

109<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# H. CON. RES. 445

Commending the National Aeronautics and Space Administration on the completion of the Space Shuttle Discovery's mission.

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 12, 2006

Mr. PAUL submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Science

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## CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Commending the National Aeronautics and Space Administration on the completion of the Space Shuttle Discovery's mission.

Whereas on July 4, 2006, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration performed a successful launch of the Space Shuttle Discovery;

Whereas, due to the overall success of the launch, the Mission was able to be extended from 12 to 13 days, allowing for an additional space walk to the 2 originally scheduled;

Whereas this mission, known as STS-121, marks the second mission on the Return to Flight sequence;

Whereas the Space Shuttle Discovery's crew consisted of Colonel Steve Lindsey; Commander Mark Kelly; Piers

Sellers, Ph.D; Lt. Colonel Mike Fossum; Commander Lisa Nowak; Stephanie Wilson; and Thomas Reiter;

Whereas STS–121 tested shuttle safety improvements to build on findings from Discovery’s flight last year, including a redesign of the shuttle’s external fuel tank’s foam insulation, in-flight inspection of the shuttle’s heat shield, improved imagery during launch, and the ability to launch a shuttle rescue mission;

Whereas the External Tank, which underwent work prior to the mission to reduce foam loss, performed well this time, especially early in the flight when a light weight piece of foam could severely damage the tile or wing leading edge, with the five instances of foam loss all occurring after the critical release time, and with the largest foam loss on the mission, which occurred in front of one of the ice/frost ramps on the external tank, calculated to be .055 pounds when the mass limit in that area is .25 pounds, meaning that the loss was not even a quarter of the way to the limit, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration is very pleased with the performance of the tank, as it is a great improvement from last year’s STS–114 mission;

Whereas the STS–121 mission will bolster the International Space Station by making a key repair and delivering more than 28,000 pounds of equipment and supplies, as well as add a third crew member to the International Space Station;

Whereas the National Aeronautics and Space Administration has developed new procedures to ensure gap fillers between the heat-shielding tiles to make them stay in place and pose no hazard on reentry, and technicians removed

and replaced approximately 5,000 of the shuttle's 16,000 gap fillers prior to launch;

Whereas STS–121 will be the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's most photographed mission in shuttle history as more than 100 high definition, digital, video, and film cameras will help assess whether any debris comes off the external tank during the shuttle's launch, while 4 new videos have been added to the solid rocket boosters;

Whereas the success of STS–121 is a tribute to the skills and dedication of the shuttle crew and all National Aeronautics and Space Administration employees;

Whereas all Americans benefit from the scientific advances gained through the Space Shuttle program; and

Whereas the National Aeronautics and Space Administration plays a vital role in America's national defense: Now, therefore, be it

1        *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*  
 2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of Congress that the Na-  
 3 tional Aeronautics and Space Administration is com-  
 4 mended for—

5            (1) completing the STS–121 mission; and

6            (2) its pioneering work in space exploration  
 7        which is strengthening the Nation and benefitting all  
 8        Americans.

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