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## Mars Society Political Advocacy Memo - 2024-2025

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### Strategic Plan for Advocacy:

*How to effectively engage political leaders, communicate the potential benefits, and align with broader policy goals*

The intent behind this strategy is to ensure continued advocacy even after the Act is passed, maintaining national motivation for Mars exploration. We want to build a strong network of relationships, develop and maintain supporting research and expert perspectives, and encourage ongoing political engagement in furtherance of our broad goals.

#### 1. A Compelling Narrative

A compelling narrative is key to engaging political officials. We will emphasize:

- **Scientific Advancement:** Highlight how The Mars Exploration Act will drive technological innovation, scientific discovery, and STEM education.
- **Economic Opportunity:** Demonstrate potential job creation, private sector investment stimulation, and entrepreneurial growth.
- **Strategic Advantage:** Frame Mars exploration as a strategic move for national security and global influence, ensuring leadership in space governance.
- **Human Survival:** Stress Mars as a long-term solution for humanity's survival in the face of existential threats.

## 2. Tailored Messaging for Political Priorities

Tailoring our message to different political priorities will maximize impact. You may consider the particular political, economic, or technology-facing views of the representative you're meeting with. Examples:

- **Economic Leaders:** Focus on job creation and economic growth through space exploration.
- **Defense Officials:** Emphasize the strategic and security benefits of space leadership.
- **Environmental Advocates:** Highlight sustainable technology advancements derived from space exploration.

## 3. Evidence-Based Research

Providing credible, evidence-based research is essential. Understanding the basic context of existing space exploration programs and related political views is necessary both for effective advocacy and in cases where education or context should be provided to aid the effort. The campaign team is developing a mature body of research studies, key information and overall guidance to provide a framework and informational aid for meetings. Volunteers with relevant information or publications to share or seeking to contribute directly are encouraged to reach out. The comprehensive report will include:

- **Scientific Data:** Feasibility studies on Mars missions, advancements in space travel technology, and Mars' potential to support human life.
- **Economic Impact Studies:** Job creation, technological spin-offs, and private sector investment opportunities tied to Mars exploration.
- **Defense, National Security and Geopolitical Perspectives:** How the future of space will drastically change the nature of national security mission; state of existing space-based defense infrastructure and technologies; competition with adversarial nation-states and threat potential to the protection of both global stability and American interests
- **Case Studies:** Examples of successful past space missions and their contributions to the economy, state security, technology, and the development and well-being of American society broadly.

## 4. Engaging Influential Stakeholders

Collaborating with influential stakeholders will lend additional credibility to The Mars Exploration Act. We ask that you reach out to us directly if you have the ability to meet with or can connect us with key stakeholders (or are one yourself), including:

- **Space Agencies:** NASA, ESA, and other space agencies.
- **Academic Institutions:** Partner with universities and leaders in academia to provide expert opinions and research.
- **Private Sector Leaders:** Work with space exploration firms to demonstrate industry support.
- **Non-Governmental Organizations:** Leverage networks of NGOs focused on science and space exploration.

## 5. Outreach and Direct Advocacy

We ask that you consider reaching out to your local representatives personally, or engaging with their legislative aides or operations team. Ideally, you would seek an in-person meeting to discuss the political initiative in detail. If you're unable to engage at that level, a phone call/video meeting or email at least offers a way to drive engagement and visibility (although we strongly encourage in-person when feasible). This will be the foundation of our campaign, as political sponsorship will be necessary to gain the support needed for a successful legislative attempt.

- **Consistent and well-informed messaging:** Ensure that you understand the objective of the campaign, the core narrative you're presenting, and the specific talking points you intend to use reasonably well
- **Persistent contacts/engagement:** Don't be discouraged if you don't get much of a response at first! Congressional representatives can be quite busy, and continuing to follow up may just get you the response you were hoping for. It might be worth trying to get in touch via multiple channels (email, phone, in-person visit to schedule a follow-up)

## 6. Monitoring and Adapting the Strategy

Ongoing evaluation of the campaign will allow us to refine and improve our approach:

- **Evaluate Impact:** Regularly assess communication efforts and political influence; collect feedback from representatives or actively evaluate how you thought it went. Document core counterarguments/sources of hesitation on representative's parts.
  - **Coordination and communication:** Notify the campaign team of meetings. Reach out when you could use some guidance or help, or feel free to offer your own suggestions!
  - **Stay Informed:** Keep up with developments in space exploration and technology to ensure relevance.
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## Talking Points for Meetings Regarding the Mars Exploration Act

Here is a list of talking points for phone calls with your representative's office to request an in-person meeting regarding the Draft Mars Exploration Act. These talking points can also be used for the meeting itself:

### **Introduction and Purpose:**

Introduce yourself as a long-standing member of The Mars Society. State the purpose of your call is to request a meeting to discuss the Draft Mars Exploration Act proposed by Robert Zubrin.

### **Importance of the Draft Mars Exploration Act:**

Highlight that the Act is pivotal for advancing human space exploration, specifically targeting Mars.

### **Strategic Benefits for the United States:**

Outline the technological innovation, economic growth, and national security benefits Mars exploration would bring.

### **Economic and Educational Impact:**

Discuss the potential economic and educational impacts, including job creation and inspiring future generations in STEM fields.

### **Feasibility and Readiness:**

Point out that the U.S. is technologically prepared to undertake Mars missions.

### **Urgency and Global Leadership:**

Argue the urgency of committing to Mars exploration to maintain U.S. leadership in space.

### **Local and Personal Relevance:**

Highlight any connections between your congressperson's district and space exploration industries.

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## **DRAFT Language for Mars Exploration Act - Page 1**

*Whereas* the planet Mars, being in its youth a twin of the early Earth, could potentially have served as the birthplace for a second genesis of life; and

*Whereas* only human explorers operating on the surface of Mars can discover and properly characterize such life, thereby revealing the truth about the potential prevalence and diversity of life in the universe, questions that thinking men and women have pondered for thousands of years; and

*Whereas* the United States now has in operation or in an advanced state of development the heavy lift launch vehicles necessary to enable the human exploration of Mars; and

*Whereas* when coupled with the heavy lander necessary to enable human Mars mission, such a transportation system could be used to enable precursor robotic scouting expeditions to Mars with a hundred times the capability offered by our current automated probes; and

*Whereas* youth loves adventure, a bold human Mars exploration program would be a bracing challenge to the young people of our nation, inviting them to develop their scientific talent to take part, thereby gifting America with a vastly expanded new generation of scientists, engineers, inventors, doctors, medical researchers, and technological entrepreneurs, who would advance our prosperity, health, and national defense in innumerable ways; and

*Whereas* the United States now has a dynamic entrepreneurial space industrial sector which can be called upon to drastically reduce the cost of a human Mars exploration program, which in turn will greatly accelerate the further development of that sector and its capabilities; and

*Whereas* the technological capabilities that would be developed by a human Mars exploration program would give America and its allies critical military and economic advantages; and,

*Whereas* just as during the 1960s, the Free World is now being challenged by an autocratic axis which claims that tyranny is the path for the human future, and this claim can and must be decisively refuted by a bold space program that once again astonishes the world by showing what free people can do; and

*Whereas* overall the United States is far better technologically prepared to send humans to Mars today than we were to send men to the Moon when President Kennedy committed us to that goal in 1961, and therefore to shrink from such a challenge would represent an unacceptable concession to the notion that we have become less than the people we used to be;

## **DRAFT Language for Mars Exploration Act - Page 2**

*Be it resolved:*

*Section 1.* Short Title. This Act may be cited as the "Exploration of Mars Act."

*Section 2.* Purpose. The purpose of this Act is to direct the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to develop a comprehensive plan for the human exploration of Mars.

*Section 3.* NASA Mars Exploration Plan.

(a) The Congress requires NASA to develop and present to Congress, within six months from the enactment of this Act, a detailed plan for a sustained and effective program of human Mars exploration.

(b) The plan shall include the following objectives:

1. Development of the necessary heavy payload delivery system with the capability of unpiloted landings on Mars, to be demonstrated no later than eight years from the program's commencement.
2. A timeline for the first human landing on Mars to occur within ten years of the program's start.
3. Strategies to involve the United States' private space industry in order to reduce costs and accelerate program progress.
4. Initiatives to inspire and engage the youth of the nation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields through involvement in the Mars exploration program.
5. An assessment of the technological, economic, and national security benefits that the program will provide to the United States and its allies.

*Section 4.* Authorization of Appropriations.

The necessary funds to carry out the provisions of this Act are authorized to be appropriated by Congress.

*Section 5.* Effective Date. This Act shall take effect immediately upon its enactment.