



July 29, 2010

Dear Representative,

It is our understanding that the NASA Reauthorization bill (HR 5781) may come before the full House of Representatives for consideration tomorrow. We also understand that the bill will likely be considered under suspension of the rules, a rule normally used for non-controversial legislation. As the two largest unions representing NASA workers, The International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), and the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) are writing to inform you that this bill is far from non-controversial. **In this regard, IFPTE and AFGE urge you to oppose HR 5781 if it comes before you in its current form.**

This bill is unfortunately being fast-tracked without addressing its many serious shortfalls. The Science Committee Chairman released the bill only nine days ago and skipped the usual two-stage subcommittee and committee mark up last week, thereby depriving subcommittee experts a fair chance to evaluate and weigh-in on the bill. All workforce recommendations, as well as objections by 13 members of the California Delegation, were then systematically ignored. The California members asked for significant changes prior to passage of this bill, and Congresswoman Donna Edwards has made it clear that she intends to offer workforce amendments during full House consideration. Now however we have learned that this bill could come to the House floor quietly and on the suspension calendar without any chance to offer amendments. This kind of process pushes the arrogant perspective that parliamentary tactics can be used to supplant thoughtful legislative deliberation. We think that is bad for NASA, and is certainly unfair to its 18,000 employees.

Sadly, the current version of H.R.5781 fails to address the fundamental problem facing NASA today. Although the bill does address some shortcomings in the Administration's proposed plan and we encourage compromise, the current version of the bill is too far from the mark to provide proper guidance to NASA for the next 5 years. Most importantly, it shows complete disrespect for the 18,000 hard working public servants who have dedicated their lives to NASA.

For all these reasons and more, IFPTE and AFGE urge you to vote NO on this bill.

Sincerely,

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