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**U.S. SEN. CORY BOOKER TEAMS UP WITH LIBERTY SCIENCE CENTER ON NEARLY \$600 THOUSAND PORTABLE PLANETARIUM TO BRING THE WONDERS OF SPACE AND SCIENCE TO UNDER-SERVED CHILDREN THROUGHOUT THE STATE
THIS TUESDAY, AUG. 25 IN JERSEY CITY**

U. S. Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) will present an oversized check for \$559,000 to **Liberty Science Center President and CEO Paul Hoffman** to launch a **“Portable Planetarium”** initiative that will bring the wonders and joy of Space, Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) to under-served children throughout the state, **this coming Tuesday, Aug. 25, at 1:30 pm at the science center, 222 Jersey City Blvd., Jersey City.**

The funds provide the means for LSC – home to the largest planetarium in the entire Western Hemisphere – to take a new portable planetarium on two specially-designed vehicles to deliver astronomy and Earth sciences programming to students of all ages across New Jersey, thereby enabling the science center to further its mission of inspiring the next generation of scientists and engineers, and exciting learners of all ages about the power, promise, and pure fun of science and technology. Already, nearly 300,000 K-12 students participate in LSC onsite, offsite, and virtual programming each year, and this new immersive portable planetarium experience will greatly enhance accessibility to these initiatives in schools, community centers, after-school organizations, and other venues.

“Sen. Booker has longed shared his love and amazement for the vastness of the universe, other galaxies, and space missions – a passion that dates to his own childhood, as well as during earlier visits to Liberty Science Center as an adult,” said Mr. Hoffman. “This very generous grant to our center for the new portable planetarium programming is a sterling manifestation of his commitment to ensure that countless thousands of children across New Jersey can experience the same wonders of science that he did and continues to have. So, we are profoundly grateful to him. In fact, school children and their parents across the state are equally thankful for his generosity.”

In his remarks, Mr. Hoffman noted that Sen. Booker’s passion for science continues unabated to this day, pointing out that he is among the foremost supporters in Congress of STEM education, scientific integrity, and research. He cited Sen. Booker’s co-sponsorship of the Scientific Integrity Act, the grants and funding he secured to expand the science and

tech workforce pipeline, and his advocacy for efforts to enhance data science and digital literacy training in schools.

Specifically addressing the features of the new portable planetarium, Mr. Hoffman explained that with a robust catalog of STEM workshops, LSC has the experience and capacity to develop new workshops leveraging the new facility. For example, LSC's "Science on a Sphere" programs visualize data sets from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Through these datasets, students can explore Earth and its systems, including global images and animations of earthquakes, hurricane tracks, sea surface temperatures, plate tectonics, and weather patterns.

Moreover, through the use of OpenSpace, an open-source data visualization software, students will be able to learn to design their own shows for the portable planetarium.

The funding from Sen. Booker will also enable LSC to recruit, hire, and train new planetarium educators to deliver offsite programming, and to develop new classroom workshops that focus on astronomy and earth science and introduce students to NASA content, lunar phases, ocean temperatures, and storm tracking.

The new portable planetarium builds on a highly successful pilot program LSC launched earlier this year with the Boys and Girls Club of Hudson County and Jersey City Public Schools. That program introduced students to technology skills and STEM careers, as well as NASA's mission and projects, like the James Webb Space Telescope and Artemis II mission.

About Liberty Science Center

Liberty Science Center ([LSC.org](https://lsc.org)) is a 300,000-square-foot, not-for-profit learning center located in Liberty State Park on the Jersey City bank of the Hudson near the Statue of Liberty. Dedicated to inspiring the next generation of scientists and engineers and bringing the power, promise, and pure fun of science and technology to learners of all ages, Liberty Science Center houses the largest planetarium in the Western Hemisphere, 11 museum exhibition halls, a live animal collection with 110 species, giant aquariums, a 3D theater, live simulcast surgeries, a tornado-force wind simulator, K-12 classrooms and labs, and teacher-development programs. More than 250,000 students visit the Science Center each year, and tens of thousands more participate in the Center's off-site and online programs. Welcoming more than 800,000 visitors annually, LSC is the largest cultural institution in New Jersey and the largest interactive science center in the NYC-NJ metropolitan area.

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