Transforming Our Understanding of the X-ray Universe: The Imaging X-ray Polarimeter Explorer (IXPE)

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Accurate X-ray polarimetry can provide unique information on high-energy-astrophysical processes and sources. As there have been no meaningful X-ray polarization measurements of cosmic sources since our pioneering work in the 1970’s, the time is ripe to explore this new parameter space in X-ray astronomy. To accomplish this requires a well-calibrated and well-understood system that—particularly for an Explorer mission—has technical, cost, and schedule credibility. The system that we shall present satisfies these conditions, being based upon completely calibrated imaging- and polarization-sensitive detectors and proven X-ray-telescope technology.