policy of this particular administration. And I would love to be able to go to him and say, Ray, the reason that your job was terminated was because the government decided to try to save money. The problem is, none of these jobs that are going to be eliminated save the government a dime.

In fact, it is true that this administration is asking for a $6 billion increase in the NASA budget even though they are going to be stopping the manned space program and throwing up to 30,000 high-paying jobs, employees who have proven their worth for years and years, throwing them out. There are some people who said, Well, the new programs would create new jobs within the NASA-private sector relationship. Yet the most they're talking about there is maybe up to 10,000 jobs to be offset by the 30,000 that we're losing? That's a three-to-one loss in the process that is there.

For a fraction of that $6 billion of new additional money above and beyond what we're already spending to be focused directly on Constellation, we could continue this program to a successful conclusion. And once again, jobs, I recognize, are parochial. I am part of that situation. But it seems ironic that in an era in which we're talking about jobs and job creation and more jobs and job creation and realizing that we're never going to get out of these economic doldrums that we're in until we actually do have jobs, we, as a government, are having a policy to try to throw out 30,000 workers who have proven their net, who have proven their worth and are moving this country forward. It just flat out does not make sense.

Mr. OLSON. If my colleague would yield, you're right: it absolutely doesn't make sense. And these just aren't some engineers who have just been doing it for a passing amount of time. These are the best in the world at what they do. These are the rocket scientists of America who led our dominance in human space flight. They have been the best for 50 years. Having been a naval officer, one thing I can tell you, in government agencies like NASA, like the military, you depend on your people to pass down their information to the young people coming up, the new generations who take that information, take that knowledge and exploit it and develop even better vehicles, better space exploration. We're going to lose that. These people are going to walk out the door and take that expertise with them.

If we try to decide as a Nation that we want to rebuild that at some point in the future, we're not going to be able to do it. Those people are going to be gone, and we are going to have to start over from scratch and teach a new generation of young Americans the lessons we learned from going to the Moon and spending 6 months in orbit at the space station. We've learned those things.

And I agree with you on the terms of the priority of the budget. This is the second largest cut in the entire budget, the Constellation program. I mean, that is the largest cut. So you figure, okay, if we're going to cut this money out of the budget, we're cutting the funding to the agency. No, as my colleague alluded to, we're actually giving $6 billion over a 5-year period to develop global warming research, to transition to these commercial launch vehicles. And I think our priorities are just wrong here. They're wrong for, certainly, our workforce; but they're wrong for America.

One thing I would like to mention too that's hard to put a dollar value on, but the ability of human space flight to inspire youth, to get these jobs, to become astronauts and to pursue the American Dream. I mean, I can tell you as a kid who grew up about a mile and a half from the Johnson Space Center, whose Little League football coach was Joe Engle, the pilot of the second space shuttle, and just growing up in that environment, how much those men and women inspired us, my schoolmates, to want to be astronauts, to want to be part of that. And that still exists today. I see it all around my district.

The administration doesn't seem to realize all the implications of killing this budget. We're killing 30,000 jobs, the best in the world at what they do. We're going to cede U.S. dominance in human space flight, give up some national security possibly, and we are going to lose the ability to inspire our youth. And I also must add, we don't give NASA enough credit for all the things they've developed for us back here on Earth. I mean, everybody here in this gallery has somehow benefited from NASA and their research up there.

If you've got a cell phone, if you've got a satellite GPS, if you've got a pacemaker or some sort of medical device, that's come from NASA. That research has come from NASA, and we're going to throw that away with this budget. That's why we're working very hard to stop it. And I wish the administration would just sit down and talk with us because, Mr. President, you have a voice, but you don't have the final word. The United States Congress, under the United States Constitution, has the final word.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. I appreciate the gentleman from Texas, if I could reclaim the time briefly. Changing from just the concept of jobs and, indeed, the future of space and especially to put the emphasis on the fact that, what are we going to do to inspire people to go into science and math and become the engineers of the future. Let's face it, if you only build one new plane for our military once every 40 years or if we're only doing one new adventure into space once every 30 years, that doesn't inspire somebody. In fact, supposedly one of NASA's new goals is to try to encourage education into space. And I think, as the gentleman from Texas clearly cited, kids are not dumb; and they're realizing, if you are at a whim firing 30,000 engineers and scientists, that doesn't give you a whole lot of encouragement to try to move into that particular area.

One of the issues especially is because Constellation is the cutting edge of science. It was granted last year by Time magazine as one of the 50 best inventions of the year. In fact, it was number one of the 50 best inventions of last year, and it shows that what we are doing is right. This is the right approach, and this is the approach that is being threatened by the policies of this administration and the current NASA leadership.

The space shuttle had a couple of very sad disasters. In the last one, there was a study made on how to avoid that in the future, and they said, The most important thing we can do—and I think every astronaut understands this, which is maybe why so many of them signed that particular letter from which the gentleman from Texas read—is two goals: NASA will never be effective if, number one, the safety of our astronauts isn't in the most primary and utmost position;

and, number two, you have a clear, understandable and stated goal—what we are going to accomplish.

It is true that during the Bush administration, we decided to halt the space shuttle program. It had run its course. We have been very successful in going to the space station and back, but there were some issues that we needed to go beyond simply space shuttle. So the effort was made to try to put our best minds together and see where we could go into the future that would meet those two goals: a clear statement of purpose and safety. And the reality of that was Constellation. This is the safety concept. This Constellation program is designed to be safer than the space shuttle by a factor of 10.

□ 1845

It was recognized that if you want to try and stop some of the catastrophes we've had today, you separate the cargo from the passengers. That's what Orion does in that process, allows a safety valve for the safety of the passengers, in this case, the astronauts. And in addition, we clearly realized that we needed to go with solid rocket propellants because it is much safer than liquid propellant, perhaps not as powerful, but certainly much more controllable. And, once again, the concept of safety is important. This is the future, if you really care about astronauts.

And the second one was the goal is very clear. The design was for a specific goal. The intent was for a specific goal. And I don't want to be disparaging to this administration, but the apparent goal of this administration with spaceflight is some day, maybe perhaps at some time, we might land on some asteroid somewhere. That's not a specific goal. That's not even a dream. That's not even a reality that we can deal with. That may be almost cartoonish in the approaches to deal with it.

And unfortunately, if we start scaling back, other countries are not. The Russians are still involved. The Chinese are stepping up their involvement in space exploration. As I said earlier, even the Indian Government and the Japanese Government have stated that they have a plan in mind to try and become involved in this concept.

What becomes so bizarre is the United States, that won the space race, is now forfeiting the space future to other countries. We had a plan between the actual startup of Constellation, which is both the Aries rocket and the Orion space capsule, and the end of the space shuttle in which the Russians would have to do some of the taxi service for us. They would charge us somewhere in the neighborhood of $30 to $35 million per ride. That's a large amount of money. But, however, our good friends in Russia, after they left communism, have found capitalism to their liking, and they realize what a monopoly gives them the power to do.

In the 2011 budget, NASA wants to budget $75 million per astronaut ride from Earth up to the space station and back. Now, that's the kind of cost that's coming to the taxpayers of the United States. And I would, once again, maybe be willing to accept it if that was moving America forward. But simply subsidizing the Russian space program instead of building our own program is not what I call smart use of moving us into the future.

In fact, we simply have said that this summer of recovery should be the summer of the Russian and Chinese recovery. We will be subsidizing their missile program, their space exploration program, at the tune of $75 million every time we send an American astronaut into space on Russian technology to help their program out, to keep their jobs going. And, well, I'm sorry. That just does not make sense as to where our future should be.

Mr. OLSON. Will my colleague yield?

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. OLSON. Thank you.

I wanted to get back to your point about needing a goal, having some sort of focus. I'm a Rice University graduate, and we had the honor of President Kennedy coming to our school in the early sixties to make his famous speech where he said, you know, we're going to go to the moon, take a man to the moon and return by the end of this decade. That was a clear goal. Here's our goal. Here's when we're going to do it in. We're going to give you the resources to do it.

When I go home, when I go back to my district, the one thing I hear from both the government employees and the contractors at NASA are, What's our goal? I mean, what are we doing? What's our target? We're going to go to Mars sometime by 2035 or somewhere in that window. We're going to take 5 years to develop a design and make development designs for heavy-lift vehicles, and then we're going to build that 5 years from now.

That's not what makes NASA great. You give these people a goal, give them a time frame and give them the resources they need to do it, they will do it. Every time in our history, they've made some of the greatest technological advancements that mankind will ever know. And again, this administration's budget priorities have nothing to do with that. And again, the ability it has to inspire our kids.

The thing we've gotten into with the Russians now, where we're going to have to depend on them to take our astronauts up to and from the space station—and as my colleague alluded to, you can say what you want about our former communist friends, but they have figured out capitalism in a very short time. And, you know, we were paying about, somewhere over, just over $20 million per seat last year. That price has gone up now to just a little over 50. We signed a contract, I believe, through 2014, and it's doubtful, certainly with the administration's budget proposal, that we'll have an American vehicle that can transport us to the space station. We're going to renegotiate that contract. And as my colleague from Utah alluded to, that thing's probably going to double again. This is just a terrible position we've gotten ourselves into.

The Constellation is the program of record, been endorsed by a Republican Congress in 2005, a Democrat Congress in 2008. We need to develop Constellation and stay the course and let our engineers and let our space experts and let our astronauts do what they do to inspire our youth.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. If I could reclaim the time, and I appreciate that comment. And once again, the fact we're throwing out different numbers of what it will cost to send Americans up there is simply because NASA doesn't know what it will cost, and that's why they're budgeting very high. Who knows if that is the actual number. Because once again the Russians realize, when they have a monopoly, they can charge what they want to charge.

Let's deal with another phrase that we often hear from this administration. They are about to commercialize space. I want to try and put that one to rest, if we could. There is no such thing as privatizing or commercializing what we are doing in space.

The Constellation program is being built by private enterprise. There were contracts let by this government that were done on a competitive bid process and won by private sectors, by the private sector, by commercial companies, which means when we cut Constellation, we're not cutting a government program. We're cutting 30,000 jobs in the private sector to build a contract that comes from here.

What the President and the NASA leaders were talking about when they say, well, we're going to commercialize the future of space is not really changing the philosophy of what we're doing. All they're doing is they're going to take the contracts from those who have them now, building Constellation, fire those people, and then we will give some of that extra NASA money that we are going to be appropriating to other companies in the private sector who are going to be winners in the values that this administration places on those particular companies.

In fact, the companies that are talking about the so-called commercialization of space already are under contract with NASA. They are already being subsidized by NASA. They are already behind in their programs with NASA, and they are asking for more Federal dollars for NASA.

So, once again, I oftentimes hear, well, this is an administration that wants to totally change the way we deal with space and they want to try and commercialize everything. That's a cute word, but the reality is you're simply having some people in the private sector who will lose their jobs so

the administration can pick other people in the private sector to have jobs, and not necessarily on a one-to-one ratio.

There is no such thing as commercialization of space or these programs, and we are not trying to come up with a free enterprise approach to the future of space. This is simply the government picking winners and losers among a lot of people who are out there in the private sector. The 30,000 jobs that are going to be lost are not government jobs. Those are private sector jobs.

Mr. OLSON. Yes, sir. My colleague from Utah makes a great point, if he'd yield a little time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. I yield.

Mr. OLSON. Certainly commercial has a place in our future, but they are not anywhere near being ready to do what this administration wants them to do, carry cargo to a space station. They're not there yet. They've had one launch. That's a long, long way to go from being able to carry cargo up to and from the space station.

More important, astronauts, human beings, that is a much, much greater challenge than carrying cargo, and they've got a long way to go. When I talk to experts back home, they say a decade would be a good number for the commercial operators to have manrated vehicles. And they've got a long, long way to go.

And one thing I'm concerned about is safety. As my colleague from Utah alluded to earlier tonight, safety is paramount. I mean, we need to do what we've done at NASA. The 50 years they've been in existence, they have put safety of astronauts as the number one concern. And it is a very, very risky endeavor that they do. And we've got to make sure that safety is put first, and that's one of my concerns with these commercial operations.

Again, as my colleague alluded to, economically, it's no different than what we're doing now. But it concerns me that we're going to have people who don't understand NASA's—the safety that's required. And they think that just because they get cargo to the station, they can get crew to the station.

Wrong. You have to do—there's so much more to carry a crew to and from the space station. You've got to insure they're safe. You've got to have the redundancy to the redundancy to the redundancy to the backup to the backup system to ensure that if anything happens to that vehicle from the time it pulls off that pad till the time it gets to the station and comes back down that the crew has the ability to get home safely. And I'm concerned that's one thing that this President's budget proposal doesn't take into account.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. I appreciate that.

And reclaiming the time once again, I'm glad we're talking about the fact that these are real people in the job market that we're going to be harming. I'm glad we're talking about the overall purpose of our space exploration program and what it means to them. I'm glad the gentleman ticked off a bunch of areas. I mean, let's face it. When my kids were growing up, the fact that I could put their shoes on with Velcro was a major advantage than trying to tie their shoes. We have those examples in our life.

I'm glad that we're talking about the fact that the Constellation is the future. It is the best science that we have. It is the safest way of going forward. And I'm glad we're talking about the fact that we're not, this entire idea that we're going to privatize our space program which has caught the fancy of some of our colleagues who aren't really perhaps deeply involved in the Science Committee, as the gentleman from Texas is, to realize that's not what we're talking about here. All we're talking about is, once again, government picking winners and losers amongst the private sector to go on with programs that will still be subsidized by the taxpayers. And in some respects, perhaps this is the right approach to do it.

If I could take us into one other direction just for a minute as well, and perhaps this comes back to one of my areas of interest, because I'm on the Armed Services Committee. One of the things that this particular administration failed to do when they announced their new program of canceling Constellation for whatever new goal that they want to have in the future is they failed to communicate with other members of the administration and with other policies and programs within government to see what the impact would have in other government areas. And once again, I'm specifically talking about our military defense system.

As I said in the very beginning, we forget that the people who build rockets and have the component parts to put a man to the moon are the same people who build the component parts and build rockets that shoot down incoming missiles from other countries.

If, indeed, we are going—and once again, as was mentioned earlier, the industrial base that creates these jobs is not something you can turn on and off like a spigot on a water fountain. You can't just decide today we're going to have these scientists; tomorrow we'll fire them and turn it off, and then the next day we'll just open it up and they'll be there again.

What we are doing, if we decimate Constellation, is we're decimating the industrial base that builds our Defense Department missiles at the same time.

The House authorization bill has intent language that tries to quantify what this is because, to be honest, as we started our hearings this year on authorization bills, both for NASA as well as for the Defense Department, we simply asked the question that if, indeed, Constellation is taken out, what impact will it have on the military. And it was clear that the military had never been broached. They had never talked about this. They had not anticipated it. However, reports going over a year now, going back to Congress simply said that there would be devastating circumstances and harmful consequences if, indeed, Constellation was stopped for the military side.

Now, in the language that will be presented in the House authorization bill, it simply says that the best estimate we have right now is the cost of military defense on everything that deals with the missile, any kind of propulsion system, is between a 40 to 100 percent increase in the cost to the defense side of our Nation if, indeed, we stop Constellation and you fire those 30,000 workers who are part of that industrial base. That simply means that anything that needs a solid rocket motor, an ICBM, the Navy missile system, double the cost of what it will take just to replace those motors to replace the work and to keep that system functioning. Any kind of strategic missile that has propulsion as part of it, and I hate to say that, but that's every kind of missile that we have, the cost will increase 40 to 100 percent simply because we are losing the expertise and the industrial base. And, indeed, oftentimes those propulsion concepts have a fixed cost to them, so if, indeed, you have to have propulsion in there, there's a fixed cost. If you have less of that, the military will be picking up what is now being shared as far as the cost with NASA at the same time.

Our land-based missile system, our kinetic energy system, even the fact that some of our laser systems in the future will have a negative impact simply because the industrial base that builds those missiles for our military is the same industrial base that builds missiles, the component part, the labor, the propulsion system for NASA for Constellation.

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You hurt one, we will hurt the other. And that was a factor that was never considered by the administration or NASA when they came up with their quick decision to try and stop Constellation for something else, some nebulous policy in the future.

Defense of this country is the role of Congress. It's a legitimate question. This administration should have asked those questions ahead of time before they announced the policy. They should have understood what the costs would be and how they planned to handle that cost. As it was, it kind of snuck up on everybody. And now people are trying to play catchup. And the best way of solving that problem is simply go with the winning program, which is Constellation, and continue on with the goal that is safe and has a clear, concise goal message to it. Don't lose the jobs, don't lose the industrial base, don't increase the costs for our military. And let us move forward in an organized, rational approach rather than this helter-skelter idea that takes place at some particular time.

Mr. OLSON. Would my colleague yield?

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Yes, I will be happy to yield.

Mr. OLSON. One thing I am concerned about, as my colleague knows, is the fact that this administration is making NASA a partisan issue in many ways. As you alluded to, I am not sure who proposed this budget or who put it together, but they certainly didn't outreach. It seemed like a very small group of individuals at the White House over at OMB who made these decisions that have dramatic impacts for our Nation.

As you alluded to, I don't think they talked to any of the defense contractors, particularly the ones that developed the missiles for our strategic nuclear deterrence. As I understood it, nothing. They heard nothing. I represent the Johnson Space Center, the home of human space flight. Our center director, when I called him up on February 2 just to sort of get how are people doing, what's the mood there, those type questions, I asked him, when did you find out? He says, I found out about it when you did. I read the paper yesterday.

That's another point. I mean Congress has the oversight. We are the power of the purse. And I am unaware of any outreach from the administration to any Member of Congress prior to this decision being made. I am a freshman here as a Member of Congress, but I have been on the Hill for a number of years, particularly in the military and the Navy. One of the standard things was, if you are going to make a radical change in a program, you went and talked to the committees of jurisdiction, the chairman, the ranking member, and at least sort of gave them the courtesy of what you were planning to do. And I am unaware of anything like that happening.

And again, they are playing politics with this. This thing we are doing with the termination liability, the Anti-Deficiency Act, where they are using—we think it's unprecedented. We are doing some research to find out if it's ever been done in the past. As my colleague knows, what's basically done is, NASA has told the contractors you are going to have to hold some money in reserve for termination liability. You can't spend that on developing rockets and human space flight. You are going to have to hold that in an account in case things get terminated. And what do the companies have to do? The money they were holding for September 30 is now going to be dried up sometime in the middle of August. The only solution they have is to lay off those people.

And again, I don't want to be skeptical, but that gets the administration more of what they want. If those people go, we are going to have a hard time getting them back, and the costs are going to go up. We need to stop this. We can't make NASA a partisan issue. It's been a bipartisan issue. That's its strength. Every American loves human space flight, is proud of America, what we have done in orbit and what we have done on the Moon. And we've got to go beyond that. And Constellation, as my colleague alluded to, is the best, most tried way so far to do it. There is no reason to get off that path.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. If I could reclaim my time very briefly here again, and once again I appreciate you making those points, because they are spot-on accurate. Congress made its voice very clear last year when we specifically told NASA, Constellation is our program of record, and you will not cut funding to Constellation. It's very clear that Congress has never changed that position. Well, this is speculation, but nor do I think we would, given our own choice of what to do.

But as the gentleman from Texas clearly illustrated, there are some things that NASA is doing right now that appear—I don't want to try and ascribe motives—but they appear clearly to try and force the issue so that by the time Congress goes through its process of coming up with a budget and appropriations process and language directing what the bureaucracies will do, in this case NASA, that this will be a fait accompli.

So the idea of withholding the derivatives was not a reduction of their contracts, but it had the same effect. The idea of taking the Constellation manager and reassigning him had a specific effect. And then, as you alluded to, the idea of telling companies that they are going to have to hold out closing costs, which has never been done in NASA before, in fact there was only one time where Congress did tell them in some way, shape, or form that they needed to close a program, but that's when Congress told them to close a program down, not when they were trying to close it down before Congress has a chance to react to it. But what that would do is simply force them to fire people now so the industrial base is gone before anything takes place.

And that is a strange approach for any kind of executive branch of government to do when the legislative branch has yet to give them any clear direction that's what we want to do, or has spoken. In fact, everything we have said so far is the exact contrary to that. So I appreciate that.

If I could just put one last thing in, and then I will yield to the gentleman from Texas again. The government apparently put out the National Space Policy of the United States today. It's an interesting document. It says that we should have a robust and competitive commercial space sector, which is good. But I promise you, if you take all the jobs away from those who are doing Constellation, there will not be a robust or competitive space program.

They say that we should strengthen U.S. leadership in space-related science. Now, once again we have said over and over again if indeed you stop Constellation, you are ceding leadership in space-related science. We're not creating leadership. They say we should retain skilled space professionals. Once again, what is happening today is the exact opposite of this effort or this directive.

They say we should reinvigorate U.S. leadership. You don't reinvigorate something if you destroy the program that is our program of record that will move us towards a leadership position. I find this document unusual.

Now, I haven't had a chance to read everything that is in it, but certainly certain things come glaring out in the process of just skimming through it, saying that what we are doing is not necessarily what our words are. If our words here were indeed what our policy is, I would be very happy and content. But what I see happening is not what this policy statement says that we should be doing.

Sometimes I wonder if we really do understand what we are doing in space. And we need to recognize the significance of it, the importance of it, and the importance it has in other aspects of the government, and to our citizens, and to the future to inspiring kids. I yield back.

Mr. OLSON. If my colleague would yield very briefly again, I am just very scared that this administration is turning NASA into a partisan political football, and it's never been that way. Let me read just another quote again from the letter I read earlier that was put together by Walt Cunningham, who was one of our first return-to-flight astronauts after the Apollo 1 disaster. Walt flew in the next Apollo mission. And he has been very adamant and very clear about how he feels this change, this radical budget is going to affect our human space flight future.

Let me just read the three paragraphs that I think are most important. Again, Walt and about 30 other astronauts from every program, every human space flight program we have, signed this letter: ''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 the 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 space frontier for a lack of will or an unwillingness to pay the price.'' Yet that's exactly what this budget proposal does.

And I am very scared that this has become a partisan issue that doesn't serve America well, that doesn't serve our future well. As my colleague alluded, Republican Congress endorsed the Constellation, Democrat Congress endorsed the Constellation. You hear people out there say this is George Bush's plan. Yes, it was his plan, but it's been endorsed by, again, a Republican Congress and a Democrat Congress. It's not Bush's plan. It's America's plan. And we need to see it through.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. If I could just reclaim for just one particular second right here. Once again, and I appreciate you bringing that point out, I think the pushback or the outrage in Congress has been a bipartisan pushback and outrage. Republicans and Democrats alike have said the approach this administration is taking is not necessarily the right approach. Because indeed, Constellation is a safer, better system than the space shuttle. It is the new way forward. It shows what is the best and the brightest that this country has to offer. It is something that makes us good and makes us noble. It is the direction we should go into the future.

And for us to back off now for some program that is not clear, is not understandable, has no discernible goals, that's just not the way a country moves forward. It is indeed the way a country moves backwards, and this country should not be moving backwards.

I appreciate the gentleman from Texas's leadership on this particular issue, everything that he has been doing in organizing our review, our reports, some of our complaints, too, as we try and say what we need to do is do that which moves the country forward and ennobles us as a people. Constellation does that. A clear space mission does that. A mission emphasizing safety for astronauts does that. That's what we need to continue on. And I'm sorry, but what NASA is asking us to do right now does not meet those goals.

I yield back for any concluding statements the gentleman has.

Mr. OLSON. Yes, I will be very brief here. You are very aware of the Orion Pad Abort, the very successful launch test we had I believe it was in late April or early May. Good chance you could get a Time magazine from this upcoming year, and that's going to be on the cover of that magazine. That was a flawless, flawless test.

In fact, if you remember, the rocket got off the pad so quickly at White Sands that the cameras that are there to track rockets—I mean they are there to track all rockets—couldn't keep up with it because it was moving so darn fast. And that's the program of record.

And I will just conclude by saying what I tell people all across this country. The President and the administration have a voice in this process, but they don't have the final word. The United States Congress has the final word. And I am confident that at the end of the day, Constellation is still going to be the program of record. I thank my colleague, and yield back my time to him.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your time and efforts. We yield back.

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS HOUR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. FUDGE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

(Ms. FUDGE asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. FUDGE. I appreciate the opportunity to anchor this Special Order hour on Wall Street reform for the Congressional Black Caucus. Currently, the Congressional Black Caucus, the CBC, is chaired by the Honorable BARBARA LEE from the Ninth Congressional District of California.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield to our chair, the Honorable BARBARA LEE.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me thank Congresswoman FUDGE for once again being on the mark in terms of the Special Order tonight. She has taken the leadership on behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus to really bring the message of the Congressional Black Caucus to the country. Tonight, Congresswoman FUDGE will be talking about the urgent need to enact regulatory reform of America's financial markets.

So thank you for your leadership. I know your district is going to benefit tremendously from this. Oftentimes we forget that regulatory reform also has a direct impact on the huge foreclosure crisis that I know your district is facing. So thank you again for your leadership.

Let me just thank, first of all, all Members who were on that Financial Services Committee for such a major effort to take this important step in protecting Americans from another financial crisis. While many provisions in the bill could be much stronger, I believe that H.R. 4713 is a critical step forward in bringing some reasonable regulations and oversight back to an out of control financial services sector.

I actually was on the Banking Committee during much of the deregulation process and could not support it then. And unfortunately, what those of us on the committee saw happening and said would happen has happened. But now this important legislation will finally make our banks and financial services institutions much more transparent, put consumer rights before corporate profits, and allow shareholders more of a say on skyrocketing CEO pay packages.

While I would have preferred a standalone Consumer Financial Protection Agency, this bill will create an independent agency that remains independent and puts consumers first. I am pleased that more transparency on CEO pay is included in these reforms. While I might have preferred some reasonable constraints, like my bill that would limit tax deductibility of executive pay, allowing shareholders to have a say on pay is a good step forward.

I remain concerned that rules on risky derivatives trading, limits on proprietary trading by our biggest banks, and controls over the operations of ratings agencies may not be strong enough to prevent continued risk to our markets and taxpayers. I had hoped that more could be done to ensure that banks pay for their failures. But I know that we must pass these reforms and we must pass them now.

So I hope that my colleagues across the aisle will join us in the effort to protect consumers, shareholders, and the open and honest functioning of the financial markets that are so critical to our continued prosperity. I hope that we have all come to understand how ridiculous it is to claim that the markets can regulate themselves, and that we can agree that the government has a critical role in ensuring that our financial services sector functions fairly, with transparency, and allows equal opportunity for all Americans.

I look forward to working with the regulators as they begin to implement these new protections for investors and consumers. I hope that we can work together to make sure that we are never again, never again held hostage to out of control greed on Wall Street and regulators who really were asleep at the switch.

Thank you again. Thank you, Congresswoman FUDGE, for your leadership.

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Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, I just want to continue to express my support for our Chair. She is very strong and courageous and keeps us on task. I just appreciate her hard work and her leadership, not only for the Congressional Black Caucus but for our caucus in general. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Mr. Speaker, tonight we will focus on the need for this Wall Street reform that Americans have been waiting for. Americans have faced the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. Millions have lost their jobs, businesses have failed, housing prices have dropped, and savings have been wiped out. A year and a half after the country's banking system nearly imploded, it is still operating under the same inadequate rules and regulations. The failures that led to this crisis require bold action. We must restore responsibility and accountability in our financial system to give Americans confidence and the protections they need. We must create a sound foundation to grow the economy and to create jobs. This is in fact why Congress is set to vote this week on the Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. Despite vigorous lobbying from the banks, this bill protects the American people and the financial system from abuses that nearly caused the entire system to collapse. This bill contains commonsense reforms that hold Wall Street and the big banks accountable.

It will end bailouts by ensuring that taxpayers are never again on the hook for Wall Street's risky decisions. It will protect families' retirement funds, college savings, homes and businesses' financial futures from unnecessary risk