What if we lived in a world where the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), or even the entirety of the USA's desire to explore space never existed? Sure, we most likely would have never gone to moon and would not have been able to beat the Russians in the Space Race, but there are many other implications that you may not have considered. From improving lives, to creating technology. NASA has allowed for the development of new ideas, challenges, and barriers that are on the verge of being broken. With that in mind, it confuses me as to why some people would want to shut down or degrade such an important and historic program.

For the greater part of 56 years, NASA has been at the forefront of technology and research in regards to aeronautical and astronomical fields. However, recent years have not been so kind to NASA. It seems that year after year, federal appropriations given to NASA have become less and less. According to recent budgeting statistics, "NASA’s budget has generally been approximately 1% of the federal budget from the early 1970's on" [1]. Even though this number is very low, general public opinion would have you believe otherwise. In a 1997 public opinion poll, “most Americans responded that 20% of the federal budget went to NASA” [2]. This understanding comes from the belief that the rockets and satellites that NASA builds are astronomically priced compared to other programs. As the data would show, NASA’s piece of the proverbial federal budget pie is a mere fraction of other programs such as our armed forces. It hasn’t been until this most recent year that, thankfully, appropriations by the federal budget saw an increase in funding for NASA.

I believe that if NASA were to continue to receive funding, they would be able to develop a additional and practical technologies that we would be able to use. Of course, don't just take my word for it. You can also just take the word of instead, listen to Neil deGrasse Tyson, one of the world’s leading astrophysicist, as he who-has gone on record saying, “Right now, NASA’s annual budget is half a penny on your tax dollar. For twice that—a penny on a dollar—we can transform the country from a sullen, dispirited nation, weary of economic struggle, to one where it has reclaimed its has reclaimed its 20th century birthright to dream of tomorrow” [4]. This means that NASA will not only improve our chances beyond earth, but improve the lives of billions of people on our own planet. To oppose NASA would be to oppose improving our future.

Even without NASA, the great expanse of space could become the greater aim of the private sector. Several large companies have already emerged at the forefront of space technologies, including SpaceX and Orbital Sciences Corporation. Both companies have already reached contracts with NASA to provide supplies to astronauts in orbit at the International Space Station, with SpaceX completing its first delivery in 2013. In its latest launch to the space station, “Dragon [SpaceX’s launch craft] is filled with more than 4,300 pounds of supplies and payloads, including critical materials to support science and research investigations that will occur during Expeditions 43 and 44” [5]. These companies will only be able to improve on their own technology through their collaboration with NASA and deliver more and more advancements to the public market. Currently, not much opposition exists for these companies currently, but I believe that while NASA is currently
the most important space technologies organization, the emerging private sector only serves to benefit the industry even more by providing new methods, research, and job opportunities as we continue towards a future among the stars.

Our world has, and always will, have its problems. While it is important that we focus on fixing some of those problems, it shouldn’t be our goal to eliminate an organization that is doing a good deal in order to improve our chances. The advancements that NASA and its private sector counterparts have and will create, I believe, will come to change and benefit our lives for years to come. So, let’s be thankful we live in a world where such an organization does exist!

Works Cited


