



**Citizens for Space Exploration
Washington, D.C. Trip
May 19-21, 2008**

Executive Summary Report

- 147 Citizens for Space Exploration (CSE) representatives – including 36 “Gen Y” university students – representing 29 states met with 333 Congressional offices from 45 states to speak on behalf of NASA and space exploration.
- CSE visited 74% of Senate offices (including the three candidates for President) and 60% of all House offices. CSE had direct contact with 6 Senators and 50 House Members.
- Approximately 50% of total CSE representatives and 65% of students were first-time participants.
- CSE has grown to be the largest (i.e. most Congressional offices contacted) pro-NASA, pro-space exploration grassroots annual trip to Washington, D.C. in the nation.

General Background: CSE is comprised of a diverse group of small and large business representatives, “Gen Y” students and teachers, and county/municipal officials and employees who support America’s investment in space exploration. Every year, CSE brings new voices, different voices (not industry or space community), young voices (“Gen Y”) and passionate voices to bear in support of NASA.

CSE is an important advocate in a growing chorus of voices to support America’s space program. Some Congressional offices, when asked for an appointment, said “we just met with a space group within the last several weeks.” Messages are clearly being communicated by many concerned for and interested in space.

2008 marked the 17th annual trip of CSE – formerly known as National Keep It Sold – to Washington, D.C. for meetings with Congress. CSE’s bottom-line message was to advocate support for America’s space exploration program and promote the goal of investing 1% of the federal budget annually in NASA.

Members and/or staff were provided with a one-page point paper explaining who CSE is and the reasons for supporting America’s investment in space. In addition, CSE materials included a “1 Percent for Our Future” point paper urging support for an incremental growth in NASA’s annual budget to 1% of the total federal budget – as compared its current funding level of 6/10ths of 1 percent. Finally, CSE distributed NASA Spinoffs books which was well-received by Members and staff who often expressed interest in specifically what we get for our investment in space.

A dozen Congressional members (listed on page 4) and many staff participated in a reception hosted by the CSE on Tuesday evening, May 20. NASA Associate Administrator for Government Affairs, Bill Bruner, also attended and participated in the CSE opening reception/orientation session on Monday evening, May 19.

Unlike previous years, CSE members were not able to attend a Space Alliance Technology Outreach Program (SATOP) annual awards breakfast in light of the demise of Congressional funding for this very worthy program that had previously resulted in the successful application of space technology and know-how to multiple, non-space small businesses across the country. SATOP success stories had also been of great interest to Congressional offices in the past and were largely missing from the CSE pitch this year.

Meeting Feedback: The information below provides a brief, top-level summary of major findings from CSE visits with House and Senate Members/staff.

- **Overall Awareness of Space Exploration** Many of the CSE team leads who had participated in previous trips to Washington, D.C. noted that Members and staff seemed more informed and aware of space exploration-related matters, though some delegations remain less knowledgeable since they have little NASA presence in their states and/or receive little attention from the space community in telling the story of exploration. There continues to be fairly high change of staff in Congressional offices, as well, highlighting the need for regular updates and relationship building. On rare occasion, a Congressional office or two made it clear that neither the staff nor the Member had an interest in space and saw little connection to their constituents. Finally, others were favorably inclined toward NASA and exploration and would welcome help in promoting greater awareness of space and its value among their constituents back home in the hope of generating more vocal support for NASA from their state/district.
- **Presidential Candidates** CSE met with the offices of all three Senators running for President. Staff for each Senator put a positive face on their overall support for space.
 - **Senator Clinton:** Staff referenced the drain on national resources – for space and other things – resulting from America’s continued war efforts in Iraq. They also mentioned importance of environmental benefits of space and expressed surprise about the elimination of funding for SATOP. (Note: New York – through the efforts of Rep. Walsh (R-NY) – had been one of the core SATOP participant states and beneficiaries.) (Note: Senator Clinton was the first candidate on record with a policy position supportive of space exploration.)
 - **Senator McCain:** Staff stressed the positive (contrary to last year’s visit where staff conveyed Senator McCain’s lack of enthusiasm about human missions to the moon and Mars) in terms of McCain’s support for exploration. CSE did not engage the office on the issue of the potential impact on NASA of a freeze on domestic discretionary budget proposed recently by the Senator.
 - **Senator Obama:** Staff expressed more words of reservation or caution relative to his support for exploration vs. other national priorities. Obama’s staff stated that more NASA funding should go to science. They also indicated Senator Obama would be putting forward a space policy statement within the next 7-10 days.

- **Challenges to U.S. Leadership** While some offices are clearly alarmed by the activities of China and other foreign countries in terms of the challenge to U.S. leadership – indeed, some advocating that only the rise of an external enemy, analogous to the 1960’s Cold War competition with the Soviets, will create the imperative needed to build support for substantial increases in NASA funding – there remains no pressing or uniform view on this matter and it still has not gelled as a distinctly compelling argument in support of NASA or space exploration. Education, as a benefit of space, remained a strong item of interest and support – potentially reflecting the high profile participation of “Gen Y” university students in the CSE trip.
- **“1% for Our Future”** This new initiative advocating the goal of investing 1% of the federal budget annually in NASA received a mixed response. Some offices welcomed the formula as a clear and worthy goal, but many more pointed out that the competition for available funding – especially between programs competing for domestic discretionary dollars – is intense and not likely to NASA’s advantage. The budget is seen basically as a zero-sum game where some lose and some win. Some fiscal conservatives also referenced the budget relative to the deficit, while other offices expressed concern about the impact of space exploration funding on science and aeronautics.
- **Shuttle Launches** Many Members and staff have not had the opportunity to view a Space Shuttle launch, but expressed high enthusiasm – when asked – about their desire to do so if given the chance. With a dwindling number of launches, these opportunities provide a heightened means of engaging Members first-hand in the human space experience in a manner not possible through an office visit or Congressional hearing.

States Represented by Travelers

1. Alabama
2. Arizona
3. Arkansas
4. California
5. Colorado
6. Florida
7. Georgia
8. Illinois
9. Indiana
10. Kentucky
11. Louisiana
12. Maryland
13. Massachusetts
14. Michigan

15. Minnesota
16. Mississippi
17. Missouri
18. New Hampshire
19. New Jersey
20. New York
21. North Carolina
22. Ohio
23. Oregon
24. Pennsylvania
25. Tennessee
26. Texas
27. Virginia
28. West Virginia
29. Wisconsin

Congressional Reception Attendees

1. Senator David Vitter (R-LA)
2. Rep. Kevin Brady (R-TX-8)
3. Rep. Tom Feeney (R-FL-24)
4. Rep. Gene Green (D-TX-29)
5. Rep. Ralph Hall (R-TX-4)
6. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX-18)
7. Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-OH-10)
8. Rep. Nick Lampson (D-TX-22)
9. Rep. Ron Paul (R-TX-14)
10. Rep. Ted Poe (R-TX-2)
11. Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA-46)
12. Rep. Dave Weldon (R-FL-15)

Summary Stats of Visits

- Senate offices: 74% (38 Republican and 36 Democratic)
- House offices: 60% (130 Republican and 129 Democratic)

- Senate Appropriations Committee member offices: 72%
- Senate Commerce Committee member offices: 76%

- House Appropriations Committee member offices: 68%
- House Science Committee member offices: 85%