faith with our veterans—we will jeopardize the national security of the nation.

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the measure before us, S. 1402, the Veterans Benefits and Health Care Improvement Act. I would like to thank the work of Chairman BOB STUMP, Representative LANE EVANS, as well as their staffs for bringing this legislation to the floor. I'd also like to thank Chairman SPECTER and Senator ROCKEFELLER for their assistance.

In addition to many of the beneficial provisions in this bill, such as a badly needed increase in the basic Montgomery G.I. Bill benefit, S. 1402 includes language of considerable importance to the citizens and veterans of Southeast Michigan.

For sixty years, the veterans' hospital in Allen Park, Michigan provided quality health care to those who answered our nation's call to arms. In the 1930's, this 39-acre property was given to the VA as a gift from the Henry Ford family. The deed that turned the property over to the VA, however, included a reversionary clause that spelled out that if the VA no longer used the property, the land would revert back to the Ford family.

The VA operated a fully functional hospital on the Allen Park site until 1996, at which time a new VA hospital was opened in nearly Detroit. This new state-of-the-art hospital, which I am deeply honored is named the John D. Dingell VA Hospital, provides quality health care for the veterans of Southeast Michigan despite recent budgetary shortfalls which required the hospital to make unspecified efficiency cuts, usually resulting in staff cuts.

At the time the decision was made to build a new hospital in Southeast Michigan in 1986, the VA envisioned converting the old Allen Park facility into a long-term care facility, creating a dual campus arrangement with Detroit. The dual campus plan, however, was abandoned because the Allen Park facility was no longer needed to meet veterans' needs in the area. Just to be certain, at the request of myself and my colleague Representative JOE KNOLLENBERG, the VA conducted a study to determine whether the Allen Park facility, or the campus, was needed to meet area veterans' health care needs today or in the future. The VA found that not only was Allen Park no longer needed, but that two floors at the new hospital were currently vacant. The General Accounting Office verified the accuracy of the VA study.

Currently, the Allen Park campus consists of perhaps 15 buildings, and is closed with the exception of a small corner of the old main hospital building, which is used as a part-time outpatient care clinic. Few veterans use Allen Park except to catch the VA bus to the Detroit facility. The VA operates this clinic only to keep an official VA presence on the campus, because if it failed to have a presence, the land would revert to the Ford family and the VA would immediately be responsible for paying enormous cleanup costs before the reversion could occur. These costs would have to be absorbed by the VA, and no doubt would eat up a significant chunk of the annual VA budget.

Today, it costs the VA between $500,000 to $1,000,000, probably more, just to maintain the Allen Park clinic and campus, which fails to offer most health services, is in shabby condition and filled with asbestos. This money comes out of the budget intended specifically for VA health care in VISN 11. It is money poorly spent, which undermines the already cash strapped regional VA health care budget. It makes the veterans' health care system in Southeast Michigan worse.

Given that the VA's Allen Park facility is no longer needed, the Ford Land Management Company would like to develop the Allen Park property. The VA would like to abandon it. Additionally, the City of Allen Park has long sought to see the VA campus developed and have the land placed on city tax rolls.

This summer the VA conducted an environmental impact study and estimated cleanup costs. VA and Ford officials concluded that it would cost at least $21.3 million to clean up the site. Ford officials have offered to pay for all cleanup costs after $14 million, saving taxpayers at least $7.3 million. Ford will also save taxpayers' money because it will store the demolished materials in a nearby storage facility. No appropriation earmark will be required now or in the future. The VA will be spared having to fund a one-time, $21.3 million major construction project simply to demolish an obsolete building. Additionally, the VA will be able to use the $500,000 to $1,000,000 spent each year at Allen Park to better the veterans' health care system in Southeast Michigan. Finally, I am pleased that the Allen Park agreement also requires a flagpole and a plaque be maintained at the site in honor of the service of our veterans.

Madam Speaker, the Allen Park provision of this bill is a good deal for veterans, a good deal for taxpayers, and a good deal for Allen Park. I urge my colleagues to pass this bill.

Mr. STUMP. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MORELLA). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. STUMP) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to the House amendments to the Senate bill, S. 1402.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate amendments to the House amendments to the Senate bill were concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER COMMERCIALIZATION ACT

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 209) to improve the ability of Federal agencies to license federally owned inventions.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate amendment:

Page 21, after line 2, insert:

SEC. 11. TECHNOLOGY PARTNERSHIPS OMBUDSMAN.

(a) APPOINTMENT OF OMBUDSMAN.—The Secretary of Energy shall direct the director of each national laboratory of the Department of Energy, and may direct the director of each facility under the jurisdiction of the Department of Energy, to appoint a technology partnership ombudsman to hear and help resolve complaints from outside organizations regarding the policies and actions of each such laboratory or facility with respect to technology partnerships (including cooperative research and development agreements), patents, and technology licensing.

(b) QUALIFICATIONS.—An ombudsman appointed under subsection (a) shall be a senior official of the national laboratory or facility who is not involved in day-to-day technology partnerships, patents, or technology licensing, or, if appointed from outside the laboratory or facility, function as such a senior official.

(c) DUTIES.—Each ombudsman appointed under subsection (a) shall—

(1) serve as the focal point for assisting the public and industry in resolving complaints and disputes with the national laboratory or facility regarding technology partnerships, patents, and technology licensing;

(2) promote the use of collaborative alternative dispute resolution techniques such as mediation to facilitate the speedy and low-cost resolution of complaints and disputes, when appropriate; and

(3) report quarterly on the number and nature of complaints and disputes raised, along with the ombudsman's assessment of their resolution, consistent with the protection of confidential and sensitive information, to—

(A) the Secretary;

(B) the Administrator for Nuclear Security;

(C) the Director of the Office of Dispute Resolution of the Department of Energy; and

(D) the employees of the Department responsible for the administration of the contract for the operation of each national laboratory or facility that is a subject of the report, for consideration in the administration and review of that contract.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GORDON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 209.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Wisconsin?

There was no objection.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 209 continues the Committee on Science's long and rich history of advancing technology transfer to help boost United States international competitiveness.

Through the enactment of the Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act of 1980, the Federal Technology Transfer Act of 1988, and the National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act of 1995, Congress, by the direction of the Committee on Science, has created the framework to promote the government-to-industry transfer of technology that has enhanced our Nation's ability to compete in the global marketplace.

H.R. 209, which originally passed the House in May of last year, continues this tradition.

Last week, the Senate agreed to H.R. 209 and added a new section to the bill that directs the director of each Department of Energy laboratory to appoint an ombudsman to hear and help

resolve industry partner concerns regarding laboratory policies or actions.

The ombudsman's primary duty is to facilitate the speedy and low-cost resolution of complaints and disputes with industry partners.

In its consideration, the Senate made clear that, to ensure fairness and objectivity, the ombudsman should promote the use of collaborative alternative dispute resolution techniques, such as mediation, but that the amendment should not be interpreted to empower the ombudsman to act as a mediator or arbitrator in the process.

After its passage today, H.R. 209 will be sent to the President for his signature into law.

I congratulate the Chair of the Subcommittee on Technology of the Committee on Science, the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA), for introducing this bill and for her tireless efforts to work cooperatively with the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GORDON) and other Members of the minority, the administration, and the other body in crafting this important bill.

I urge adoption of the Technology Transfer Commercialization Act, and I look forward to its signature by the President.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 209, the Technology Transfer Commercialization Act of 1999, and urge its passage.

This is a bill but important piece of legislation that will make it much easier to transfer Federal technology to the businesses that can extract economic value from that technology.

It has been about a year and a half since this legislation was last on the floor of the House of Representatives. It was a good bill in March of 1999, and it is a good bill now.

The only changes which the Senate made to the legislation was to add a section that creates mediators or ombudsmen at each of the Department's national laboratories and makes sure that the appropriate people in the Department's headquarters are kept informed quarterly of the mediators' progress in resolving disputes.

This provision is a good idea because some small businesses have been caught up for years in attempting to resolve intellectual property disputes with DOE laboratories. Having mediators in each lab should help small businesses by resolving those disputes much more quickly and inexpensively.

The Senate did not change a word in the provisions we sent to them last year. The bill still makes important changes in the law regarding federally owned patents. It will now be easier for small businesses to license these inventions and more likely that taxpayers will get their money's worth from them.

I urge my colleagues to think about these businesses, many of which are small and with limited resources, who are risking much to commercialize Federal inventions. This bill will make their lives easier, and it is worthy of our vote.

I want to extend my thanks and compliments to my colleagues who worked on this legislation, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER), the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA), and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BARCIA). I urge all Members to support this passage.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA).

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time, and I thank him for his outstanding leadership as Chair of the Committee on Science. I am pleased to be here.

Each day in our Nation's over 700 government laboratories, Mr. Speaker, new innovations are created by our hard-working Federal scientists to meet the mission of that laboratory.

There are instances, however, when these government-owned innovations have commercial applications beyond just the Federal mission and have been brought into the marketplace, resulting in consumer products that have improved our quality of life while also enhancing our international competitiveness.

Successful technology transfer commercialization from our government laboratories is fighting our deadliest diseases, creating safer and more fuel-efficient methods of transportation, protecting the food that we eat, assisting the disabled, and making our environment cleaner.

I will just list a few of the current examples of technology transfer success stories:

An infrared heat-seeking digital sensor, developed with Department of Defense funding, designed to search for distant galaxies and spot missile launches as part of the Star Wars program that is being used to probe for the first signs of cancer in the human body;

A NASA satellite device used to locate hotspots during fires and monitor volcanoes that has applications in recognizing tumors and abnormalities in women's breasts;

Department of Energy research that developed gas-paneled, energy-efficient superwindows has been transformed to develop an inexpensive, advanced insulating material for use as a thermal packaging to ship perishable cargo such as seafood, meat, fruit, prepared foods and pharmaceuticals; and

Eye-tracking technology; food irradiation research that has an application in the commercial sector.

But it should be clear by now that the importance of technology transfer to our economy and our society cannot be underscored enough; certainly, if we include some of the more storied success stories, such as the Internet, the AIDS home testing kit, and Global Positioning System.

So by permitting effective collaboration between our Federal laboratories and private industry, new technologies are being rapidly commercialized.

Federal technology transfer stimulates the American economy, enhances the competitive position of United States industry internationally, and promotes the development and use of new technologies developed under taxpayer-funded research so those innovations are incorporated quickly, effectively, and efficiently into practice to the benefit of the American public.

One of the most successful legislative frameworks for advancing this has been the Bayh-Dole Act. The Bayh-Dole Act, which was enacted in 1980, permits universities, not-for-profit organizations, and small businesses to obtain title to scientific inventions developed with Federal Government support. It also allows Federal agencies to license government-owned patented scientific inventions even nonexclusively, partially exclusively, or exclusively, depending upon which license is determined, to be the most effective means for achieving commercialization.

Prior to the enactment of the Bayh-Dole Act, many discoveries resulting from federally funded scientific research were not commercialized to help the American public. Since the Federal Government lacked the resources to market new inventions and private industry was reluctant to make high-risk investments without the protection of patent rights, many valuable innovations were left unused on the shelf of Federal laboratories.

With its success licensing Federal inventions, the Bayh-Dole Act is widely used as an effective framework for Federal technology transfer. So the process for licensing of government-owned patents should continue to be refined, we believe, by refining the procedures and by removing the uncertainties associated with the licensing process.

So if we can by reducing that and the uncertainty created by existing procedural barriers and by lowering the transactional costs associated with licensing Federal technologies from the government, we could greatly increase participation by the private sector in its technology transfer programs. This approach would expedite the commercialization of government-owned inventions and through royalties could reduce the cost to the American taxpayer for the production of new technology-based products created in our labs.

That is the intention of this bill before us. The goal of H.R. 209 is to remove the procedural obstacles and, to the greatest extent possible within the public interest, the uncertainty involved in the licensing of Federal-patented inventions created in a government-owned, government-operated laboratory by applying the successful Bayh-Dole Act provision to a GOGO.

Under the bill, its agencies would be provided with two important new tools for effectively commercializing on-the-shelf, federally owned technologies, either licensing them as stand-alone inventions under the bill's revised authorities of section 209 of the Bayh-Dole Act, or by including them as part of a larger package under the Cooperative Research and Development Agreement.

In doing so, this will make both mechanisms much more attractive to U.S. companies that are striving to form partnerships with Federal laboratories.

Let me just close by noting that the bill before us represents a bipartisan and bicameral consensus. I am pleased to have worked very closely with Members of the minority, the administration, and the Senate in helping to perfect the bill since it was originally introduced.

I am especially pleased that the administration has issued a Statement of Administration Policy which states that the administration supports passage of H.R. 209, which will significantly facilitate the licensing of government-owned inventions by Federal agencies.

I want to thank the chairman of the full committee, the Committee on Science, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER), for his leadership; the ranking member of the Committee on Science, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HALL), as well as the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Technology of the Committee on Science, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BARCIA).

I certainly want to commend the ranking member on the committee. I also want to commend some members of the other body, Senators ROCKEFELLER, FRIST, HATCH, and LEAHY for their input and for their support in helping to refine the legislation.

I look forward to the President's signature of this important bill into law.

I want to point out that staff also helped enormously. Barry Berringer, Jim Turner, Jeff Grove, and Ben Wu especially worked very hard on this.

The Federal laboratories are eager to receive the new authorities contained in this bill, and I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 209.

1245

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GIBBONS). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 209.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate amendment was concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COMMERCIAL SPACE TRANSPORTATION COMPETITIVENESS ACT OF 2000

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill, (H.R. 2607) to promote the development of the commercial space transportation industry, to authorize appropriations for the Office of the Associate Administrator for Commercial Space Transportation, to authorize appropriations for the Office of Space Commercialization, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate amendment:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Commercial Space Transportation Competitiveness Act of 2000''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds that—

(1) a robust United States space transportation industry is vital to the Nation's economic well-being and national security;

(2) enactment of a 5-year extension of the excess third party claims payment provision of chapter 701 of title 49, United States Code (Commercial Space Launch Activities), will have a beneficial impact on the international competitiveness of the United States space transportation industry;

(3) space transportation may evolve into airplane-style operations;

(4) during the next 3 years the Federal Government and the private sector should analyze the liability risk-sharing regime to determine its appropriateness and effectiveness, and, if needed, develop and propose a new regime to Congress at least 2 years prior to the expiration of the extension contained in this Act;

(5) the areas of responsibility of the Office of the Associate Administrator for Commercial Space Transportation have significantly increased as a result of—

(A) the rapidly expanding commercial space transportation industry and associated government licensing requirements;

(B) regulatory activity as a result of the emerging commercial reusable launch vehicle industry; and

(C) the increased regulatory activity associated with commercial operation of launch and reentry sites; and

(6) the Office of the Associate Administrator for Commercial Space Transportation should continue to limit its promotional activities to those which support its regulatory mission.

SEC. 3. OFFICE OF COMMERCIAL SPACE TRANSPORTATION.

(a) AMENDMENT.—Section 70119 of title 49, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''§ 70119. Office of Commercial Space Transportation

''There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Transportation for the activities of the Office of the Associate Administrator for Commercial Space Transportation—

''(1) $12,607,000 for fiscal year 2001; and

''(2) $16,478,000 for fiscal year 2002.''.

(b) TABLE OF SECTIONS AMENDMENT.—The item relating to section 70119 in the table of sections of chapter 701 of title 49, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''70119. Office of Commercial Space Transportation.''.

SEC. 4. OFFICE OF SPACE COMMERCIALIZATION.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Commerce for the activities of the Office of Space Commercialization—

(1) $590,000 for fiscal year 2001;

(2) $608,000 for fiscal year 2002; and

(3) $626,000 for fiscal year 2003.

(b) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Commerce shall transmit to the Congress a report on the Office of Space Commercialization detailing the activities of the Office, the materials produced by the Office, the extent to which the Office has fulfilled the functions established for it by the Congress, and the extent to which the Office has participated in interagency efforts.

SEC. 5. COMMERCIAL SPACE TRANSPORTATION INDEMNIFICATION EXTENSION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—If, on the date of enactment of this Act, section 70113(f) of title 49, United States Code, has not been amended by the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001, then that section is amended by striking ''December 31, 2000'' and inserting ''December 31, 2004''.

(b) AMENDMENT OF MODIFIED SECTION.—If, on the date of enactment of this Act, section 70113(f) of title 49, United States Code, has been amended by the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001, then that section is amended by striking ''December 31, 2001'' and inserting ''December 31, 2004''.

SEC. 6. TECHNICAL AMENDMENT TO SECTION 70113 OF TITLE 49.

(a) Section 70113 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by striking ''———, 19——.',' in subsection (e)(1)(A) and inserting ''———, 20——.',''.

(b) The amendment made by subsection (a) takes effect on January 1, 2000.

SEC. 7. LIABILITY REGIME FOR COMMERCIAL SPACE TRANSPORTATION.

(a) REPORT REQUIREMENT.—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Transportation shall transmit to the Congress a report on the liability risk-sharing regime in the United States for commercial space transportation.

(b) CONTENTS.—The report required by this section shall—

(1) analyze the adequacy, propriety, and effectiveness of, and the need for, the current liability risk-sharing regime in the United States for commercial space transportation;

(2) examine the current liability and liability risk-sharing regimes in other countries with space transportation capabilities;

(3) examine the appropriateness of deeming all space transportation activities to be ''ultrahazardous activities'' for which a strict liability standard may be applied and which liability regime should attach to space transportation activities, whether ultrahazardous activities or not;

(4) examine the effect of relevant international treaties on the Federal Government's liability for commercial space launches and how the current domestic liability risk-sharing regime meets or exceeds the requirements of those treaties;

(5) examine the appropriateness, as commercial reusable launch vehicles enter service and demonstrate improved safety and reliability, of evolving the commercial space transportation liability regime towards the approach of the airline liability regime;

(6) examine the need for changes to the Federal Government's indemnification policy to accommodate the risks associated with commercial spaceport operations; and

(7) recommend appropriate modifications to the commercial space transportation liability regime and the actions required to accomplish those modifications.

(c) SECTIONS.—The report required by this section shall contain sections expressing the views and recommendations of—