

## Congressman Rothman Takes Part in Hearing Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of NASA

(Washington, DC)&mdash;

On July 30, 2008, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ), a member of the House Science and Technology Committee, participated in a hearing commemorating the 50th anniversary of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). The testimony before the Committee focused on the past 50 years of accomplishments of NASA, and the future opportunity and challenges NASA faces.

&ldquo;It was a privilege to hear from the four distinguished speakers today, each of whom has made a great contribution to space exploration and to improving life here on earth,&rdquo; said Rothman. &ldquo;I believe that a renewed commitment to NASA is in order. The speakers raised some very important points that the Committee will have to discuss &ndash; and find the money to address, within a very tight budget, given the significant needs we have here at home.&rdquo;

Congressman Rothman said that he identified closely with the remarks of Dr. Norman Augustine, the former Chairman of NASA Space Systems and Technical Advisory Board, whose testimony said, in part, that &ldquo;the most effective space program is a balanced space program, one that utilizes humans for those functions where humans excel and uses robots for those functions where robots excel . . . [G]iven a balanced space program, first priority nonetheless goes to the conduct of research. It is here that the greatest return per dollar can frequently be realized [with research] and where fundamental new knowledge can be derived.&rdquo;

During their testimony before the House Science and Technology Committee, former Senator John Glenn (D-OH), Norman Augustine, and Maria Zuber, Professor of Geophysics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) highlighted the continued need for America to focus on improving math and science education. &ldquo;In the year prior to the launch of Sputnik, there were nearly twice as many college students pursuing a bachelor&rsquo;s degree in physics than there are today&rdquo;, testified Mr. Augustine. As renowned physicist Stephen Hawking said in his video address to the Committee, &ldquo;we live in a society increasingly governed by science and technology yet fewer and fewer young people want to go into science.&rdquo;

After listening to the testimony of these witnesses, Congressman Rothman said, &ldquo;once

again, it has been made clear to me the importance of fully funding the America COMPETES Act, a new law that makes a significant commitment to the future of the United States by investing in math and science education and federal research. We can and must do better. As a young person, I remember the excitement and keen interest in science brought on by President Kennedy and his promise to land an American on the moon before the end of the 1960's. We must bring back that feeling in children today so that we can compete tomorrow."

This year, the Science and Technology Committee is also celebrating its 50th Anniversary. The testimony highlighted this anniversary and the accomplishments of NASA over the last 50 years. The hearing is part of a series the Committee has planned focusing on our country's technological advances of the past half century and the challenges ahead.

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Contact: Jean Roehrenbeck, (202) 226-8364; (202) 420-1524 [cell]