PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ALLEN BOYD

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 17, 2001

Mr. BOYD. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall no. 385, I was unable to cast my vote due to a previous commitment in my district.

Had I been present, I would have voted ''yea.''

ON THE INTRODUCTION OF THE TECH TALENT ACT, H.R. 3130

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 17, 2001

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that America has long recognized that its long-term strength and security, and its ability to recover and sustain high levels of economic growth, depends on maintaining its edge in scientific achievement and technological innovation. Biomedical advances have permitted us to live longer, healthier, and more productively. Advances in agricultural technology have permitted us to be able to feed more and healthier people at a cheaper cost, more efficiently. The information revolution can be seen today in the advanced instruments schools are using to instruct our children and in the vast information resources that are opened up as a result of the linkages created by a networked global society. Our children today can grow up to know, see, and read more, be more diverse, and have more options in their lives for learning and growing. Other emerging technologies—such as nanotechnology—have untold potential to make our lives more exciting, secure, prosperous, and challenging.

Many countries also recognize this and they, therefore, focus their industrial, economic, and security policies on the nurturing and diffusion of technological advancement through all levels of society in a deliberate fashion. Countries that follow this path of nurturing innovation focus a lot of their efforts into recruiting and training the very best engineers and scientists, ensuring that a pipeline which pumps talented and imaginative minds and skills is connected to the needs of the country's socio-economic and security enterprise.

Yet here in this country, this pipeline is broken, threatening the competitive edge we enjoy in the business of technological innovation. Fewer and fewer Americans are getting degrees in scientific and technical fields—even as the demand grows. For example, the number of bachelors degrees awarded in math, computer science, and electrical engineering has fallen 35 percent and 39 percent respectively from their peaks in 1987, at a time when total BA degrees have increased. The number of graduate degrees in those fields has either fallen noticeable or stayed flat. And only about half of all engineering doctoral degrees granted in the U.S. are earned by Americans.

The nation has dealt with this crisis in the recent past by expanding the H1B Visa program to let more foreign residents with science and engineering degrees enter the country. But the H1B program was never intended to be more than an interim solution. The long-term solution has to be ensuring that more Americans get into these fields.

Therefore, today, along with House Science Committee Chairman SHERWOOD BOEHLERT, and Representatives MELISSA HART, MARK UDALL, and MIKE HONDA, I have introduced the Tech Talent Act, H.R. 3130, aimed at increasing the number of scientists, engineers, and technologists in the United States. Senators JOSEPH LIEBERMAN (D–CT), CHRISTOPHER BOND (R–MO), BARBARA MIKULSKI (D–MD), BILL FRIST (R–TN), and PETE DOMENICI (R–NM) introduced a companion bill in the Senate.

This legislation addresses the tech worker shortage by establishing a competitive grant program at the National Science Foundation that rewards universities and community colleges that pledge to increase the number of U.S. citizens or permanent residents obtaining degrees in science, math, engineering and technology (SMET) fields. The pilot program, which will award three-year grants, is authorized at $25 million in the next fiscal year, with funding expected to increase if the initial results are encouraging.

It always pays to be mindful of the fact—especially in the wake of the September 11 events—that there is a strong and tight linkage between our national security and the level of science and technology proficiency in America. Our strength and leadership in the world is based on the might of our defense, strength of our economy, and the quality of our education system. Without any one of these three components the global preeminence of the nation suffers.

In the House Science Committee room there is an inscription: Where there is no vision, the people perish. To remain a strong nation, we must ensure that the single most important element that keeps us dynamic, innovative, prosperous, and secure—and therefore mighty—is there for us: our students, teachers, researchers, engineers, scientists, and technologists. In short, we need more people with vision. This bill will keep them coming.

I am honored to be a sponsor of this important legislation in the United States House of Representatives.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ALLEN BOYD

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 17, 2001

Mr. BOYD. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 384, I was unable to cast my vote due to a previous commitment in my district. Had I been present, I would have voted ''nay''.

WOMEN IN AFGHANISTAN

HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 17, 2001

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the women in Afghanistan. Today in Afghanistan, a woman's basic right to vote, to pursue an education, and to join the job force, is threatened. The Taliban's insistence on secluding women from public life is a political maneuver disguised as ''Islamic'' law. Before seizing power, the Taliban manipulated and used the rights of women as tools to gain control of the country. To secure financial and political support, the Taliban emulated authoritarian methods typical of many Middle Eastern countries. The Taliban's stand on the seclusion of women is not derived from Islam, but, rather, from a cultural bias found in suppressive movements throughout the region.

Three and a half million Afghan refugees are fighting to survive in bordering countries, and the number has been increasing every day since the U.S. vowed retaliation for the September 11 attacks. Afghan women who fled the ruling Taliban's oppressive regime comprise more than 70 percent of those in refugee camps; many are already starving.

Before 1996, women were 70 percent of the school teachers, 40 percent of the doctors, 50 percent of government workers and 50 percent of the college students in Afghanistan. They were scientists, professors, members of parliament and university professors. Since then, the women and girls of Afghanistan have suffered horribly under the Taliban's rule, forbidden to work or attend school, prohibited from going outside without a close male relative and cut off from health care. Violations of these and other strict rules have resulted in beatings, torture and public executions.

The women and girls who escape these sub-human conditions must not be allowed to starve in refugee camps. Expansion of the U.S. humanitarian aid package and its proper distribution will help ensure that this will not happen.

Today, the treatment of women in Afghanistan is receiving much international attention. The Taliban's discriminatory gender policies have been heavily criticized by outside governments, intergovernmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations. Whilst the Taliban's response has been to vigorously defend their position, the opposition alliance fighting the Taliban in the northeast have sought to portray themselves as defenders of women's rights, although whether this is anything more than an opportunistic attempt to garner international support remains to be seen. They themselves have committed human rights abuses.

This pattern of using the status of women to accrue political advantage must be broken.

If the aims of peace and development are ever to be realized in Afghanistan, then women's fundamental human rights must be respected. It is now recognized the world over that progress, social justice, the eradication of poverty, sustained economic growth, and social development all critically depend on the full participation of women on the basis of equality in all spheres of society. As agreed by the governments participating in the Fourth UN World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, local, national, regional and global peace is attainable and is inextricably linked to the advancement of women. In the Platform for Action, world governments pledged to take all necessary measures to prevent and eliminate violence and discrimination against women, which are major obstacles to the advancement and empowerment of women.

I rise today to reiterate my support for the women of Afghanistan. It is obligatory that the unalienable rights of these women be restored; an increase in humanitarian aid must

be implemented for Afghan women and children; and Afghan women should play a leadership role in rebuilding the country.

HONORING JOE DESCH AND THE NCR CODE-BREAKING EFFORT

HON. TONY P. HALL

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 17, 2001

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, at a ceremony on October 19, 2001, the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE) will designate as a ''Milestone in Engineering'' the U.S. Naval Computing Machine Laboratory, in Dayton, Ohio, which I represent.

During World War II, the ability to analyze quickly coded enemy messages was one of our most critical military capabilities. To build a machine that could break codes from Nazi submarines, the Navy turned to Dayton's National Cash Register Company (NCR) and Joseph R. Desch, director of its Electrical Research Laboratory.

For three years, Desch and his team of dedicated workers developed a machine which allowed our Nation to crack the secret code used by the Nazi military command to communicate its secret plans to its forces in the field. The device, called a Bombe, was the military's highest priority, second only to the development of the Atom Bomb. Its success gave the Allies a significant advantage, hastening the end of the war and saving the lives of American soldiers.

Desch and his team faced enormous pressure as they labored daily to construct and produce the code-breaking device. They sacrificed their personal health, both emotional and physical. Many of these heroes are no longer living. Desch died on August 3, 1987, at age 80.

The effort has been all but forgotten because of the enormous secrecy surrounding the project. In February and March 2001, the Dayton Daily News ran an extraordinary 8-part series by Jim DeBrosse about Desch. The series brought to light for the first time much information about NCR's code-breaking efforts. The IEEE ceremony later this month will bring additional honor to his memory.

Perhaps the greatest tribute to the memory of Joe Desch and his contribution to the war effort would be the permanent display of an original NCR Bombe in Dayton. Of the more than 120 Bombes that were believed to have been constructed in Dayton, the sole known surviving Bombe is displayed at the National Security Agency's National Cryptologic Museum in Ft. Meade, Maryland. I have been in touch with the National Security Agency requesting assistance in tracking down another example of this extraordinary invention.

As part the IEEE ceremony, the surviving members of this top-secret project will return to the site of the U.S. Naval Computing Machine Laboratory, at NCR. They will be joined by Desch's daughter, Debbie Anderson, whose persistence has helped the story be told.

I offer my congratulations on this award to all the survivors of the project and to Debbie Anderson in honor of her father.

TRIBUTE TO THE NATIONAL AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHRISTIAN SINGLES CONFERENCE

HON. KEN BENTSEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 17, 2001

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 15th Annual National African-American Christian Singles Conference being held October 19–21, 2001, at the J.W. Marriott and Exhibition Center in Houston, Texas. Under the leadership of Pastor Joe Samuel Ratliff, the Singles Ministry of Brentwood Baptist Church of Houston will serve as the official host of the conference.

Dr. Joe Samuel Ratliff has been the pastor of Brentwood Baptist Church since 1980. Under his direction the congregation has grown from 500 members to more than 10,000. He has lead the congregation in developing fourteen mission churches in various parts of the Houston metropolitan.

In 1986, Pastor Ratliff, founded the first National African-American Christian Singles' Conference. The Conference is a non-denominational event designed to address the needs and concerns of single Christian adults. Through the tireless efforts of the congregation, the conference has grown each year since its creation. It now attracts more than 1,000 singles from across the nation, and as far away as England, Germany, and Africa.

The National African-American Christian Singles Conference demonstrates Brentwood Baptist Church's commitment to promoting Christian fellowship and facilitating an environment for spiritual and cultural expression. The focus of this year's conference is, ''Growth through Evangelism, Stewardship, Prayer, and Praise.'' This powerful weekend provides Christian singles an opportunity to become empowered, enriched and encouraged to face the challenges before them. The conference itinerary includes speakers on topics such as faith based initiatives within the community, financial stability, and neighborhood enrichment programs.

Brentwood Baptist Church has developed a Community Foundation which has made tremendous strides in the efforts to improve the quality of life in the Houston area. The Brentwood Community Foundation is a catalytic force, which seeks to empower its neighbors through programs in the arts, education, economic development, health care, and social services. Through its exemplary model of community activism, Brentwood Baptist Church has earned the respect and praise of its neighbors.

Again, I would like to recognize the 15th Annual National African-American Christian Singles Conference and congratulate the congregation on their exceptional service to the greater Houston area.

HONORING CU PROFESSOR TIM SEASTEDT FOR WEED CONTROL RESEARCH

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 17, 2001

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the important work of University of Colorado Professor Tim Seastedt in weed control research. Professor Seastedt's exciting and path-breaking research on using insects and soil chemistry to control the spread of noxious, non-native plants holds promise in addressing a vexing—and spreading—problem, especially on our western lands.

Professor Seastedt's work was recently recognized through a $280,000 grant awarded to him by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to continue his work of examining the soil chemistry of diffused knapweed and devising a way to develop soil nutrients that kill or hamper the growth of this problem weed in Colorado and elsewhere. Through this grant and his existing work on the role of insects in controlling the spread of weeds, Professor Seastedt is demonstrating that we can address our weed problems and do so in an effective and environmentally sensitive manner.

The nature and extent of the weed problem in the west is dramatic and serious. In Colorado alone, there are 85 species of weeds that are taking root in millions of acres of rangeland, have displaced nearly 10 percent of the state's native plant species, have destroyed habitat for bighorn sheep and other wildlife, and caused upwards of $100 million in lost crop productivity annually. Similar impacts exist in many other states.

Weeds get here and take hold for a host of different reasons. In the case of diffused knapweed, it is theorized that this plant came over from Europe from imported alfalfa crops. But no matter how they get here, once these plants take hold they are very hard to eradicate. In North Dakota, for example, where another plant—leafy spurge—is a particularly bad problem, the state has been spending nearly $100 million a year to control it. Such controls involve everything from herbicides, mowing, hand-pulling, and the use of grazing animals such as sheep—all to little or no effect. The plants keep coming back. In addition, some of these methods, such as the spraying of chemical herbicides, are controversial as they may be harmful to the environment.

That's where Professor Seastedt's work comes in. Given the cost, low-effectiveness and environmental concerns of these traditional methods, Professor Seastedt and his researchers began looking for better methods. He latched on to insects. For example, in the case of diffused knapweed, Professor Seastedt found that a number of species of weevil feed upon the roots, stems, seeds and flowers of this plant. So, he released a swarm of them in test plots along Colorado's Front Range, an area especially hard hit by this weed. The result: where there once were 30 stems of diffused knapweed per square meter, there now are hardly any at all. And native grasses and plants, which are not palatable to the weevils, are now making a strong return.

This story is being copied in North Dakota with the leafy spurge. There is a species of insect called flea beetles that seems to thrive on this weed with the result of reducing by half the acreage that has been affected there. This insect is now being used to control the leafy spurge problem at Colorado's Cherry Creek State Park, which has resulted in a 60 percent reduction of the growth of this weed at this popular state park.

Insects are thus proving to be an exciting tool in our arsenal against weeds. The other weapon is the new research on soil chemistry. Professor Seastedt has been studying the soil