Young, and Person of the year in the Genome Technology All-Star Awards. Furthermore, in 2003 Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm nominated Gene Codes Corporation for the National Medal of Technology.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and all of my colleagues join me in congratulating Mr. Howard Cash and his employees on their accomplishments and in wishing them many more years of success and service. The selfless acts of this amazing group of people should be commended. Through their teamwork, dedication and perseverance, these men and women have truly shown the nation what it means to be a hero.

SUPPORT OF THE AMERICORPS PROGRAM

HON. MICHAEL E. CAPUANO

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 2003

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the AmeriCorps program and in support of an increase in funding for this important initiative. AmeriCorps engages our citizens in service to meet the nation's critical needs in the areas of education, public safety and environmental protection. AmeriCorps enlists 50,000 people nationwide, 1,400 of whom serve in Massachusetts. As you know, the program faces a serious financial crisis and without additional funding, 20,000 new service member positions will be cut and hundreds of programs will be at risk.

The other body has already added additional funding in its version of the Supplemental Appropriations bill. The House needs to act today to preserve this successful program. Without the full $100 million in additional funding, the service programs as well as the volunteers and communities that rely on them will be devastated. Teach for America and Habitat for Humanity will see a dramatic decrease in participants and the infrastructure of many programs in my district including, Just a Start, City Year and Youth Build, do not have the resources to sustain any cut to their budget. These important programs respond to the needs of communities and my district relies heavily on these AmeriCorps services. AmeriCorps members tutor children, serve as mentors for teens, renovate low-income housing, immunize children against preventable diseases, and restore parks. They work with community leaders and provide services to Head Start children, high school students and senior citizens. With a loss of funding, communities will no longer be able to provide these essential services.

While I remain concerned with the recent accounting errors and mismanagement by the Corporation for National and Community Service's executives, I do not believe we should punish thousands of volunteers for the mistakes made by the Corporation's leadership. These destructive cuts come at a time when our nation is depending on AmeriCorps service members to meet critical education, safety, homeland security and health needs. My district counts on AmeriCorps volunteers and we should be proud of their service. Let's fully fund AmeriCorps.

FIRST RESPONDERS ENHANCEMENT ACT

HON. DARLENE HOOLEY

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 2003

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, protecting the security of our communities requires that we have an adequate number of first responders, who form our first line of response to any terrorist attacks. But right now, there are law enforcement agencies all over the country who are being forced to turn back federal grants to hire additional law enforcement officers because they do not have the money to cover the local requirement.

During a time when our nation seems its most vulnerable and under its greatest threat, we have the responsibility to ensure that everyday Americans are safe and secure. We must protect and defend our cities at home during these troubling times by investing in first responders and providing local law enforcement with adequate manpower and resources to prevent any future attacks.

The Universal Hiring Program (UHP) is one of several programs developed by COPS to increase the number of officers on the beat. This program enables interested agencies to supplement their current sworn forces through three-year federal grants. Under current law, these grants cover up to 75 percent of the approved entry-level salary and benefits of each newly hired additional officer position over three years. There is a maximum of $75,000 per officer over the three-year grant period. A minimum 25 percent local match is required.

Although current law does allow for waivers of the local matching requirement may be requested under UHP due to extreme fiscal hardship, these waivers are rarely granted. One city in my district, Salem, Oregon, has had to decline four COPS Universal Hiring Program grants this year because they were unable to come up with the matching funds required by the program. Considering the budget crisis is resulting in police layoffs, this money is needed now more than ever to ensure that police agencies have the first responders needed to keep our communities safe and protect our homeland.

I am introducing legislation that would provide for a temporary two-year waiver of the local matching requirement for the Universal Hiring Program COPS grants. The maximum contribution of the federal government would also be raised to $150,000 over the three-year grant program. Finally, my legislation would waive the retention requirement during this two year waiver, so that law enforcement jurisdictions can hire officers without worrying about how they will pay them once the money runs out.

This legislation would provide law enforcement agencies with the resources they need to meet federal homeland security mandates during this time of increased threats and budget crises. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the First Responders Enhancement Act.

SCHOOL READINESS ACT OF 2003

SPEECH OF

HON. RAHM EMANUEL

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 24, 2003

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2210) to authorize the Head Start Act to improve the school readiness of disadvantaged children, and for other purposes:

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Chairman, I rise to address the proposed overhaul of the Head Start program. Created in 1965 as part of President Johnson's ''Great Society,'' Head Start is a program that successfully extends educational opportunity to disadvantaged children across the country.

Recently, the President called into question the successes of this program, saying that Head Start is merely, ''working OK.'' While I agree with the President that there is always room for improvement, I think he needs to take a closer look at the remarkable track record of this program.

Head Start has a long and proven record of success: Head Start narrows the achievement gap between disadvantaged and other children; Head Start children show IQ gains compared to children who are not in the program; and Head Start children are much more likely to graduate from high school and college.

Head Start has effectively opened doors and improved the quality of life for 20 million kids over its 38-year history.

Yet, today we consider a bill that threatens to cripple this successful program. I would like to take this opportunity to remind my colleagues across the aisle that a vow to ''Leave No Child Behind'' means that you can't turn your back on those who need your support the most.

By creating a system of block grants, this bill means that there is no longer a guarantee that federal money will go towards Head Start programs, leaving the burden on the states. In these times of economic hardship, there is a very real possibility that these funds could be diverted to fill holes in tight state budgets, leaving Head Start and our children with nothing.

A recent survey of state funded preschool programs confirms these fears. This study found that when states managed their own preschool programs they frequently failed to provide the same level of services as those required by Head Start.

I would like to applaud President Bush for his call to improve the quality of teaching in Head Start programs by putting a qualified teacher in every classroom.

But I would also remind the President that this is a meaningless promise unless he and the Congress can supply the estimated $2 billion needed to attract and pay more highly qualified teachers. The last thing the states need now is another unfunded mandate.

Head Start is one of our nation's great success stories. It has a proven track record, and what we should be doing is expanding it and giving it stronger support, not the opposite.

For the sake of the one million kids nationwide, 42,000 Illinoisans and 469 children in my district who depend on Head Start annually, I urge you to vote ''no'' on the bill.