

PROTECT AMERICA'S TECHNOLOGY AND ACCESS TO SPACE

Space is as important to 21st century warfare as the more traditional warfighting dimensions of air, land, sea, and cyberspace. Space-based technology touches nearly every aspect of American life and the American economy. Protecting that technology and ensuring critical access to space are significant national security priorities.

BACKGROUND

The U.S. Space Force was established on December 20, 2019, to “lead our Nation in preparing for emerging threats in an evolving space environment.”¹ Space Force will “help ensure we are postured to deter aggression, defend our national interests and outpace potential adversaries.”²

Adversarial nations such as China and Russia also recognize space as a war fighting domain. Russia has developed and tested robust anti-satellite capabilities in the past. In 2007, China demonstrated anti-satellite capability by blowing up a satellite in low-earth orbit. India demonstrated a similar capability just last year.³

U.S. Space Force will take responsibility for a variety of programs and policies that were previously under the purview of other military services.⁴ Doing so allows greater oversight of these programs and gives them a higher priority. Space Force is part of the Air Force, just as the Marine Corps is part of the Department of the Navy.

Establishing a Space Force is not a new idea. In 1997, then Air Force Chief of Staff Ron Fogleman suggested the idea, and the Rumsfeld Space Commission made a similar recommendation in 2001.⁵ The House included a bipartisan proposal for “Space Corps” in its version of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

These efforts were a reaction to the Department of Defense’s (DOD) fragmented approach to space-related national security challenges such as defending critical satellites and ensuring access to GPS through a jamming environment. Because the space workforce was previously scattered across DOD, working on space was not considered an attractive career path for military officers. As a result, space-related programs were frequently perceived as lower priority by the services than other warfighting needs.⁶

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY AND REPUBLICAN PRINCIPLES

Under Article I Section 8, the Constitution requires Congress, “To raise and support Armies; To provide and maintain a Navy,” and to, “make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces.” America’s ability to defend assets in space is critical to both national security and economic wellbeing.

Quick Take

Space is important to 21st century warfare and America’s economic security.

Congress must continue oversight of the U.S. Space Force and to ensure that America’s interests in space are adequately defended.

POLICY SOLUTIONS

The FY2020 NDAA established Space Force with the understanding that it could expand over time as it acquired additional resources and capabilities. Congress must grant Space Force new authorities and resources as necessary in the future.

Please contact Cameron Smith or Kelsey Wall with the Republican Policy Committee at (202) 225-4921 with any questions.

¹ Mark Esper, Secretary of Defense, *Department of Defense Establishes U.S. Space Force*, December 20, 2019, <https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Releases/Release/Article/2045981/department-of-defense-establishes-us-space-force/>.

² *Id.*

³ NPR, *The Reasons for a Space Force*, December 26, 2019, <https://www.npr.org/2019/12/26/791414989/the-reasons-for-a-space-force>

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Todd Harrison, *Why We Need A Space Force*, CSIS, October 3, 2018: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/why-we-need-space-force>

⁶ *Id.*