



Introduction

Bill Nelson is a true son of Florida: his family came to Florida in 1829; and, his grandparents homesteaded in the early 20th Century on land that today is the Kennedy Space Center.



Most of us have a clear memory of the day America was shocked by the catastrophic destruction of the space shuttle Challenger. Even so, the dangers of space exploration were known to our senator, as he spent six days orbiting the Earth aboard the space shuttle Columbia - just ten days before Challenger's ill-fated launch in 1986.

In his book, Mission, he recalled being just seconds into his own flight, climbing straight up and hearing his pilot's voice over the com-system: "We have a malfunction. We have a helium leak."

It was one of many crises that would be averted on a flight that gave him a unique perspective on Earth's environment, and an appreciation of the importance of our nation's exploration into the unknown. He is recognized as a congressional expert on NASA.

But mostly he's an unrelenting advocate for all Floridians, and a moderate voice in an increasingly partisan world of national politics.

Bill Nelson is a fifth-generation Floridian, who has served the people of his home state for more than three decades, first as state legislator, then as congressman, then a state Cabinet officer, and now as Florida's senior United States senator.

During his time in the Senate, he's stopped oil companies from drilling off our coast and has been a tireless champion to save the Everglades.

Almost single-handedly, he stopped the government from confiscating lower-cost prescription drugs from consumers who had purchased them from Canadian pharmacies. More recently, he's been a leader in the fight to protect children from the hazards of unsafe imported toys.

Bill Nelson is someone who thinks public service is a noble calling - and, that's why he's devoted his life to serving his community, his state and his country.