

Rothman Statement On Space Shuttle Columbia Disaster

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Hackensack, NJ - Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ9) today issued the following statement in response to the space shuttle Columbia disaster.

"First and foremost, my prayers and thoughts are with the families and friends of the seven space shuttle Columbia astronauts who lost their lives today. Our nation mourns with them and the people of Israel and India who each lost a native hero in today's disaster.

"A tragedy befell this nation today that touches each and every American deeply and personally. Throughout our modern history, the NASA program and the astronauts who have courageously committed their lives to space exploration, have represented the hope and promise of the future. In an endless universe with so many unknowns, these brave men and women are the ones who set out to find the answers that further the understanding of our existence and provide the keys to the technology of the future.

"When that promise of our future is suddenly struck with great tragedy, we feel an emptiness deep within us. While we mourn, we must remember that space travel must go on and that we must continue to explore space in order to advance the causes and abilities of humankind.

"As a Congressman, I have had the honor of getting to personally know a number of our NASA astronauts, having brought them to several Bergen and Hudson County elementary and middle schools. As the astronauts made their presentations and discussed their experiences, I saw the eyes of the children light up with wonder, amazement, and admiration. Our astronauts, who are some of the brightest people on our planet, are heroes to all of us, and in particular to our children, who see the hope of a better tomorrow for themselves through the eyes of our space explorers.

"As we try to find the answers behind today's disaster, all Americans must unite and draw strength from one another in order to heal and move forward. May God bless our heroes who were lost today as well as their families and loved ones, and may God bless America.

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