



Contact: Steve Everett  
see@everettgroup.com  
301-261-6448

## **Americans back space exploration, Know little about proposed policy changes, Everett Group “space poll” finds**

Crofton, Md. (April 16, 2010) – As Pres. Barack Obama vows continued commitment to space exploration, including increased funding to explore the solar system and the ultimate goal of landing astronauts on Mars, he finds support from many Americans.

Most Americans have a positive image of NASA, the country's space agency, and one-third say it's very important to them that the U.S. continue to explore the solar system (with one-third more saying it's somewhat important to them).

Their reasons? Protection of the planet, according to the national scientific survey's findings. Among those who think it's important to explore space, 63 percent cited protecting the Earth from collisions with comets and asteroids, and 57 percent said understanding climate change were important reasons for the U.S. to continue exploring space. Not on many people's list: Determining whether life exists beyond Earth, cited by only 18 percent.

Those are some of the findings from an independent “space poll,” a landline and cell phone survey of 1,200 randomly-selected adults fielded nationwide between Mar. 27 and Apr. 12, just before Pres. Obama's Thursday speech on space policy. The poll's findings have a maximum margin of sampling error of 3.7 percentage points, plus or minus.

The Everett Group, an opinion and market research company headquartered near Washington, DC, found that, in the days before Obama's speech, many Americans were not familiar with the proposed changes in space policy. Two-thirds said they were either slightly or not at all familiar, while only one in 10 said they were very familiar with the issue.

Obama's Kennedy Space Center speech in Florida came on the heels of bipartisan concern about jobs and national status that would be lost if NASA's “Constellation” program were to be scrapped. Americans' main concerns about proposed changes in NASA's direction included job losses and threats to national security (both at 54 percent), but even more (63 percent) had major concern the changes would cause a loss of inspiration for America's youth to study science and math, according to the poll.

Obama's space policy counts on “commercial space entrepreneurs” to be able eventually to launch humans into Earth orbit – a feat one-third of Americans think already is being done today.

Government spending continues to be an issue for many. “Americans are split right down the middle on which should be a bigger priority for the government -- reducing the deficit or maintaining America's space leadership,” said Steve Everett, Principal of The Everett Group. “Forty-five percent said cut spending on the space program to reduce the deficit, while 47 percent said increase the space budget to maintain U.S. leadership.

A summary report of the study findings is posted on the Everett Group's “Space Poll” Web site ([www.spacepoll.com](http://www.spacepoll.com)). For more information about this or other Everett Group studies, contact Steve Everett (301-261-6448, see@everettgroup.com).

# # #