

STATEMENT ON H.R. 2262

Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

H.R. 2262, the “*Spurring Private Aerospace Competitiveness and Entrepreneurship Act of 2015*”

Full Committee Markup

May 13, 2015

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Today we are marking up four commercial space-related bills. I would like to have been able to say that all of these are bills that should pass out of this Committee with strong bipartisan support. Unfortunately, that will probably not be the case today. And that certainly holds true for the first bill being considered today, the SPACE Act of 2015.

This bill amends the Commercial Space Launch Act, which is one of the seminal achievements of this Committee. That Act opened the doors to establishment of the now flourishing commercial space industry.

I think Members on both sides of the aisle strongly support this industry in general, and under better circumstances, I would have liked to support updating the Commercial Space Launch Act. Unfortunately, I have to oppose the Majority’s bill as it is currently written.

The issues being dealt with in this bill are not straightforward. They are complex and require thoughtful consideration, and this Committee hasn’t made any attempt to thoughtfully consider the issues being debated today. We haven’t had a single hearing on this legislation in the 114th Congress. In fact, we haven’t had a hearing on any of the issues in the bill before us in over a year. We also haven’t had a subcommittee markup to try to work through some of the underlying issues in this legislation.

To echo something Ms. Edwards said at the NASA markup, I don’t understand the point of having subcommittees if this is how we are going to proceed.

Commercial space is the only regulatory program within the Science Committee’s jurisdiction, and yet it apparently doesn’t even warrant a hearing. I would note that we’ve found plenty of time to have hearings on fracking and ozone regulations, issues which really aren’t terribly relevant to this Committee’s jurisdiction. It would be nice if we could spend a little more time

focused on carrying out oversight within our jurisdiction, and a little less time trying to constantly score political points against the Obama Administration.

So, where did the bill before us today come from? Straight from industry.

Nearly every provision in this bill, in every conceivable way, gives preference to the priorities of the commercial space launch industry—whether in matters pertaining to the safety of the general public, or in matters pertaining to the safety of the future customers of this very industry, and it does so at the expense of the American taxpayers.

I want to be clear that I am a strong supporter of the commercial space launch industry. I want to see this industry continue to grow and be successful. But I don't want that growth to be at the expense of the safety of the public on the ground or of the space-flying public.

I certainly don't fault the industry for seeking the most advantageous laws they can get. However, when Congress gets those wish lists from industry, we ought to act with a little restraint.

Instead the Majority acts with a rubber stamp in the crafting of this bill.

Democratic Members have a number of good amendments today, and I hope that as we move through them and debate the merits of the proposals, we can, at the very least, begin to honestly consider the consequences of what we are doing here today.

With that, I yield back.