

COLUMBIA ORBITER MEMORIAL ACT

APRIL 8, 2003.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 1297]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Veterans' Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 1297) to require the construction at Arlington National Cemetery of a memorial to the crew of the Columbia Orbiter, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the bill do pass.

INTRODUCTION

The reported bill reflects the Committee's consideration of H.R. 1297.

On March 13, 2003, Representative C. W. Bill Young introduced H.R. 1297, to require the construction at Arlington National Cemetery of a memorial to the crew of the Columbia Orbiter.

On April 3, 2003, the full Committee met and ordered H.R. 1297 reported favorably to the House by unanimous voice vote.

SUMMARY OF THE REPORTED BILL

H.R. 1297 would:

1. Require the Secretary of the Army, in consultation with the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, to construct at Arlington National Cemetery a memorial marker honoring the seven members of the crew of the Columbia Orbiter who died on February 1, 2003.
2. Make available \$500,000 from the Operation and Maintenance, Army, account appropriated under title II of the De-

partment of Defense Appropriations Act for 2003 (Public Law 107–248), for construction of the memorial.

3. Authorize the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to accept gifts and donations of services, money, and property for the purpose of the construction of the memorial.
4. Authorize the Administrator to transfer services, money, and property to the Secretary of the Army for the purpose of the construction of the memorial marker. Any money transferred would be merged into the funds available from the Operation and Maintenance, Army, account.
5. Authorize the Administrator to accept gifts and donations for construction of the memorial for five years following the date of enactment of this Act.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

On January 16, 2003, at 10:39 a.m., the STS–107 *Columbia* launched into orbit for a 16-day microgravity research mission. *Columbia* was the oldest orbiter in the Shuttle fleet. In 1981, it was the first space shuttle to fly into Earth orbit. This was the 113th Shuttle Mission for *Columbia*. On board were seven astronauts: Crew Commander Rick Husband (Colonel, U.S. Air Force), Shuttle Pilot William McCool (Commander, U.S. Navy), Payload Commander Michael Anderson (Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Air Force), Mission Specialist Kalpana Chawla, Ph.D., Mission Specialist David Brown (Captain, U.S. Navy), Mission Specialist Laurel Blair Salton Clark, M.D. (Captain, U.S. Navy), and Payload Specialist Ilan Ramon (Colonel, Israel Air Force). STS–107 *Columbia* was the first space flight experience for all but three of the crew members. The crew worked 24 hours a day in two alternating shifts, and conducted approximately 80 scientific experiments.

At 8:15 a.m. EST, on February 1, 2003, *Columbia* decelerated to begin the reentry phase into the atmosphere for a planned landing at Kennedy Space Center. At 8:52 a.m., *Columbia* crossed over the coast of California. At 8:58 a.m., *Columbia* was over New Mexico. Loss of communication with the crew and of data occurred shortly after 8:59 a.m. About 16 minutes before its scheduled landing, the shuttle broke up while traveling at 12,500 miles per hour at an altitude of 207,135 feet over East Central Texas, resulting in the loss of both the *Columbia* and its crew.

Lieutenant Colonel Anderson, Captain Brown, and Captain Clark are interred at Arlington National Cemetery.

H.R. 1297 would authorize the construction of a memorial honoring the seven crew members of STS–107 *Columbia*, all of whom excelled in their careers and died while fulfilling their dreams of traveling in space.

A precedent for this memorial at Arlington National Cemetery currently exists. On January 28, 1986, the Shuttle *Challenger* exploded just seconds after take off, killing all seven crew members on board. The pilot of the *Challenger*, Captain Michael Smith, and the Shuttle Commander, Francis “Dick” Scobee, were interred at Arlington National Cemetery. The unidentified remains of all seven astronauts were later interred near Commander Scobee’s grave. On June 12, 1986, the 99th Congress passed a concurrent resolution

authorizing the Secretary of the Army to construct and place a memorial at Arlington National Cemetery honoring all seven members of the *Challenger* crew. The memorial was dedicated on March 21, 1987.

It is the Committee's intent that a memorial similar in stature to the *Challenger* memorial be erected in honor of the *Columbia* crew.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1 would provide that this Act be cited as the "Columbia Orbiter Memorial Act".

Section 2(a) would require the Secretary of the Army, in consultation with the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, to construct at Arlington National Cemetery, a memorial marker honoring the seven crew members of the Columbia Orbiter who died on February 1, 2003, during the landing of space shuttle mission STS-107.

Section 2(b) would provide that \$500,000 from title II of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2003 (Public Law 107-248), Operation and Maintenance, Army, be available for the construction of the memorial marker required by subsection (a).

Section 3(a) would provide the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration the authority to accept gifts and donations of services, money and property (including personal, tangible, or intangible property) for the purpose of an appropriate memorial or monument, whether such memorial or monument is constructed by the Administrator or is the memorial marker required by section 2.

Section 3(b)(1) would provide authority for the Administrator to transfer to the Secretary of the Army any services, money, or property accepted by the Administrator for the purpose of the construction of the memorial marker.

Section 3(b)(2) would require that any moneys transferred to the Secretary under paragraph 3(1) be merged with appropriated amounts from the Operation And Maintenance, Army account.

Section 3(c) would provide that the authority for the Administrator to accept gifts and donations for the construction of a memorial expires five years after date of enactment of this Act.

PERFORMANCE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The reported bill would authorize a memorial in Arlington National Cemetery in honor of the *Columbia* Shuttle crew, who died on February 1, 2003. The Cemetery's performance goals and objectives are established in annual performance plans and are subject to the Committee's regular oversight.

STATEMENT OF THE VIEWS OF THE ADMINISTRATION

At the time of consideration, views of the Administration were not available.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

The following letter was received from the Congressional Budget Office concerning the cost of the reported bill:

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, April 4, 2003

Hon. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH,
*Chairman, Committee on Veterans' Affairs,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 1297, the Columbia Orbiter Memorial Act.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Melissa E. Zimmerman, who can be reached at 226-2840.

Sincerely,

DOUGLAS HOLTZ-EAKIN,
Director.

Enclosure.

*H.R. 1297, Columbia Orbiter Memorial Act, As ordered reported by
the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on April 3, 2003*

H.R. 1297 would direct the Secretary of the Army to construct a memorial marker located in Arlington National Cemetery to honor the astronauts who died in the *Columbia* space shuttle accident on February 1, 2003, and would earmark \$500,000 from funds made available by title II of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2003 to be used to construct the memorial marker. The bill also would authorize the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to collect donations that may be transferred to the Secretary of the Army to pay for construction of the memorial.

According to information provided by Arlington National Cemetery, CBO expects that the Columbia Orbiter Memorial would be similar in size and cost to an existing memorial marker dedicated to the astronauts who died in the *Challenger* space shuttle accident in 1986. That memorial marker was dedicated in 1987 and cost about \$10,000.

After adjusting the cost of the *Challenger* memorial marker to account for inflation, CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 1297 would cost less than \$20,000 and that some of that cost may be offset by donations collected by NASA. (Donations are recorded on the budget as revenues.)

H.R. 1297 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

On April 2, 2003, CBO transmitted cost estimates for H.R. 1297 as ordered reported by the House Committee on Science on March 26, 2003, and for S. 628 as passed by the Senate on March 18, 2003. All three versions of the legislation are identical, as are the three estimates.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Melissa E. Zimmerman, who can be reached at 226-2840. This estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

STATEMENT OF FEDERAL MANDATES

The reported bill would not establish a federal mandate under the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act, Public Law 104-4.

STATEMENT OF CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY

Pursuant to Article I, section 8, of the United States Constitution, the reported bill is authorized by Congress' power to "provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States."

