Her frustration at her inability to find employment due to her gender led to her first involvement in politics. According to The Honolulu Advertiser, Congresswoman MINK recalled that ''I didn't start off wanting to be in politics—I wanted to be a learned professional, serving the community. But they weren't hiring women just then. Not being able to get a job from anybody changed things.''

Her early first-hand experience with these issues led to her vocal championing of legislative responses to the problem—most notably the landmark Women's Educational Equality Act, otherwise known as Title IX, which was passed 30 years ago and mandates gender equality in any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. In the years since, the athletic scholarship money available to women has increased from $100,000 in 1972 to $197 million in 1997. However, Title IX also has a significant impact in the fight for parity in academic fields. One of the most important areas to reach parity in is math and science education and access to technology and technological training. These areas hold the key to achievement and employment for women now and in the future. The gains we have made in each of these areas could not have been possible without her principled leadership.

Another issue on which Congresswoman MINK led was opposition to the Vietnam War. After being elected in the fall of 1964, she was one of Congress' most vocal opponents of the prolonged military campaign. Indeed, she and fellow member Representative Bella Abzug of New York flew to Paris to talk to participants in the Vietnam War Peace Talks. Although this position brought her scathing criticism from many sources, including her own constituents, she always did what she felt was right, even in the face of namecalling, as she was labeled ''Patsy Pink''.

After leaving the House to pursue other political opportunities in the 70's, she returned to the House in 1990. Since then, she has continued to be a vocal leader for progressive causes, most recently as the lead sponsor of vital legislation on welfare reform. This legislation would have expanded educational opportunities for women struggling to leave government assistance, and provided ample funding for child care. Her commitment to the needs of women and children could never be questioned. Indeed, in lieu of flowers, her family has asked that donations be made to the Patsy Takemoto Mink Education Fund for Low-Income Women and Children, which will be established in her honor. What a fitting tribute to her work.

I am proud to have served with such a remarkable woman. Congresswoman MINK will be greatly missed both in this chamber and in her home state.I thank the Speaker.

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my heartfelt condolences to the family of the late Congresswoman PATSY MINK, including her husband John and daughter Wendy, and the people of Hawaii's Second Congressional District who share our recent loss.

PATSY MINK was a dedicated public servant and an inspiring example of the great strides minority women have achieved in our society. She was a fierce and courageous advocate for women rights and whose powerful voice during political rallies and congressional debate belied her petite frame.

I am very proud of my 12 years together with her on the Education and Labor Committee. I always admired her compassion, insight, and extensive knowledge of each matter considered before our committee. My colleagues and I will miss her presence on the dais, but her spirit will live on in the memory of her enduring contributions to her priorities in education, women's rights, housing and health care.

I believe PATSY's greatest accomplishment was the addition of Title IX to the Education Act, which she helped write in 1972. This landmark measure has a proven track record for increasing scholarships for women and promoting equality in athletics. Her contributions positively impacted the lives of tens of thousands of young American women. Without her leadership, the Women's National Basketball Association, women's soccer and other athletic endeavors for women would not be flourishing as they do today. The Women's Educational Equity Act and Native Hawaiian Education Act were also directly shaped by PATSY's vision of equality and opportunity.

I will always remember PATSY's friendship, collegiality and generosity, particularly several boxes of chocolate macadamia nuts from her native Hawaii that my family and I have enjoyed so much over the years! My thoughts and prayers remain with her family and constituents as we remember PATSY MINK's contributions to Congress and public service in America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GRUCCI). Pursuant to the request of the gentleman from Hawaii, the Chair requests that all Members stand to observe a moment of silence in memory of the late Honorable PATSY T. MINK, a Representative from the great State of Hawaii.

Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the resolution.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REREFERRAL OF H.R. 5498 TO COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the bill, H.R. 5498, be rereferred to the Committee on Resources.

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

There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings this evening on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record votes on postponed questions will be taken tomorrow.

REMOTE SENSING APPLICATIONS ACT OF 2002

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2426) to encourage the development and integrated use by the public and private sectors of remote sensing and other geospatial information, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2426

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Remote Sensing Applications Act of 2002''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds that—

(1) although urban land use planning, growth management, and other functions of State, local, regional, and tribal agencies are rightfully within their jurisdiction, the Federal Government can and should play an important role in the development and demonstration of innovative techniques to improve comprehensive land use planning and growth management;

(2) the United States is making a major investment in acquiring remote sensing and other geospatial information from both governmental and commercial sources;

(3) while much of the data is being acquired for scientific and national security purposes, it also can have important applications to help meet societal goals;

(4) it has already been demonstrated that Landsat data and other earth observation data can be of enormous assistance to Federal, State, local, regional, and tribal agencies for urban land use planning, coastal zone management, natural and cultural resource management, and disaster monitoring;

(5) remote sensing, coupled with the emergence of geographic information systems and satellite-based positioning information, offers the capability of developing important new applications of integrated sets of geospatial information to address societal needs;

(6) the full range of applications of remote sensing and other forms of geospatial information to meeting public sector requirements has not been adequately explored or exploited;

(7) the Land Remote Sensing Policy Act of 1992, Presidential Decision Directive 23 of 1994, and the Commercial Space Act of 1998 all support and promote the development of United States commercial remote sensing capabilities;

(8) many State, local, regional, tribal, and Federal agencies are unaware of the utility of remote sensing and other geospatial information for meeting their needs, even when research has demonstrated the potential applications of that information;

(9) remote sensing and other geospatial information can be particularly useful to State, local, regional, and tribal agencies in the area of urban planning, especially in their efforts to plan for and manage the impacts of growth, development, and sprawl, as well as in environmental impact and disaster relief planning and management;

(10) the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, in coordination with other agencies, can play a unique role in demonstrating how data acquired for scientific purposes, when combined with other data sources and processing capabilities, can be applied to assist State, local, regional, and tribal agencies and the private sector in decisionmaking in such areas as agriculture, weather forecasting, and forest management; and

(11) in addition, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, in conjunction with other agencies, can play a unique role

in stimulating the development of the remote sensing and other geospatial information sector through pilot projects to demonstrate the value of integrating governmental and commercial remote sensing data with geographic information systems and satellite-based positioning data to provide useful applications products.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act—

(1) the term ''Administrator'' means the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration;

(2) the term ''geospatial information'' means knowledge of the nature and distribution of physical and cultural features on the landscape based on analysis of data from airborne or spaceborne platforms or other types and sources of data; and

(3) the term ''institution of higher education'' has the meaning given that term in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)).

SEC. 4. PILOT PROJECTS TO ENCOURAGE PUBLIC SECTOR APPLICATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall establish a program of grants for competitively awarded pilot projects to explore the integrated use of sources of remote sensing and other geospatial information to address State, local, regional, and tribal agency needs.

(b) PREFERRED PROJECTS.—In awarding grants under this section, the Administrator shall give preference to projects that—

(1) make use of existing public or commercial data sets;

(2) integrate multiple sources of geospatial information, such as geographic information system data, satellite-provided positioning data, and remotely sensed data, in innovative ways;

(3) include funds or in-kind contributions from non-Federal sources;

(4) involve the participation of commercial entities that process raw or lightly processed data, often merging that data with other geospatial information, to create data products that have significant value added to the original data; and

(5) taken together demonstrate as diverse a set of public sector applications as possible.

(c) OPPORTUNITIES.—In carrying out this section, the Administrator shall seek opportunities to assist—

(1) in the development of commercial applications potentially available from the remote sensing industry; and

(2) State, local, regional, and tribal agencies in applying remote sensing and other geospatial information technologies for growth management.

(d) DURATION.—Assistance for a pilot project under subsection (a) shall be provided for a period not to exceed 3 years.

(e) REPORT.—Each recipient of a grant under subsection (a) shall transmit a report to the Administrator on the results of the pilot project within 180 days of the completion of that project.

(f) WORKSHOP.—Each recipient of a grant under subsection (a) shall, not later than 180 days after the completion of the pilot project, conduct at least one workshop for potential users to disseminate the lessons learned from the pilot project as widely as feasible.

(g) REGULATIONS.—The Administrator shall issue regulations establishing application, selection, and implementation procedures for pilot projects, and guidelines for reports and workshops required by this section.

SEC. 5. PROGRAM EVALUATION.

(a) ADVISORY COMMITTEE.—The Administrator shall establish an advisory committee, consisting of individuals with appropriate expertise in State, local, regional, and tribal agencies, the university research community, and the remote sensing and other geospatial information industry, to monitor the program established under section 4. The advisory committee shall consult with the Federal Geographic Data Committee and other appropriate industry representatives and organizations. Notwithstanding section 14 of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, the advisory committee established under this subsection shall remain in effect until the termination of the program under section 4.

(b) EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATION.—Not later than December 31, 2006, the Administrator shall transmit to the Congress an evaluation of the effectiveness of the program established under section 4 in exploring and promoting the integrated use of sources of remote sensing and other geospatial information to address State, local, regional, and tribal agency needs. Such evaluation shall have been conducted by an independent entity.

SEC. 6. DATA AVAILABILITY.

The Administrator shall ensure that the results of each of the pilot projects completed under section 4 shall be retrievable through an electronic, Internet-accessible database.

SEC. 7. EDUCATION.

The Administrator shall establish an educational outreach program to increase awareness at institutions of higher education and State, local, regional, and tribal agencies of the potential applications of remote sensing and other geospatial information.

SEC. 8. COST SENSITIVITY STUDY.

The Administrator shall conduct a study of the effect of remote sensing imagery costs on potential State, local, regional, and tribal agency applications. The study shall identify applications that are likely to be most affected by reductions in the cost of remote sensing imagery. Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall transmit to the Congress the results of the study conducted under this section.

SEC. 9. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to the Administrator $15,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2003 through 2007 to carry out this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) and the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. UDALL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on H.R. 2426.

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

There was no objection.

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

First of all, I congratulate the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. UDALL) for having this bill come to the floor and the hard work that he has put into this bill. He has been a tremendous inspiration to us in working for high technology and a great environment at the same time. This bill, I think, exemplifies that type of attitude and commitment. So I congratulate him first and foremost for the great work he has done that has manifested itself in this bill.

I support H.R. 2426, the Remote Sensing Applications Act of 2002. This bill provides incentives to make federally funded remote sensing data accessible and useful to address current needs in local communities. This has been a great concern of mine for several years. Since getting to Congress, I have always talked about getting down-to-earth benefits for the taxpayer from satellite data. So I am very pleased to support this legislation that will result in benefits for a broad range of users.

This bill establishes a pilot program to enable the development of creative ideas for applying remote sensing toward societal needs. These applications will benefit all who depend on or work in the areas of agriculture, urban planning, environmental management, weather forecasting, resource management and disaster relief, just to name a few. I would suggest that perhaps we could add to that list, and I hope with his leadership to work with him on this, see a way that we can use satellite sensing to help discover sources of pollution in the ocean which plague the coastal areas of California where I happen to represent.

I have always strongly supported the use of satellite remote sensing data to address current problems in our society, with tangible benefits, of course, to the taxpayers who are paying for these satellites in the first place.

This bill is not another big government program with no end, however. Yes, we are providing a service, but instead we are doing so in a very responsible way. Instead, it is a limited 3-year pilot program to jump-start projects that will benefit thousands, maybe millions of citizens. These projects will be competitively selected with preference given to those that partner with non-Federal sources of support. These projects will be evaluated for their effectiveness with the results made available to everyone through the Internet. Successful ideas will spur private industry to develop more and more useful applications for remote sensing with direct benefits, of course, to the citizens of the United States and to the world.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2426 as a remarkably forward-thinking piece of legislation. Again, I would like to mention to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. UDALL), I know that there was an older Udall that was here when I first came here. This is a bill in keeping with that fine tradition that he left in this body.

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

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, as the author of this legislation, I obviously support passage

of the bill. I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) for his kind words and also his support. I also wanted to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. BOEHLERT), the chairman of the Committee on Science, and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HALL), the ranking member, for making it possible for the House to consider the bill today.

I introduced the Remote Sensing Applications Act in June 2001 to address a real problem we have in Colorado, the problem of excess growth and sprawl. My goal was to point to a way to utilize the resources of the Federal Government to help foster wise community planning and management at the local level. As a member of the House Committee on Science and the Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics, it made sense to me to look for ways to help communities grow in a smarter way through the use of technology.

One new space-age tool, and the gentleman from California was talking about it, is the use of satellites to provide images of the Earth's surface. We now have the technology, using geospatial data from satellites, that can produce very accurate maps that show information about vegetation, wildlife habitat, flood plains, transportation corridors, soil types and many other things. By giving State and local governments and communities greater access to geospatial data from commercial sources and Federal agencies such as NASA, I believe that the Federal Government can help bring valuable and powerful informational planning resources to the table.

H.R. 2426 would facilitate this transfer of information. The bill would establish in NASA a program of grants for competitively awarded pilot projects. The purpose of the grants would be to explore the integrated use of sources of remote sensing and other geospatial information to address State, local, regional and tribal agency needs. This legislation would build on and complement an applications program that NASA's Office of Earth Science announced last year.

State and local governments and communities can use this geospatial data in a wide variety of applications, in such areas as urban land use planning, coastal zone management and erosion control, transportation corridors, environmental planning, and agricultural and forest management.

One potential application that has garnered much attention since the tragic events of last September 11 is the use of geospatial technology to bolster our homeland security.

□ 2145

Emergency management has always been an important responsibility of State and local governments; but in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks, the scope of this responsibility has broadened. Geospatial technology can help States and localities identify the location, nature, and scope of potential vulnerabilities and the impact of potential hazards, as well as how to respond to events and recover from them.

Certainly, it is important that we continue to add to our database of available geospatial information. More information is always better than less, but we have to also make sure that we have maximum use of the information that we already have at hand, and that is the need that this bill would address.

State and local officials are becoming more familiar with the uses of geospatial technology for various planning purposes. However, there is a need for Federal agencies such as NASA, which has been pioneering the use of satellite remote sensing technologies, to work with State and local organizations to demonstrate how remote sensing and other geospatial data can offer a cost-effective planning and assessment tool.

I am pleased that there is broad bipartisan cosponsorship of the bill and that it has earned the endorsement of a number of important national organizations. The supporters of H.R. 2426 understand the importance of targeting geospatial information at the places where it will have the greatest impact, that being local and regional levels. This act can help begin to bridge the gap between established and emerging technology solutions and the problems and challenges that State and local communities face regarding growth management, homeland security, forest fire management, and other issues.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this bill will be welcomed by States and localities nationwide, and I urge its adoption.

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

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, my compliments to my colleagues, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) and the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. UDALL), on moving this ahead. My colleagues talk very calmly about what can be a useful tool in so many areas. From my experiences in agriculture, I have learned that we now have the remote sensing capability that we are really not using to predict insect infestation, to predict how the yields are going to accommodate the demand for food in this world. So with useful information of satellites and assisted land set help from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and our university of systems, so many things that we can do to make sure that we can plan ahead for such things as drought or insects or low production in certain parts of the world so we can accommodate increased production in other areas.

So I commend my colleagues for moving this bill ahead; I hope we will pass and, more than that, I hope we will eventually have the kind of funding so that we can maximize the use of these tools and techniques.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I have no other speakers. I would just close by again congratulating my colleague, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. UDALL); and I would like to thank him for the many hours of hard work he has put in to getting the bill to the floor like this. In this Congress, during this wartime has not been an easy thing. He has put in a lot of time and effort, and he is to be commended for it.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2426, the Remote Sensing Applications Act. This good common sense legislation will not cost much, but will enable us to extract huge benefits from programs that already exist.

Geospatial satellite data is expensive. Usually when groups present in the Science Committee with communications or surveillance needs, we immediately start talking about hundreds of millions, or even billions of dollars in potential funding. However, once those satellites are successfully deployed, the data they collect and transmit back is invaluable. It just makes sense that we milk every bit of useful information out of that data, and get it to the American people who pay for it. H.R. 2426 will do just that.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration is the world leader in space and satellite technology, and commercial space entities in the U.S. are driving an exciting and growing international sector of space-based industry. From the networks of satellites produced by these groups stream a wealth of data, that needs to be put to work. Countless groups are already lining up to start taking advantage of it. For example, the American Planning Association endorses the Remote Sensing Applications Act, because it will enable them to visualize changes in patters of urban development, and to plan emergency procedures accordingly. Environmental groups and ecologists are excited because they may be able to access the best images available to follow changes in our coastlines and our forests. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce supports this bill, because possibilities for the commercial use of geospatial data are nearly limitless. Legislation like this will most-likely lead to a new generation of consumer products—maps, weather information, land-management systems, etcetera—that will improve the lives of Americans.

H.R. 2426 will bring about these great changes by establishing a program of grants to fund pilot projects meant to bridge the gap between remote sensing technology, and the needs of the public. Project-proposals would be reviewed and funded on a competitive basis. To ensure that the pilot projects would be fruitful, the Administrator would give preference to projects that make use of existing data sets, integrate data in innovative ways, involve collaborations with and contributions from non-federal sources, and demonstrate good potential for future public sector applications. I have long felt that collaborations with NASA could be of great use in increasing homeland security by improving our nation's cyber- and satellite-security. In that same spirit, H.R. 2426 takes advantage of the great technology and expertise at NASA, and uses it to the betterment of the nation.

The bill would authorize $15 million for each of fiscal years 2002 through 2006. This is a bargain considering the potential benefits of the program. I strongly support H.R. 2426, The Remote Sensing Application Act.

Mr. BOEHLERT. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following correspondence:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE,
Washington, DC September 30, 2002.

The Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Office of the Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER HASTERT: I am writing to inform you that the Committee on Science has discharged from further consideration H.R. 2426, the ''Remote Sensing Applications Act of 2002.'' H.R. 2426 was referred to this Committee on June 28, 2001.

Sincerely,

SHERWOOD L. BOEHLERT,
Chairman.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GRUCCI). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2426, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CHARLES ''PETE'' CONRAD ASTRONOMY AWARDS ACT

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5303) to authorize the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to establish an awards program in honor of Charles ''Pete'' Conrad, astronaut and space scientist, for recognizing the discoveries made by amateur astronomers of asteroids with near-Earth orbit trajectories, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 5303

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Charles 'Pete' Conrad Astronomy Awards Act''.

SEC. 2. PETE CONRAD ASTRONOMY AWARD PROGRAM.

(a) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—The Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (hereafter referred to as the ''Administrator'') is authorized to establish the Charles ''Pete'' Conrad Astronomy Awards Program. The Administrator is authorized to contract with the Minor Planet Center of the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory (hereafter referred to as the ''Minor Planet Center'') to administer the program.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the program authorized by subsection (a) shall be to award outstanding amateur astronomers who make asteroid discoveries and to augment asteroid discovery efforts by the Government.

(c) AWARD CATEGORIES.—The award program authorized under subsection (a) shall consist of 3 categories of awards as follows:

(1) FIRST CATEGORY.—An award in the first category shall be presented annually to the amateur astronomer who, using amateur equipment only, discovers the largest absolute magnitude new asteroid having a near-Earth orbit during the preceding calendar year.

(2) SECOND CATEGORY.—An award in the second category shall be presented annually to an amateur astronomer for pre-discovery and recovery efforts, including—

(A) the discovery of asteroids by an amateur as a result of information produced by professional telescopes or as a result of the amateur's use of time on professional equipment; and

(B) efforts to locate newly discovered asteroids using old images and already discovered near-Earth orbit asteroids that have been ''lost''.

(3) THIRD CATEGORY.—An award in the third category shall be presented annually to the amateur astronomer, or professional not funded for optical astronomy, who provides the greatest service to update the minor planet catalogue. Eligible discoveries may be made by visual, photographic, or electronic means.

(d) GUIDELINES FOR AWARDING PRIZES.—General guidelines for the awarding of prizes are as follows:

(1) Prizes shall be awarded to the person or group with the greatest contributions as determined by the Minor Planet Center for the second and third categories.

(2) The award in the first category shall not be presented for years in which there are no eligible asteroid discoveries.

(3) All awards are reserved for United States citizens.

(4) The decisions of the Minor Planet Center in administering the award program are final.

(e) ELIGIBILITY.—Individuals are eligible to apply for the awards authorized under this section if the following conditions are satisfied:

(1) All applicants must demonstrate that they are not funded to use professional telescopes or observations and are acting solely in an amateur capacity.

(2) Government and professional astronomers associated with the near-Earth orbit asteroid project, as well as members of their immediate families, are not eligible for the awards.

(f) REGULATIONS.—The Administrator or the Minor Planet Center may prescribe such regulations as may be necessary to implement the program authorized by this section.

(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated $10,000 for each of fiscal years 2003 and 2004 to carry out this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) and the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. UDALL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 5303.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, one of my top priorities as chairman of the Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics has been addressing the threat posed by near-Earth objects, or NEOs. Our subcommittee will, in fact, hold a second hearing on this subject this Thursday. In our first hearing, we heard disturbing testimony about the potential for a close encounter or a collision between Earth and one of these objects that are meandering around space.

Mr. Speaker, three times this year alone, two astroids came close enough to the Earth to pass within the distance between the Moon and the Earth, and the other passed at a slightly greater distance. In astronomical terms, they missed our planet by a hair.

Given the vast number of astroids and comets that inhabit our Earth neighborhood, a greater effort for tracking and monitoring these objects is critical. This is why I rise in support of H.R. 5303, the Charles ''Pete'' Conrad Astronomy Awards Act.

This bill is intended to encourage amateur astronomers to discover new and track previously identified large astroids, particularly those that threaten a close approach to the Earth. The bill establishes an award for outstanding amateur astronomers who make astroid discoveries.

The act contains three categories of awards to be presented annually. The first category awards amateur astronomers who discover the largest new astroid having a near-Earth orbit. The second category awards amateur astronomers for discovery of astroids using the information derived from professional sources and locating newly discovered astroids. And the third category awards those who provide the greatest service to update the Minor Planet Center's catalog of known astroids. The funds for the annual awards shall be $2,000 per category.

This bill is a tribute to Pete Conrad for his tremendous contributions to aerospace and to his country over the last 4 decades. Pete Conrad was a pilot, explorer, and entrepreneur of the highest caliber. He commanded Apollo 12 and, during that mission, became the third man to walk on the Moon. He saw space as a place to get to, to explore, and to do business. Space exploration and commercialization is what he did. It was his job to explore the Moon. He then worked to develop new spacecraft and space transportation systems.

I might add that later in his career he lived in my congressional district and had a business in my congressional district, a space-related business of managing satellites. An interesting aside to this is that, as we are naming this bill after Pete Conrad and we are trying to encourage young astronomers, one aside of this is that a recent analysis of an orbiting object which was identified by an amateur astronomer suggests that this object, which no one could figure out what it was, they thought it might be some near-