

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 467

Commending the astounding work of the Southwest Research Institute in
discovering the cause of the Columbia space shuttle disaster.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 21, 2003

Mr. GONZALEZ (for himself, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. RODRIGUEZ, Mr. LAMPSON, and Mr. BELL) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Science

RESOLUTION

Commending the astounding work of the Southwest Research
Institute in discovering the cause of the Columbia space
shuttle disaster.

Whereas the space shuttle Columbia disintegrated above
Texas on February 1, 2003, claiming the lives of six
brave American astronauts and Israel's first astronaut;

Whereas, through a series of tests, investigators at the
Southwest Research Institute and NASA demonstrated
that the cause of the space shuttle disaster began with
debris that fell off the external tank after launch and
caused damage to a critical heat shield;

Whereas the investigators at the Southwest Research Insti-
tute demonstrated that the breach in the wing's delicate
heat-protection system was caused by a 1.67-pound block

of foam that was fired by a gas-powered gun and fell off Columbia 82 seconds after launch, and that such a block of foam could cause catastrophic damage;

Whereas the simulation conducted by the Southwest Research Institute came after months of careful research and confirms that the energy of foam impact on the wing had been previously underestimated;

Whereas the Southwest Research Institute's ground-breaking discovery will change the way space shuttles are designed and paves the way for safer space travel in the future;

Whereas the Southwest Research Institute was founded by a philanthropist who believed that science and technology are the keys to a better world;

Whereas the Southwest Research Institute's recent discovery lives up to the premise upon which it was founded;

Whereas the Southwest Institute should be recognized for its unique ability to utilize science and technology for the advancement of mankind; and

Whereas the United States will be forever grateful for the sacrifice the astronauts of Columbia made for the future of NASA and space exploration: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives recog-
 2 nizes and commends the Southwest Research Institute in
 3 San Antonio, Texas for its outstanding work in dem-
 4 onstrating the cause of the Columbia space shuttle dis-
 5 aster.

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