

Colorado
Lieutenant Governor Barbara O'Brien

1. In the area of aerospace/defense/space what is the most important issue for you?

Colorado has several key issues relating to aerospace, defense, and space.

The first of these is workforce development through science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education.

Secondly, reduction of unnecessary licensing and export restrictions through reform of the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) is important not only for Colorado but for the entire nation.

Lastly, we must support funding for NASA and military and civilian resources.

2. What is the first thing the next president should do to address this issue?

It will be important to approach the issue of workforce development from both sides, by educating new minds that will come into the field and by supporting current initiatives to maintain and improve our current industry, government, and academic aerospace sectors.

Exempting exports of space related items to US allies from ITAR will allow for focused security protections without creating barriers to commerce and development.

The federal government needs to maintain support for NASA with a minimum of current funding levels while expanding funding for small satellites program and climate missions, and continue manned and non-manned missions.

Military and civilian resources need support for facilities and federal labs to assure a sustainable, long-term presence of vital space-related military, federal, and civilian assets.

3. How important are the following issues to aerospace/defense/space interests in your state -- and why?

All of these issues are highly important. Colorado has the second largest aerospace, defense, and space economy in the nation (as measured by private employment). Colorado excels in launch vehicle, spacecraft, and sensor manufacturing in addition to ground control, navigation, remote sensing, and geospatial data collection and analysis.

Education is a top priority in the state of Colorado. In order to stay competitive in a continuously evolving world, we must support and produce excellent students. The STEM program, including science, technology, engineering, and math, is a great initiative to expose students to critical knowledge throughout their academic careers.

Manned space flight has a strong history in Colorado with 65 astronauts with ties to the state. With several NASA grants across the state's colleges and universities, the educational opportunities are excellent.

Colorado has enormous potential in renewable energy including solar and wind power. We are stewards of the environment and must leave a legacy of responsible environmental use to future generations.

4. Also which of the candidates – if any – have addressed these issues and what is your reaction to what they've said.

We look forward to working with both candidates and whoever becomes the next president to ensure understanding in the importance of aerospace, defense, and space.

5. Are there any other issues in aerospace/defense/space that is of concern to you and your state? Have any of the candidates addressed them?

The aerospace, defense, and space industry and knowledge in these areas is critical to keep our nation competitive and secure, rather than dependent on foreign technology.