

LAUREL, MD - Congressman Steny Hoyer (D-MD) today served as part of a leadership panel at the Maryland Aerospace Summit in Laurel, MD. The program's primary purpose was to analyze the current and projected aerospace employment picture in the state.

"I am very proud of Maryland's robust aerospace community," Hoyer said. "Just as Maryland benefits from the great work of companies like Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, Swales Aerospace, and others -- I know that these companies simultaneously enjoy the great benefits our state has to offer."

Hoyer said Maryland is blessed with a well-educated, well-trained, and highly skilled workforce and reaps the benefits of fine research institutions like the University of Maryland and Johns Hopkins. Hoyer also noted the close proximity of significant federal facilities, including Goddard Space Flight Center, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWCAD).

"When it comes to the future of aerospace, Maryland's combined assets—business, academic, and professional—have forged an intellectual synergy that is second to none," Hoyer said.

In addition to acknowledging the strategic importance of maintaining a vibrant aerospace industry, Hoyer stressed the significance of improving K-12 education, specifically in math and science. "First of all, we must provide the resources to help prepare the next generation," Hoyer said. "We will make no progress if we continue to fail to invest in our nation's students."

Hoyer expressed his disappointment that 4 years after President Bush signed No Child Left Behind into law, he has underfunded it by \$40 billion. "Superintendent Nancy Grasmick began raising standards in our public schools long before No Child Left Behind, so it is no wonder that Maryland is doing well," Hoyer said. "But we need the same commitment from the federal government."

Last year, the National Academy of Sciences released a report stating that improvements in education would be the first step in increasing the talent pool and ensuring future prosperity. Hoyer said the same needs also exist in higher education. "Instead of cutting \$12.7 billion from federal student aid programs, as the Republican budget does, we must ensure that students can actively pursue the engineer's degrees and advanced training that the industry desperately

needs.”

Hoyer said the nation’s leaders must work harder to make aerospace a national priority. “In 1961, President Kennedy did not simply set a goal for scientists and engineers to achieve when he stated that he wanted an American on the moon,” Hoyer said. “He also inspired a generation of children and students to become interested in learning about science and engineering.”

Hoyer said the United States has become too complacent, and is in danger of losing its place as a global leader in the sciences.

“At this critical juncture in history, there is much more we must do to prepare the next generation of workers for the aerospace industry,” Hoyer concluded.

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