

**Testimony of
The Honorable Bill Posey (FL-08)
Before the
House Committee on Budget
March 2, 2017**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking member and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to come before you today. Thank you, also, for the very difficult, yet important work that this Committee does for our nation.

As you set budget priorities for Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 and beyond, I ask for your continued support for our nation's space programs, to our commitment to preserve Social Security and Medicare, and to safeguard our coastal estuaries.

These issues do not just impact Florida's 8th district. They touch us all. And they are fundamentally a question of leadership. Will the United States continue to lead the world in the space arena, honor commitments to our seniors, and protect our environment for the next generation and beyond? And, will we achieve these goals in an innovative, efficient, and fiscally responsible manner?

American dominance in space is no longer a given. The Russians and Chinese both have increasing capabilities and ambitions in space, and ceding this ultimate military high ground to any nation is unacceptable.

In addition to public investments, the immense size and power of the American private sector is increasingly emerging as the vanguard of U.S. space leadership. We need to continue to empower and unleash the awesome potential of the U.S. economy with a regulatory framework that will take the bureaucratic shackles off our innovative private sector space industry partners.

Public investments in the burgeoning space economy are paid back many times over as new technological and engineering breakthroughs are made here on earth, and these are technologies and capabilities that are being created by American companies, employing an American high-tech workforce, and driving the American economy into the 21st century.

Our recently departed friend and colleague Senator John Glenn, the first American to orbit the earth, said, “The most important thing we can do is inspire young minds and to advance the kind of science, math and technology education that will... take us to the next phase of space travel.”

American space exploration is fulfilling Senator Glenn’s vision of inspiring the next generation. A refocused NASA, with sites set high on a mission to Mars and with an aim towards establishing a lasting American presence on the moon will invigorate and inspire the entire nation, including the next generation of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math leaders.

We also need to honor the commitments we have made to our seniors, and to ensure that Medicare and Social Security is preserved and made solvent for those at or near retirement.

The Social Security Board of Trustees estimates that under current law Social Security is projected to be unable to pay full benefits beginning in 2034. It is imperative that we address this looming crisis now so that this safely net of earned benefits is available to fulfill the promises we have made to our seniors.

Likewise, the Medicare Trust Fund will be completely exhausted and unavailable to seniors within a decade. This vital program needs to be safeguarded and protected to preserve the quality and availability of health services for our seniors.

We must also be good stewards of the ecology and economic well-being of our coastal areas. Many estuaries of national significance are in immediate need of attention, including the Indian River Lagoon in my district of coastal Florida.

We are making progress in this area, but more needs to be done. Last year's bi-partisan reauthorization of the National Estuary Program implemented a new competitive grant competition to get much-needed funding to those estuaries with the most urgent needs. This new opportunity needs to be fully funded so its benefits can be immediately realized.

I ask that these issues receive your careful consideration as the committee crafts the FY18 budget resolution. Thank you for your time and the opportunity to testify today.

Sincerely,

Bill Posey
Member of Congress