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THE VIABILITY OF THE SPACE SETTLEMENT NARRATIVE IN POLITICS

Abstract

Since the Apollo Program, there has been a strong desire to see a radical expansion of human space activity by space supporters and space activists. To encourage laws and policies that would enable such an expansion, the National Space Society and the Waypaver Foundation created the Space Settlement Campaign. The purpose of the campaign was to add the goal of enabling human space settlement to the missions of NASA, the Office of Space Commerce (OSC), and the Office of Commercial Space Transportation (AST). The campaign developed a strategy of policymaker engagement, particularly focused on Congress, that was built around the value of settlement. The central theme of the campaign was to show a value proposition to policymakers that articulated how their goals and needs would be served by supporting space settlement. This theme examined historical models, near term impacts, existing policy activities that addressed space settlement, and included a strong emphasis on lowering the barriers to entry of spaceflight for the average person. The campaign presented this analysis to 25+ members of Congress, 10 aerospace companies including major companies, and 20 nonprofit organizations. The result of this campaign is that Senators John Cornyn and Gary Peters have introduced a bill which would add enabling space settlement to NASA's mission, under the original NASA Act, as amended. In conclusion, the campaign believes that a narrative of policy creation around space settlement, especially one that focuses on lowering barriers to entry, is credible with stakeholders. This narrative strengthens the justifications for a radical expansion of human space activity.