

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 AWARDED 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 asteroids 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 asteroids 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 asteroids, particularly those that threaten a close approach to the Earth. The bill establishes an award for outstanding amateur astronomers who make asteroid discoveries.

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

Earth object or an asteroid or a comet, but it turns out that it probably is the remains of a Saturn 5 third-stage rocket, and it is most likely that this near-Earth object that has just been discovered by an amateur astronomer was part of Pete Conrad's Apollo mission. So this is a slight bit of irony as we discuss this issue today.

I find no better way to honor Pete Conrad than to establish an annual astronomer's award for the future asteroid discoveries in his name. He always wanted people to be looking up with a positive can-do American spirit. This was, perhaps, exemplified by his historic description upon landing on the Moon, and Pete's description, of course, was "whoopee."

Pete was a fun-loving man who did serious things. I remember having many discussions with him because he was a constituent and he came to my office discussing new ideas; and every time we would come up with an idea, he would go "super," and that is the kind of man Pete Conrad was. Of course, he was a man filled with energy, but everybody also knew the serious nature of the work that he was in. There is a serious threat of an asteroid causing great damage, if it would hit the Earth; and this is, of course, a very serious matter.

The idea of a catastrophic asteroid or comet impacting on the Earth has, of course, caught the attention of Hollywood and the mass media in the past. Nevertheless, it is vital for all of us to realize that this is not science fiction that we are talking about. The Earth's moon and many other planetary bodies in our solar system are covered with impact craters. Most people have heard, of course, of the "dinosaur extinction" theory, or perhaps have seen pictures of the meteor crater in Arizona; and I remember as a young boy being taken to that meteor crater in Arizona. But however remote is the possibility of a near-Earth object striking the Earth and causing a worldwide calamity, it may be remote; but the threat is real, nonetheless.

In a hearing that we had, it was described as perhaps you have no greater chance of being killed by a comet or an asteroid than getting a straight flush in Las Vegas. I remember after the witness said that, I remembered that I had gotten a straight flush in Las Vegas, a royal straight flush. And oh, my gosh. So we have to take this very seriously.

So this is no fantasy. We have to look at this as a potential threat, put it in perspective, and move forward. This bill does precisely that, and it is a first good step in cataloging these potential dangers. Indeed, the near-Earth object issue has given the topic of planetary defense a serious tone within many quarters of the space community. So far, NASA has surveyed 600 asteroids, but this is but a fraction of the total number of asteroids and objects in space. What needs to be done now is to fully understand the scope and the breadth of the near-Earth ob-

jects that may and could possibly hit the Earth and would be coming in our direction.

While the asteroids that killed the dinosaurs is estimated to have happened perhaps 100 million years ago or more, and it may only happen that often; smaller, yet still incredibly hazardous, asteroids impact happen much more frequently. For example, the destructive force of the 1908 asteroid that hit in Siberia was roughly equal to a 10-megaton blast of TNT. An asteroid hit South America in the 1930s; an asteroid struck central Asia in the 1940s and, in 1996, satellites detected high-altitude bursts over Greenland involving an asteroid which had the destructive force of 100 tons of TNT.

Ironically, if you look at an asteroid from the perspective of our national goals in space, they also offer opportunities as well as dangers. In terms of pure science, asteroids are geological time capsules from the era of when our solar system was formed. Even better, they are orbiting mines of metals, minerals, and other resources we can use to possibly build structures in space and carry things up or to and from Earth.

□ 2200

They are readily accessible compared to, for example, going to the moon or going to Mars, because the orbits of these asteroids may bring them closer to the Earth than the moon, and certainly than Mars.

In closing, asteroids deserve a lot more attention from the scientific community. The first step, however, is tracking all of the sizable near-Earth objects. That is what H.R. 5303 is all about. It is a modest step towards this goal.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I urge them to remember Pete Conrad. A few years ago, Pete died in a motorcycle accident. That is it. The man who went to the moon, rode there on the top of a large rocket, died when his motorcycle hit a drainage ditch on a mountain road.

But Pete would want us to keep moving on. Pete would not want us to look back, and he would not want us to look down. He would always want us to keep looking up. That is what this bill is all about.

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. UDALL of Colorado asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I, too, rise in support of H.R. 5303, the Charles "Pete" Conrad Astronomy Awards Act.

The bill which was introduced by the gentleman from California (Chairman ROHRBACHER) is a bill, as he so eloquently outlined for us, that has two important purposes. By establishing an awards program, it recognizes the im-

portant role amateur astronomers can play in detecting potentially hazardous Earth-crossing asteroids, and it honors the memory of a genuine American hero, Apollo astronaut Charles "Pete" Conrad, who led the second expedition to land humans on the moon.

I have to tell my colleague, the gentleman from California, that I enjoyed hearing more about Pete Conrad. He was a true American hero, and he lived life to the fullest. I thank the gentleman for sharing some of those stories and insights into what made Pete Conrad the man that he was.

The Committee on Science has focused attention on the importance of detecting and cataloging Earth orbit-crossing asteroids for more than a decade. I venture to say that my colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRBACHER), has led much of that work. I want to commend him for his attention to this important area.

The late Chairman George Brown held hearings on the topic early in the last decade, and Congress subsequently passed legislation directing NASA to establish a near-Earth object detection program. There is a growing scientific consensus that asteroid impacts have had profound effects on the history of our planet and may have helped lead to the demise of the dinosaurs.

I remember growing up in Arizona. In Arizona in the northern section is Meteor Crater. We were very familiar with that incredible event that led to a crater being created there that is over a mile wide, and quite an object to behold.

The gentleman mentioned later this week that the Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics will be holding a hearing on near-Earth objects. At that hearing the subcommittee will receive an update on the nature of the potential threat posed by Earth orbit-crossing asteroids, as well as the status of the international efforts to detect them.

As noted in H.R. 5303, amateur astronauts can play a useful role in detecting asteroids, and their efforts should be recognized.

Mr. Speaker, the bill before us today is a constructive measure, and I want to commend the gentleman from California (Chairman ROHRBACHER) for his initiatives.

I urge my colleagues to suspend the rules and pass this bill.

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

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, I would just say that this bill accomplishes a number of things that we have gone over today. I think perhaps the most important element of this legislation is that it is designed to try to enlist young people in America's space program in a very meaningful way. This bill will encourage young people, boys and girls in grade school and in scouting units and perhaps junior high schools and high

schools and colleges, to actually go out and to look into the heavens and get to know about the intricacies and the stories and the forces at work in this vast area around this planet and around this universe and around our solar system.

It will, I believe, go a long way to encouraging young people who, let us say if we inspire them with this bill, they might make a lifetime of contributions. We may be encouraging a young lady or a young man who later on would become the Pete Conrad of the next generation, because he or she would be so excited in understanding that they had seen something in space that perhaps no one else had seen, and strive towards that type of accomplishment.

I think that that is one element of this legislation that we should not overlook. It is very futuristic-oriented, but there are some real positive benefits today, as well.

One last note about George Brown, who was the chairman of the Committee on Science while I was a junior member of the Committee on Science. Let me say that for George Brown, this was an area of his interest. I forgot about that until I was just reminded by my friend, the gentleman from Colorado. George Brown took a personal interest in this.

I will have the Members know that George Brown was one of the most admired men here in Congress. He was such a fine person, and his memory to this day, I am glad the gentleman brought it up here in remembering Pete, these were the kinds of Americans that really made this country. George Brown was really kind of a real liberal guy compared to my political area in the spectrum, and Pete, I guess, was a little more conservative, on the conservative side of the spectrum, although he was nonpolitical. He was just a real professional in that business.

But I would say that what we are talking about when we talk about developing technologies and taking America into the future and creating this type of a vision, it is something that can unite a country and a people and has served to unite us in the past.

I believe that America's space program has not gotten the attention it deserves in these last, I would say, 15 years. That was something that George Brown was fighting for when he was alive. That is what he really wanted to do, and I am sorry that he was not able to fully succeed in reenergizing America's space program; and I do not think we have, either. We are all working on it.

Perhaps if we can attract the younger generation by offering them a chance like this to actually participate and to find some things in space, we should go out of our way to make sure that we do that. That is what this bill does. I am sorry, maybe I should have named it the Pete Conrad and the George Brown bill, but we remember

George tonight as we debate this, because I am sure he would be more than happy to be here tonight helping out, if he was alive and with us. I remember his passing, and I miss him very much.

So, Madam Speaker, I ask my fellow colleagues to support this legislation and to remember Pete Conrad and keep looking up, as we do.

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

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE,

Washington, DC September 30, 2002.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,

Speaker, 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. 5030, the "Charles 'Pete' Conrad Astronomy Awards Act." H.R. 5303 was referred to this Committee on July 26, 2002.

Sincerely,

SHERWOOD, L. BOEHLERT,

Chairman.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. HART). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRBACHER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5303, 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.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR GOALS AND IDEAS OF DAY OF TRIBUTE TO ALL FIREFIGHTERS

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 476) expressing support for the goals and ideas of a day of tribute to all firefighters who have died in the line of duty and recognizing the important mission of the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation in assisting family members to overcome the loss of their fallen heroes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 476

Whereas for over 350 years the Nation's firefighters have dedicated their lives to the safety of their fellow Americans;

Whereas throughout the Nation's history many firefighters have fallen in the line of duty, leaving behind family members and friends who have grieved their untimely losses;

Whereas these individuals served with pride and honor as volunteer and career firefighters;

Whereas until 1980 there was not a national tribute to honor these heroes for their acts of valor or a support system to help the families of these heroes rebuild their lives;

Whereas in 1992 Congress created the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation to lead a nationwide effort to remember the Nation's fallen firefighters through a variety of activities;

Whereas each year the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation hosts an annual memorial service to honor the memory of all firefighters who die in the line of duty and bring support and counseling to their families;

Whereas in 2002 the memorial service will take place the weekend of October 5 and 6;

Whereas 446 fallen firefighters, including firefighters from 34 States, will be honored in 2002; and

Whereas many of their family members are expected to attend the memorial service: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring). That Congress supports the goals and ideas of a day of tribute to all firefighters who have died in the line of duty and recognizes the important mission of the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation in assisting family members to overcome the loss of their fallen heroes.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material in the RECORD on H. Con. Res. 476.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, this important resolution that I cosponsored with my friend, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON), provides us with an opportunity to honor the commitment and bravery of those firefighters who gave their lives while in the line of duty during the year 2001. It also recognizes the important mission and contributions of the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation.

In 1992, Congress created the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation to lead a nationwide effort to remember our fallen heroes of these first responders. The Foundation has successfully met this challenge, providing a variety of supporting activities to surviving family members, including emotional support, awards, scholarships for surviving spouses and children, and the establishment of the national park in Emmitsburg, Maryland, to memorialize the fallen firefighters.

Madam Speaker, this Sunday the Foundation will honor 446 firefighters that lost their lives in the line of duty at an annual ceremony usually held in Emmitsburg, but this year held here in Washington. The Foundation is expecting over 20,000 people to attend this year's memorial weekend, a record number. Many of these people will be spouses and children of the 343 firefighters that perished September 11.

On that warm September morning in 2001, the firefighters of the New York