

awareness about hunger and the problems faced by millions of people who are having trouble feeding themselves and their families. Today, thousands of hunger relief advocates and volunteers will work with food banks, food-rescue organizations and agencies to help raise awareness about hunger in their communities.

Madam Speaker, the statistics are astounding. Nearly 35 million Americans go hungry each year. 13 million are children. In 2002, over 34 million Americans and 7.2 million American families lived in poverty. The problem of hunger is getting worse, not better. The percentage of households experiencing food insecurity increased from 10.7 percent in 2001 to 11.1 percent in 2002.

Hunger and food insecurity don't fit the old stereotypes of the poor and uneducated. Not only are more working families relying on food banks for help to feed their children, but over 62 percent of recipients of food from food banks have at least a high school diploma. This is intolerable. As a nation, we should not and can not continue to have lower-income families struggle to earn enough money to put food on the table. Poverty and hunger are directly related—if you don't have money, you can't buy food. It's that simple.

This year's theme for Hunger Awareness Day is "One Big Table." Hundreds of events are taking place around the country, and I would like to highlight one taking place in my district.

Today, the Worcester County Food Bank is holding a "Picnic and Food Drive Kick-Off." The Worcester County Food Bank, together with Sovereign Bank, Shaw's Supermarkets, the Worcester Telegram & Gazette, WSRS/WTAG Radio and Curry Printing, are kicking off the 2nd Annual County-wide Grocery Bag Food Drive. Held at the Worcester County Food Bank, the event includes food drive sponsors, partner agencies, volunteers and staff enjoying a picnic lunch prepared by Community Kitchen student chefs. It will feature on-air radio interviews with the sponsors and agencies to raise awareness of the local hunger problem and promote the upcoming food drive.

Madam Speaker, National Hunger Awareness Day is just one day out of the year when individuals, companies, organizations, and faith-based groups can participate, but the reality is that hunger is a political problem. There is no justification for hunger to exist in this country, or around the world, for that matter. We have the food, the money, and the manpower to end hunger in the United States. What we can't seem to find is the political will to do so.

Earlier this year, this body approved bipartisan legislation reauthorizing the child nutrition programs. It's a good bill that, sadly, doesn't go far enough. For example, over 22 million low-income children participate in the free and reduced-price school breakfast and lunch program. However, only 4.7 million children receive these same lunches in the summer—a 78.8 percent drop in participation. And it's not for lack of need. No, Madam Speaker, it's from the lack of commitment by this Congress.

In another example, Madam Speaker, the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act rightly ends the requirement that many families must pay a reduced price for breakfasts and lunches. But instead of ending this required payment now, the House-passed bill phases it out over five years.

Madam Speaker, we must do better. The Education and Workforce Committee crafted a good, bipartisan bill. It's a good start, but it must be improved. The programs to end hunger are in place. They don't need to be recreated; they just need to be fully funded. The American people deserve better, and, on National Hunger Awareness Day, I urge my colleagues in the other body to pass a broader, more inclusive Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act.

Madam Speaker, let me close by commending America's Second Harvest, the food banks around the country, the corporations, faith-based groups, volunteers and other anti-hunger advocates for their hard work and dedication to end hunger in the U.S. Today is National Hunger Awareness Day. But these individuals and groups work to end hunger every day. Food bank participation continues to rise. The need for anti-hunger programs is clear. I, for one, am grateful for America's Second Harvest's commitment to ending hunger in America. I urge my colleagues to make every day Hunger Awareness Day, to commit themselves to ending hunger in any way they can, and to find the political will to end the scourge of hunger here at home and around the world.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. INSLEE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CULBERSON. 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 on the subject of my Special Order today.

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

There was no objection.

ADVANCING FRONTIERS OF SCIENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CULBERSON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to appear here on the House floor today to join with the majority leader and Members of Congress who will be with me here today to express our strong support for maintaining America's leadership role in the ex-

ploration of outer space, and our leadership role in advancing the frontiers of science, to demonstrate through the examples we will give today and the presentations that we have of the many, many tangible ways in which the mission of NASA, our leadership in the exploration of space, and America's leadership in the advancement of the frontiers of science have touched and changed the lives of Americans individually, and advanced the freedom and prosperity of the Nation and the world as a whole.

Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to recognize the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT).

Mr. CALVERT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to support NASA's new vision for our continued exploration of the universe. Forty-three years ago, President John F. Kennedy laid out a vision of space exploration that became a reality 8 years later when Neil Armstrong stepped onto the Moon. With the Apollo missions, America led the world in space exploration and propelled decades of technological and biological research that continue to benefit us to this day.

Four decades later, President George W. Bush offered the Nation another bold and challenging vision of space exploration that will keep America economically, technologically, and militarily strong. Congress needs to support this mission so we can work with NASA to achieve the goal of returning Americans to the Moon and sending astronauts to Mars and beyond.

NASA's new space exploration vision comes at a time when America faces increased competition from other nations. Aside from Russia, the People's Republic of China now has an ambitious space flight program. China has already launched a spacecraft into low-Earth orbit and is intent on developing a manned aerospace and lunar exploration program.

We need to return the Space Shuttle to flight, complete the International Space Station, and extend our presence across the solar system by developing a new crew exploration vehicle.

Space exploration not only advances the Nation's vision. It provides jobs, growth and opportunity to millions of American workers. Being the leader in space flight also makes America the leader in commercial research and development. The end of the last century witnessed rapid advances in science and technology that could only have been accomplished by astronauts conducting research in space. Microgravity experiments on the Space Shuttle and the International Space Station led to the creation of next-generation silicon computer chips and laser communication. Experiments on the Shuttle in the early 1990s fostered the development of a manufacturing process known as liquid phase centering that is now being used to produce over \$20 billion worth of products in the United States.

Human space flight stimulates our economy and increases our global competitiveness. A new vision must be launched if we are to maintain our lead in space and ensure our viability as a Nation for decades to come. Like it or not, other nations are sending their citizens into space and seeking to reap the rewards of those journeys.

In an ever-changing and more unpredictable world, we cannot afford to cede our leadership role in space. We have come too far and paid too high a price to turn our backs on the future. Supporting NASA's new space exploration vision and a reasonable investment in NASA's budget this year will keep us on a path toward our nation's destiny.

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT). It is important that he mentioned that the nation of China has an aggressive space program. They have set a goal of going to the Moon. It reminds me that centuries ago, the Chinese had one of the greatest fleets in the world. The emperor who built that great fleet, composed of ships, I understand, that any one of which could have sailed up the Thames River prior to Columbus' discovery of America and conquered all of England because of their superiority in fire power and the maneuverability of the ships. That emperor who built that fleet died, and the succeeding emperor decided to keep China focused on itself and burned the fleet at the docks in order to keep the Chinese focused inward. As a result, the Chinese lost that great advantage they had in the exploration of the seas, and ceded not only control, they basically lagged far behind the rest of the world in technology, exploration, and freedom.

Mr. CALVERT. The gentleman is correct. Not only did the aforementioned emperor burn the fleet, if I remember correctly, he was the one that first ordered the construction of the wall to insulate themselves from the rest of the world. That insulation stayed for some centuries, and they put themselves way back in the pecking order of the world. The Chinese now are trying to catch up. They are putting a lot of their national treasure and expertise into outer space.

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Speaker, the Chinese recognize the importance of reaching outward to the nations in not only exploration, but of the tremendous technological benefits to the nation as a whole, and of commerce with other nations. The American people understand that the advancement of exploration of space, the advancement of the frontiers of science bring benefits to us individually and promote the cause of freedom.

Mr. CALVERT. In the 1950s, it was the Russians that first went into outer space with Sputnik. That launched a new generation of young people to go into engineering, science, and technology. Those folks were the backbone of what was the Gemini and the Apollo

programs. It was a great part of our history as we went to the Moon and did some wonderful things in outer space.

As the gentleman well knows, in recent times we have starved our science budget. We are not doing as good a job as we should be doing in space exploration, which helped us bring along the personal computer, the types of equipment that we see in our cars that can tell us where we are at any moment, all of these amazing technologies that we just count on. The gentleman is correct, if we do not continue this investment, we are going to be behind in the world, and other nations are going to be ahead of us.

Mr. CULBERSON. It is truly only the Federal Government with the resources we have available to pour into scientific research, much of the work that scientists do, much of the work that NASA does, the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, the magnificent discoveries that have been made at JPL in California, a part of NASA, have been as a result of the dedicated support of this Congress and of the United States to put the resources, the commitment necessary to run down a lot of the rabbit trails that are necessary. There may be some dead ends there. There are going to be failures and setbacks. Exploration is dangerous; it is hard. Pushing the frontiers of knowledge is hard and requires a commitment that each and every American shares in their heart and they are counting on us to be there, to give the people at NASA, at JPL, and our scientists the support that they need.

Mr. CALVERT. We are a Nation of pioneers. We are a Nation that explores the unknown, and science gives us the ability to go to outer space. Really, outside of the oceans of our Earth, which we continue to explore, space is the next frontier that has unlimited exploration and unlimited discoveries that can help us on this Earth and make us literally the leader of the world for many centuries to come.

Mr. CULBERSON. I know the gentleman has seen partnerships in California, as we have in Texas, between NASA and our universities. The research that is done between NASA and our universities has yielded tangible benefits in medical technology and in so many different ways.

We are going to be on this floor talking about those benefits which have touched the lives of individual Americans, particularly in the area of medicine, which the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WELDON) who has just joined us, is so familiar with.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WELDON) to join us in this colloquy to lay out the benefits individually and collectively as a Nation that have come to us from the exploration of space and the work that NASA is doing.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be here and join the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CULBERSON) and the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT).

Space is important to the future of our country. We are a Nation of pioneers. We are a Nation of explorers. We lead the world in science and technology. Everywhere I go as I travel around the United States, I see images at schools, at universities, and in airports of our space program. Frequently I will see pictures or images of the Shuttle or of our Apollo pioneers; and the reason for that I think is obvious. It is in our blood, it is in our nature.

Indeed, the gentleman mentioned I am a physician and practiced medicine for 15 years before I was elected, and I still see patients once a month at the VA clinic in my congressional district; and I always marvel at the daily application of space technology, spin-off technologies directly from our Shuttle program, from our Apollo program, even from some of our unmanned probes.

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I have a contractor in my congressional district who has taken the NASA coolant technology used to cool the systems in these planetary probes that we use and has placed it in car and home air conditioner units and believes he can improve the efficiency of these air conditioner units by as much as 15 percent. The potential savings in electricity demand from a product like that, if it is able to yield its full potential, could be in the order of hundreds of billions of dollars over a period of just a few years. As a matter of fact, if this product proved to be as useful as he believes it may be, it could potentially pay for the space program several times over.

Of course, as I was referring to earlier, as a physician we use space technology in many of our imaging modalities, like MRI scanning and CAT scanning. We use space technology in a lot of our pacemaker capabilities, these implantable defibrillators. Indeed, even the prosthetic devices, such as artificial limbs, some of the materials science that goes into those devices are actually spin-off benefits of the space program.

So I rise today to join my colleagues in speaking out in support of the national space initiative that I think President Bush so eloquently laid out in his speech at NASA headquarters several months ago.

It is really critical that we move ahead with this agenda, because one of the problems that I found within NASA from virtually the moment of my arrival is there was not really a clear agenda of where NASA was going. NASA had a very clear agenda when John F. Kennedy originally articulated it, I believe he was at Rice University, if I am not mistaken, in his famous speech, "We go to the moon not because it is easy, but because it is hard," and NASA had a clear agenda of getting a man on the moon. But since that time it has been a little unclear.

Now the President has laid out very clearly an agenda, and I want to underscore for all my colleagues in the

House of Representatives and the other body, this is an affordable agenda. Some people have ridiculed this as costing \$1 trillion and being impossible to do.

But with the tragic loss of *Columbia*, I think it has been clear and obvious to everyone that, for our manned space flight program to continue, we need to come up with a replacement for the space shuttle in the years ahead. We cannot continue to rely on this system. It has been a great system, but it is down now, it could go down again in the future, and when it goes down, we are dependent on the Russians for the support and service of the Space Station.

So the President has laid out I think an affordable initiative to come up with a replacement vehicle for the space shuttle, but this vehicle would not just go and from low earth orbit, like the space shuttle does, but it would have the flexibility to be able to go back to the moon, to go on to Mars, and it can support the Space Station in the years ahead.

Importantly included in this vision as well is the priority of reorienting the Space Station research. There have been a lot of people who have questioned what the purpose of the Space Station is, and the President has clearly put forward in his national initiative the vision of saying that we are going to focus the Space Station research on answering a lot of these questions about biological sciences in terms of how people live and work in space.

As a physician, I know a fair amount about this. If you look at people who go up to the Space Station and spend 3 or 6 months there, when they come back, they frequently have problems standing up in the gravitational field of the Earth, they have problems with anemia, there are problems with bone loss, there are problems with blood loss, actually, something called the hemoglobin hematocrit decline in the setting of a prolonged space exposure. So we need a better understanding of that if we are ever to go to Mars and if we are ever to go beyond Mars and if we are going to create a permanent presence in space, such as on the moon.

Now, the President's vision does call for going back to the moon and going on to Mars, but he lays out an initiative I think in a way that calls for international cooperation, so that this would be something that is affordable.

The most important thing that I want to say tonight in this dialogue with my colleagues here is that some Members of the House of Representatives have criticized the budget request from the President as it relates to NASA and feel that we should not go to Mars, and therefore we need to reduce this budget request. But I just want to underscore the bulk of the President's request is to get the shuttle flying again and to complete construction of the Space Station.

To say we want to cut NASA now is to basically to say, well, we do not

want to fly the shuttle again, and we do not want to complete the Space Station construction. I do not think in any way there is a majority of colleagues here in this body who are saying that we do not want to do those things.

So we need to put the resources behind NASA, I think, so that they can move ahead with getting the shuttle flying again safely and getting the Space Station completed. We have international partners.

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Speaker, reclaiming my time, if we could have a little colloquy, it is important to point out to the American people and to the fellow Members of Congress that the President's vision which he laid out so eloquently and so clearly for the future of space exploration in this Nation is simply moving money largely within NASA's budget, preprogramming \$11 billion within NASA's existing, projected budget to achieve this vision. The vision itself only calls for an additional \$1 billion over the next 5 years in spending above the fiscal year 2004 budget.

It is important to keep in perspective, as the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WELDON) so correctly pointed out, that at the time of Apollo, the Nation committed 4 percent of our budget, 4 percent of the Federal budget, was committed to the Apollo program. Yet today what the President is asking for is simply less than 1 percent of the Federal budget to be invested in the exploration of space and pushing the frontiers of science.

Mr. CALVERT. As my friend from Texas understands also, this is about transformation. This is a time of transformation in the military. It is a time of transformation for NASA, to become refocused upon their primary mission; and their primary mission, I think we all agree, is the exploration of outer space. This is a great opportunity for this country to once again get back to our national dream of space exploration.

As the gentleman from Florida mentioned, whether or not we can afford this, I would say we cannot afford not to. The type of technologies that we have been able to share with this country that have come out of the space program are irreplaceable.

Look what we are doing with energy. The gentleman mentioned energy. Solar. We look at solar as a renewable resource. I cannot think of many folks that have done more work on solar research than NASA, because of what we use solar for today, to help get the energy that is necessary to keep the station going.

The fuel cell technology really started with NASA. Hydrogen technology, fuel cell technology, that gives us a clean source of energy, some people really believe the next generation of energy that will sustain this country as we move away from an oil-based economy.

Communications, where would we be without our cell phones? Sometimes I

wonder. But it is those satellites up there that keep us communicating with one another.

All of the types of technologies that come from this fantastic investment, and I say "investment" in the true sense, the return on this, I do not think of many things we do in government that we get a higher return than what we do with the money we put in this.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. If the gentleman would yield on that, there is another interesting aspect of that, and I think it is really an unmeasurable return on the investment.

One of the things I have been most intrigued by when I talk to teachers, and I have had conversations with teachers from all over this country on this issue, as many people know, we have a problem with not enough young people going into math and sciences. If you go to many of our colleges and universities, the bulk of the graduate students are foreigners.

If you talk to our teachers in our schools, they will tell you the thing that gets people most motivated to study math and science, young kids, what excites young kids in the third grade and the fourth grade and the sixth grade to really hunker down and study math and science, more than any other subject, it is the space program. When you take the science teaching, math teaching, and apply it to the space program, the teachers tell me it gets them excited.

How do you put a price tag on that? How do you measure that? You are talking about our competitiveness. Where are we creating jobs? We are creating jobs in the technology arenas. But if we are losing ground on technology because our young people are not studying those fields, then that can affect our whole economy. And how do you put a dollar value on that?

I think the gentleman is absolutely right, and he said it best, we cannot afford not to invest in NASA. It is one of the wisest investments that we can make in this body, because it is an investment in our future.

I would be very happy to yield to the majority leader. I am so pleased for the support the gentleman has supplied NASA over the years. It is great to have the gentleman with us.

Mr. DELAY. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman yielding, and I really appreciate his holding this special order, because it is so important to continue this debate on the President's vision, and this is a perfect way to do that, and I appreciate the gentleman from California and the gentleman from Texas and their comments.

If I could just make my comments, for four decades the men and women of NASA have done the impossible. Whether conquering Earth's gravity, or shooting the moon, or studying the vast expanse of space or just beyond our atmosphere, NASA has taken on every challenge put to it and succeeded. We owe them our thanks, and we owe them our loyalty.

But as valuable as the research NASA has conducted over the last two decades has been, both in its application in space and here on Earth, the time has come for NASA to once again dare mighty things. The President's vision asks them to do just that, to return the space shuttle to flight, to complete the International Space Station, to return to the moon and ultimately launch a manned mission to Mars.

The President's vision is bold, practical and consistent with America's tradition of leading mankind's journey into the unknown.

Now the only way this Nation could in good conscience walk away from our historic legacy in space, from the legacy of John Glenn, Allen Sheppard and Neil Armstrong, is if we determine that space exploration is no longer worth it, not worth America's expense, not worth America's risk, not worth America's time.

If the time had indeed come when mankind, and specifically the United States of America, had gotten out of space everything it could hope for, then I would be the first in line to declare victory over the unknown and move on to something else. But, of course, nothing of the sort is true. America's space program is not merely a choice but a mission in our national interests and in the interests of all nations.

Not worth the expense? Consider the value of the satellite technologies that we use to communicate which have become the basis of our national defense of this Nation; of touch tone and cellular phones; of global positioning technologies now employed in Iraq and Afghanistan to win the war on terror; of magnetic resonance imaging, which has revolutionized medicine; the automatic insulin pump, which has saved and improved millions of lives; or the portable X-ray machine.

Madam Speaker, our economy, our national defense and our ability to communicate with each other and the world, for that matter, would simply be unrecognizable to us without the expensive space travel paid for by previous generations of Americans.

Not worth the risk? Exploration, mankind's inherent curiosity and will to discover the truth, not worth the risk? Such thinking, Madam Speaker would have left Columbus in Spain, Magellan in Portugal and Lewis and Clark in Virginia.

The history of mankind is not a matter of advance despite the risks, but advance, in a sense, because of them. Of course, space travel is risky. It is the most dangerous enterprise in history but also the greatest adventure.

If space travel were easy, everyone would be doing it. We are lucky, lucky despite the hardships and tragedies that we have endured, to have been chosen by history and providence to live in a nation with the collective wealth and courage to meet such harrowing challenges, to live such an

adventure. And no one knows this more than our astronauts, all of whom would gladly take on those challenges, and many more, for the opportunity to serve this Nation and all mankind in this endeavor.

Now I concede that space travel is risky, but so is anything worth doing, and the risk involved in turning our backs on space far outweigh the risk of advancing further into it, which is why questions about the President's timing are the least viable. We are at war, we are told, and facing a budget crunch. Come back when times are rosier, and then we can look at space again.

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But, Madam Speaker, the President's assertion that the time is now for America to reestablish its space program is not only correct; it is urgent. We are at war, just as we were when Neil Armstrong walked on the Moon.

The budget is constricted; but for 4 decades, America's mission in space has been one of the surest economic investments the Federal Government has made. Rocketry, satellite technology, cellular telephony, the MRI, all of these were direct benefits of the space program, solutions to problems found in space. And they are just the tip of the iceberg of the knowledge that we have discovered and a subtle foreshadowing of what we will learn.

There is simply no telling what new innovations await our Nation, our economy, our health care, our national defense, when NASA's engineers begin staring down even larger problems of long-term space flight. What will a fully constructed international space station discover during its intensive research on bioastronautics? What engineering and medical miracles will be created to compensate for an astronaut's prolonged exposure to radiation and microgravity? What new materials and devices will be forged in the development of a new crew exploration vehicle? And what applications will these discoveries have to our life on Earth?

We cannot answer these questions without first having the courage to allow our scientists and engineers at NASA to have at them.

The President's vision is a bold challenge to each and every one of them, and to each and every one of us, to do it again. And when they do, Americans of all ages, from seniors who remember a time before NASA, to children who never saw an Apollo landing, will come together one night in the future, look up in the sky, see that tiny red dot 50 million miles away, and know that somewhere up there Americans are doing the impossible.

The President's vision is a vision of that night. It is a vision that will fulfill the promise of the Mercury Seven and inspire the dreams of their grandchildren.

Generations of scientists and engineers were drawn into their fields by the awesome images and historic competition of the space race. It is time to

reignite the torch of knowledge and push deeper into the darkness. Thousands of years to get to Kitty Hawk, and only 66 more to get to the Moon.

The time has come, Madam Speaker, for our Nation to strap itself in for the next leg of that journey. We have come too far as a Nation and as a world to turn back now. Even as we fight to liberate mankind from the oppression of tyranny and terror, we have an opportunity, and I believe a calling, to liberate mankind from the ancient oppression of ignorance of the unknown that continues to hold us back.

The answers are a long and difficult road away, but despite the costs, risks, and hardship, we can get there from here. Back to space, back to the Moon, and on to Mars.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the majority leader, who has so eloquently and forcefully set forth the benefits in so many ways to this Nation of the President's vision for outer space, of space exploration. Because the best evidence I could give in support of what the leader has just told us of the value of what the President has set forth is to quote Thomas Jefferson in his charge to the Lewis and Clark expedition. Two hundred years ago, President Jefferson set forth very simply to Meriwether Lewis: "The object of your mission is to explore the Missouri River." And that simple charge, that simple direction from the President of the United States to explore the Missouri River has led to the expansion of the United States to the Pacific Ocean and the innumerable benefits that flowed from that.

Madam Speaker, I am happy to yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT).

Mr. CALVERT. Madam Speaker, just in closing, I would like to point out that in this very building, we were in a conflict between the States and the President at that time. Abraham Lincoln made a determination that the business of the Union would go forward, and the dome of this very building was completed during the Civil War. The business of this Nation moves forward. As a matter of fact, the underpinnings of the great railroad that bound this Nation together was done while Abraham Lincoln was President of the United States while the Civil War was raging across this Nation, but the business of the Republic moved forward.

So to say that we should stop the exploration of outer space for whatever reason is not a good reason, and I thank the gentleman for holding this Special Order.

Mr. CULBERSON. Madam Speaker, as the majority leader said, the exploration of space is hard; it is a difficult task. Pushing the frontiers of science forward is also. The support of NASA is a cause that knows no political boundaries.

I am pleased to be joined by my colleague and neighbor, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE); and I

am pleased to yield to her at this time so that she may express in her own words her view of the importance of the mission of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's mission to maintain America's leadership role in outer space.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman from Texas, and I am very glad that it is acknowledged that the idea of exploration, the idea of being a pioneer is not only Texan, but it is American and it is bipartisan. So I am delighted to be able to join my colleague not only in support, but also in raising the probative questions that need to be raised as we look at the vision that has been put forward in going to Mars and to the Moon.

First of all, it is exciting to see the amount of energy that has been generated by many of our advocates and supporters, particularly the entities that are engaged in research and space exploration as to the kind of thinking that is going on, the kind of vehicle that would be appropriate. I believe that it is important to note that our astronauts class is still one of the most sought-after opportunities, educational opportunities. In fact, I just met 2 days ago the first Puerto Rican astronaut who will be joining us in Houston sometime in August. That class was recently graduated, and I believe there are 600 or more that applied and only a few were able to obtain that particular high honor.

So I come to the floor today to indicate that the mission as evidenced by the administration is a bold new mission for NASA and that it only ensures a new life. I know that we are compelled to think about the issues of the day, whether it is Iraq or Afghanistan, whether or not it is the choices we have to make in the appropriations and budgeting process; but I have confidence in the American will and desire and in this Congress. I for one would hope that we would recognize that choices have to be made that require us to invest. As my good friend knows, we may have different opinions on tax cuts and other uses of our resources, but I hope that we will not couch this effort as borrowing from Peter to pay Paul. I hope that we will recognize that these goals are particularly important, as it provides opportunities for our young people in math and science, as it provides opportunity for reaching man's limits, and as well, it provides opportunity for the research that has been helpful to us in the past.

When I came to this Congress, we found it very difficult to pass the NASA budget, but we began to turn our attention to the American people. We began to educate and visit the schools and highlight the value of NASA and space exploration, and I like to call it the National Aeronautics Space Agency; but, more importantly, most of us know Johnson or Marshall or Kennedy, anyone who has had the privilege of seeing a launching of one of our very

fine human space shuttles, they know the excitement and the exhilaration that comes with it, but more importantly, they know how it impacts our lives. We have seen a decided improvement in cancer research, HIV research, stroke and heart disease because of our ability to go into space.

We also know that man has pushed our own human limits, men and women, because of the ability to live on the international space station. The international space station has been one of our greatest accomplishments where people are actually living in space. So the idea of stopping off at the international space station and then going on to the Moon and Mars is something that is both understandable and achievable.

Might I say to my good friends, however, that there are certain elements that we must have a bipartisan expression of, and that, of course, is the idea of making sure that we have the resources to invest in this plan. We need to have the administration delineate for us the precise dollars that we will utilize; and, of course, we want to know, which is one of the difficulties, I say to my good friend from Texas, that we are facing is people have their advocacies, whether it is basic research, whether it is unmanned space exploration. We have to ensure that NASA remains whole and that again, we do not implode the department and take from them, but to foster the space exploration, so we must work together in a bipartisan way to ensure that.

The other thing that we must do is the question of safety. I am looking forward to very productive hearings, bipartisan hearings, that will make sure that we have the T's crossed and the I's dotted, and that we look in a combined way at space safety legislation to make sure that when we send people into space that we can assure the American people that every single I is dotted and every T is crossed.

I know that the commission that has just met in New York is going to give us a 10-point report. I hope that we do not kill the messenger, that we will look at this 10-point report and be able to go down one by one and step by step to ensure that it is followed.

Let me also say that the people going to space are heroes. How many of us remember John Glenn, growing up with him? We do not want to tell our ages, but how many remember growing up with John Glenn? How many remember the challenge that President John Fitzgerald Kennedy gave to us: the stars in our eyes, the stars in the eyes of children to come? How many of us have ever had the chance to meet an astronaut, as I have, having them come into my congressional district? And do my colleagues know that at my annual Christmas party, the astronauts are more famous and popular than Santa Claus? How about that? So we realize that they can provide an impetus of excitement.

Might I just say that I want to thank you and a number of Members who pro-

vided me with 320 cosponsors, as an aside, to honor those heroes who went into space on Columbia Seven. Let their heroism be not a sign or a statement to close down the space exploration; but as their family members have said, let it be a challenge, if you will, to continue it in a more safe and positive way.

I look forward to us generating the kind of space vehicle and the kind of space power, if you will, of the kinds of humans trained to go to Mars and to the Moon, to do it in a unique and very special way. But I remind my colleagues that we must as well work with the administration on an agenda that will give us the kind of roadmap that will take us through this process.

So I am delighted to be able to come not only to provide support, but to ask the hard questions and to make sure that most are aware that we are going to ask the hard questions of budget, of investment, making sure that we do not take from needed programs that I know that the gentleman supports along with many others, such as housing and education and health care, but that this investment is one that puts America just where it needs to be: at the front of the line, on the cutting-edge of science and research that will ultimately open not only the doors and minds of future mathematicians and scientists, but also it will open the doors to physicians and cardiologists and those dealing with kidney disease, because we will be able to do the kind of research there that may open the doors to better health for America, as well as a better quality of life for all Americans.

I thank the distinguished gentleman for holding this Special Order, and I hope that when we see each other next, we will be working on a definitive space exploration program that all of our colleagues will find virtue in and will be able to support in a bipartisan manner.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for calling this hearing to discuss the future of NASA's mission in space, and to understand how the President's new budget fits in that picture. NASA is at a great turning point. Our work here today, and in the upcoming months, could determine if in a century, our kids' kids' kids will be exploring Mars, or if they will be walking through a museum, learning about how long, long ago Americans used to boldly explore the heavens.

I would like to join you in welcoming Dr. Marburger and Administrator O'Keefe. I commend them for their work so far, in keeping us informed on the President's new initiative for human-space flight. Successfully crafting the new mission for NASA will take unprecedented cooperation between the Administration, and Congress, and the private sector, and the American people. I thank the gentlemen for coming today. We must keep this dialogue going.

First, I would like to commend the President for articulating his bold new vision for NASA's future. We have much work to do to ensure that we fine tune that plan, to make sure it fits our goals scientifically, meets our responsibilities, and works within our means in a tough

economy. Unfortunately, we are in a time of tight budgets, due to horrible financial mismanagement by this Administration over the past three years. But space exploration is not about FY05, or even about 5-year projections. It is about an ongoing quest that captures people's minds and hearts, drives our technology to the cutting edge, and pushes our economy forward. We cannot afford to abandon progress in space every time we fall on challenging times. If we allow NASA to follow a boom-bust cycle, it will never have a committed workforce with the expertise and experience necessary to do great things.

So, I feel we must move forward boldly, but not so boldly that we allow the program to collapse under its own weight. We must be safe, and we must be prudent in making methodical steps, to the moon, to Mars, and beyond.

For example, it is exciting to think of building the next generation vehicle, and to retire the space shuttle. But if we are on schedule to decommission the shuttle in 2010, and then fall behind on the schedule to replace it due to shifting budget priorities, we could be caught in a very tough place. We may lose access to the International Space Station that we have invested so much in. We could start losing quality NASA employees to the private sector or to retirement, and lose their institutional memory as well. That could make it very difficult to restart a viable program in the future.

Of course, I am especially interested in how this new mission will affect Johnson Space Center near my district in Houston. As the hub of the manned space program over the years, Houston has so much to offer this new mission. However, instability as old programs give way to new, could be detrimental to the space community and the city as a whole.

And finally I am concerned about safety. Since the *Columbia* tragedy, we are all working together to re-focus on safety—improving the NASA safety “culture” as some call it. We still have much work to do on that. We need to make substantial improvement before we turn all of our thoughts to new things. However, space exploration is good and needed, and I am looking forward to a clear road map from the administration.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Texas, because support of NASA, the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, America's exploration of space, and keeping our leadership in space is indeed something that we can work on in a bipartisan way, because this is truly an American and Texan endeavor, to be at the frontiers of exploration.

My colleague is right about the popularity and importance of NASA's exploration to the average American. The NASA Web site, in fact, has had more hits on it than any Web site in history in a shorter period of time. NASA is now at over 10 billion hits on their Web site, in large part due to the spectacular success of the Mars exploration Rover program and the scientists at NASA. JPL, Steve Squires, all deserve our thanks and our sincere congratulations for their magnificent achievement in pulling together this extraordinary complicated mission of landing two rovers in completely separate parts of Mars to bring that program to-

gether in such a short period of time, to have it achieve such spectacular success so flawlessly. They deserve our congratulations and our admiration for what they have achieved. They are indeed a great inspiration to the Nation, to young people here in America and all over the world who recognize the value of not only exploring space, but pushing the frontiers of science.

□ 1630

As the majority leader so eloquently said and as my colleague from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) has pointed out, there are so many different technologies that have spun off from NASA that are important.

It occurred to me as I was listening to the majority leader's very eloquent remarks, and my colleague, my neighbor just to the east, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) pointing out NASA's many successes, I am reminded of a book we were just reading, my wife and I, to our daughter, Caroline Virginia, who is fascinated with Harry Houdini, the magician. We were reading a book to Caroline about Houdini, and it pointed out Houdini had a hard time succeeding when he began as a magician until someone pointed out to him that he was making it look too easy. He was so good at what he did that he made it look easy. The audience could not really appreciate how difficult it was, what he was doing. Houdini took that to heart and began to make his act look more difficult.

I do not want NASA to make it look more difficult, but I think NASA's great success at making it look easy at overcoming the spectacular hurdles that confront them has been in part perhaps one of the reasons that people take NASA's work for granted.

I would be happy to yield to my colleague.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, my colleague makes a very good point. I wanted to say that is why those of us on the Committee on Science, and certainly he has been working with us, and we have worked with the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LAMPSON), the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics, and before him, of course, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HALL), but there are a number of Texans who have been engaged, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BELL), on that committee and have had special advocacies. But what we have said is that, in addition to what you have been able to announce for us, is that NASA also has taken a hard look at safety.

I think it is important to say to the American people that we are not reckless in suggesting that we go to Mars or the moon. We know that we will bring about great research and great opportunities, but we also realize that it is important, our obligation as the United States Congress, to ensure that this is a safe process.

And might I just also say that we are fortunate that presidents, starting, of

course, with John F. Kennedy and then Lyndon Baines Johnson, have been supportive of the effort in space. We are very lucky that it has been an American issue. And that carried forth with William Jefferson Clinton and other previous presidents. But, because of that, I hope that this Congress takes seriously the idea that we cannot shut it down. We must continue it, looking to make it better, but we must continue it because it is something that belongs to all of America.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, certainly no better, if I may, no better expression of the importance of the mission of NASA and maintaining America's leadership role in space, what better expression of that than to have my colleague and me here, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CULBERSON) in complete agreement on that.

I would challenge any Member of the House to show someone with a stronger fiscally conservative record than I, looking carefully at the dollars we always together, my colleague and I, have been there to support NASA, as has the majority leader, who is also our neighbor from Houston. There are no political parties, there are no political divisions, I think, between us in helping NASA and the jet propulsion laboratory and the pride that we feel in their magnificent achievements and acknowledging and congratulating them for their spectacular success with the Mars Rover and recognizing in less than 1 month that NASA's *Casini* mission will go into orbit around Saturn and shortly thereafter, the first of the year, NASA will be landing a European-built lander on the surface of Titan, the only other planet in the solar system, a moon of Saturn, that has an atmosphere as dense as that of the earth.

We, both of us, in representing Houston recognize the importance of the Texas Medical Center and the work that they do with NASA in so many ways has saved lives.

If I could point out something that I am sure my colleague is familiar with, the work that Dr. Michael DeBakey has done using space shuttle technology. The shuttle has these huge turbo pumps that are required to empty the spacecraft's external tanks of more than 525,000 gallons of liquid hydrogen and oxygen in less than 8.5 minutes. Dr. DeBakey got together with NASA, with a private team as well, and developed the MicroMed-DeBakey ventricular assist device using NASA's shuttle technology to pump hydrogen and oxygen out of those fuel tanks, to miniaturize that into a device that has kept people alive so they could have heart transplants, that have helped people's hearts heal so they could avoid a transplant.

As Dr. Rosenbaum pointed out, the heart pump, the MicroMed-DeBakey ventricular assist device, is a perfect blend of NASA engineering and medicine. The same laws of physics that

apply to building and flying a space-craft apply to building and operating a heart pump.

As Dr. DeBakey said, when you have got intense research going on like this, new knowledge is bound to flow from it. I know my colleague has seen that benefit as well.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Absolutely. We are very fortunate that we have two giants in Texas, both Dr. Benton Cooley and Dr. DeBakey, who have established outstanding hospitals, but we know that Dr. DeBakey is the founder and originator of MASH, of the MASH unit in World War II.

But it speaks to the idea of the distinguished gentleman from Texas that we are still living and learning, and the ability to be able to do this in space or do this kind of research in space gives us a greater opportunity to extend the lives of Americans and people around the world.

I think it would be important now just to note for our colleagues that this mission is on a timeline that is very crucial. And that is, of course, 2008 the crew exploration vehicle which will carry astronauts to the moon, we are looking to have scheduled and to make its first unmanned test flight. In 2008, the robotic craft will start flying to the moon to prepare for human expeditions.

The reason why I say this is because I understand that you had a distinguished gentleman from California on the floor of the House. I already mentioned the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LAMPSON) and his leadership, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BELL) and his leadership, mentioned the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HALL). A number of them have been on the Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics, the distinguished gentleman from Tennessee. But the reason why I mention the diversity of States and the distinguished gentleman from Florida is because this should not be looked upon as a sole purview of the great State of Texas. But, in fact, there will be opportunities for many, many people to be engaged.

The robotic craft starts flying, as I said, in 2008; 2014 the crew exploration vehicle makes its first manned flight; and then 2015 to 2020 astronauts return to the moon. So we are gradually having a wide-reaching impact.

My colleague mentioned it earlier, but I do not know if Americans realize one of our greatest international relation efforts has been space. China, India, Israel, some of our countries in South America, France, and others have been engaged in this process; and we have found commonality around space. It is crucial.

The other thing that I think it does for those of us who represent very diverse districts, it provides the teaching tools and the incentives so that not only your daughter is excited about what happens in space but that we find children who are in inner city schools, African Americans and Hispanics and Asians and others, that may not view

this as an opportunity for them, people from rural America, people from Appalachia, if you will, that have not had opportunities to be exposed.

We want their children to be the next pool of astronauts and scientists and mathematicians. The only way one does that is you have something for them to do. We do not have anything for them to do. We cannot expect that they will be engaged in these disciplines, biology, chemistry, being doctors like Dr. DeBakey, as my colleague mentioned, Dr. Cooley.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, if I might, ignite that spark in their heart to know that the United States, the country they are so privileged to live in, is a leader in the exploration of space, in pushing the frontiers of science, to light that spark in the heart of a young person is one of the greatest things that we can do. NASA has certainly done that.

I am probably the most fiscally conservative Member of this House. My good friend from Houston knows how carefully I examine every single request to spend money that is presented to me as an appropriator. I am working diligently to balance the Federal budget. I am a co-author of the Balanced Budget Amendment. I want to thank the majority leader, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), and the lead author of the amendment, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. ISTOOK), for bringing the balanced budget amendment to the floor of this House.

We need to pay off the national debt, balance the Federal budget. When it comes to investing in scientific research and maintaining America's leadership role in outer space, both of us, I think between the two of us we pretty much cover the political spectrum, recognize that NASA, JPL, and scientific research is our national insurance policy for the future, prosperity of the country, and it will ignite that spark in the hearts of young people. I know my colleague has seen that in her district.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would not disagree with my colleague at all on that and what that leads to. And I know that I can encourage my good friend, in spite of or alongside of his fiscal posture that he takes, and do know that he is very staunch in his review, as I am very staunch in ensuring the domestic needs of our Nation with respect to health and education and housing are as well invested in.

But as we look at space it would be important for our colleagues to know that as we fund this effort it sort of generates or springs forth opportunities in education, investing in math and science for our young people so that we can create the kinds of research experts that will be part of this program that my good friend is talking about.

So there are benefits beyond just a few going into space. It generates a whole industry, a whole chemistry be-

tween industry and between the government in creating jobs that will provide for a very strong core of people who understand the very technical aspects, the very sophisticated aspects of science and math and chemistry and physics which are so very important.

We never want to lose the cutting edge of being at the very top of having that kind of discipline and expertise in our Nation. We never want to be a Nation that does not produce something, does not manufacture something, is not brilliant enough to create new science. That is what NASA provides, that opportunity.

I would only say, in your wisdom of your own political stand on being fiscally responsible, I would also charge you as being a man that has a great understanding that America has to invest in order to have returns. So we have to make choices. Hopefully, the choice of NASA and space exploration does not eliminate our opportunities to invest our education and health and other resources.

So I thank the distinguished gentleman again for bringing us all together. I think it is extremely important that our colleagues know that we do not stand here only as Texans, that my colleague had Floridians and he had Californians and maybe some others that were here before me and there are people from Tennessee and individuals from New York, our chairman, and so we have people from all over that I hope will rally around the idea of space being valuable and having us be at the cutting edge of this very valuable program.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Texas and look forward to working with her to ensure that NASA gets the support it needs, that the President's vision that he has laid out so clearly and so eloquently for the future of NASA and for the future of scientific research in this country, that we give the President's vision the support that it deserves.

As the majority leader so eloquently pointed out earlier, the exploration of space is indeed a difficult task; and it will require the efforts of every Member of this Congress working together from every part of the political spectrum.

I am so pleased to have the majority leader's leadership on this effort, to have the full support of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) there, here in the House of Representatives. He understands the importance of scientific research, the importance of NASA, the Johnson Space Center now being located, of course, in Houston.

The unity that has been shown here on this floor, between my colleague, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE), and myself and the majority leader in supporting NASA I think speaks volumes of the kind of support that I think we will see from this Congress when the time comes to get behind NASA.

Every American out there needs to, I think, express themselves to their

elected officials, to their Members of Congress, just as they have done in all the hits they have made on the NASA Web site.

I would conclude by pointing out that we will continue to be here on a regular basis pointing out the benefits of NASA's work over the years, the importance of the President's vision, supporting what he has laid out for NASA, for the jet propulsion laboratory.

□ 1645

I would also like to conclude by quoting my hero, Thomas Jefferson, who pointed out perhaps the greatest benefit of our investment in science. Mr. Jefferson was fond of saying, and it is so very true, that the first-born child of science is always freedom.

With that, I close, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. HALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Vision for Space Exploration. Since 1969, America has led the world into space and it is time to renew that vision. Our ventures into space not only keep America at the forefront of exploration and innovation, but they also are vital to our economy and our national security. This new National Vision sets America on a course toward the Moon and Mars, and we should embrace this dream and work to make it a reality.

In my mind, the first step of this new journey back to the Moon, Mars, and beyond, is to return the space shuttle to flight. I say this for several important reasons. First, our country made a commitment to our international partners that we would complete the construction of the International Space Station. Only the space shuttle is capable of completing this all-important task. Second, as the preeminent leader in human space flight, we cannot afford to sit idle and let other nations reap the rewards of our hard work, research, and sacrifice. We know that the People's Republic of China has developed a human space flight program that encompasses everything from low earth orbit to exploring the Moon and Mars. To let our space shuttle fleet, the most sophisticated and advanced space craft the world has ever seen, sit idle while other nations pass us by would be counter-productive to our space program. We must, however temper this thrust to Mars with economic realism. While people are more interested today in being able to make a trip to the grocery store than go to Mars—we agree that this is the time to initiate a sensible, stepping-stone, approach to investment in planning and carrying out our long-term mission.

It is, however, incumbent on us to do all we can to return astronauts to space safely. Last year's *Columbia* disaster underscored the sad reality that we have not done enough to ensure crew safety. I authored an amendment that was included in last year's NASA funding bill that calls for \$15 million to be used to solicit the best concepts from the aerospace industry and elsewhere to improve shuttle crew survivability. It is critical that the Space Shuttle Program continue to improve survivability for its remaining service life—including making modifications for the crew, such as cabin thermal/structural hardening, improved flight suits, and search and rescue capability.

Meanwhile, as NASA develops the new crew exploration vehicle for human space flight, we need to make sure that a viable

crew escape system for our astronauts is incorporated into the design of the spacecraft. I would suggest that if NASA can find the money for a multibillion-dollar probe to Jupiter, then it can find the funds to make crew survivability a priority. As we implement the new space vision, I will work to ensure that NASA fulfills this priority and minimizes the risks for our brave men and women who fly our space missions. Our hopes and dreams ride with them, and we must do all we can, at whatever cost is necessary, to ensure their safety.

America's space program continues to be an engine for our national economy. Exploration brings jobs and technological growth to America. Last year, space exploration brought over \$3.7 billion in funds to universities and businesses in Texas alone. Nearly every State in the union benefits from the development of technologies needed to propel our space mission. At a time when we are all concerned about jobs leaving the United States, supporting NASA makes sense because we are providing good jobs for Americans.

The money that we put into NASA grows exponentially when we consider the scientific and technological spinoffs that space exploration provides. Experiments conducted on the space shuttle and International Space Station expand health research and move us toward cures for some of our most threatening diseases. Microgravity experiments in the 1990s led to advances in antibiotics to fight infections. These experiments also unlocked secrets to protein growth that produced medicines to treat patients who have suffered from strokes and to prepare them for open-heart surgery. Americans suffering from osteoporosis also benefit from bone-density experiments conducted on the International Space Station in microgravity environments. These tests accelerated the clinical trials of a drug that is expected to be on the market soon. From the development of MRI technology to microchips, the scientific partnerships between NASA and American universities and companies ensure our Nation's viability, increase our Nation's competitiveness, and help drive our economy.

On January 14, 2004, we were pointed toward a new vision for space exploration and a renewed commitment to the American dream of reaching for new frontiers. For the first time in 40 years, our Nation once again has a vision. We owe it to future generations of Americans and the men and women who have kept the space mission alive for four decades to continue to forge ahead. Congress should approve the modest 5.6-percent increase in NASA funds this year so that we can continue this journey, secure our national interest, and fulfill America's destiny in space.

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of our Nation's new vision for space exploration.

I represent north Alabama, which is home to NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center. Space exploration holds a special place in the hearts of my constituents. Marshall and its team designed and developed the Saturn launch vehicles which sent our Nation on its last inspiring journey to the Moon. I remember that journey—it was an exciting time for north Alabama, and it was an exciting time for our Nation.

Last year, I was one of 101 House Members who wrote a bipartisan letter to the President, urging him to focus NASA on an inspir-

ing mission. On January 14 of this year, we received a reply.

NASA was given a bold, new path—which will take our Nation on a journey of exploration and discovery that is affordable, achievable, and exciting.

The first element of the vision includes returning the space shuttle to flight, and completing the International Space Station. In fact, the bulk of the increase in NASA's requested FY05 budget is for getting the shuttle fleet off the ground, and continued ISS construction. The ISS will be used to learn how to extend human presence in the hostile environment of space.

The vision includes implementing a sustained human and robotic program to explore the solar system and beyond. Not one or the other, but both human and robotic exploration, using the strengths of each to expand their frontiers of our knowledge.

The vision includes a goal of returning humans to the Moon by year 2020, and using this as a stepping stone for human exploration of Mars and other destinations.

Along the way, this journey of exploration will require the development of innovative technologies, key knowledge, and enabling infrastructures. This vision will further U.S. scientific, security, and economic interests, and it also promotes international and commercial participation in exploration.

Mr. Speaker, this vision is affordable to our nation. NASA's requested budget includes modest increases for an agency that has been essentially level-funded, in constant dollars, for the past 10 years. The FY05 budget request for NASA represents 0.7 percent of the Federal budget, compared to 1 percent in 1994, and a peak of 4 percent during Apollo. Between 1993 and 2002, the Federal Government's discretionary spending grew in purchasing power by more than 25 percent. But NASA's funding profile over this same decade resulted in a loss in purchasing power of 13 percent. I recognize that our Nation has many other worthy demands on the Federal budget at this time—but this is something that only a great nation such as ours can do.

This vision is also achievable. The plan is not a race to the Moon or Mars, but a continuation of the spirit of exploration that is such an important part of America's heritage. And it is based on a spiral-development philosophy where you build on your accomplishments, learning from your successes—and your failures—along the way. We know that this approach can work—it already has, as Project Apollo built on the amazing achievements and occasional setbacks of Project Mercury and Project Gemini.

Mr. Speaker, I know that there are some who say that NASA has not yet provided enough details about their exploration plan. They are working hard to provide us with the details. But we can all be assured that this body will have regular opportunities during the journey for strong congressional oversight.

We have a bold new vision for our Nation's space program laid out in front of us. This vision will help secure America's national security. This vision will help assure America's economic prosperity. And it will help strengthen America's technological competitiveness. Like the successes of Apollo, the benefits of this vision of exploration and discovery will be felt over generations.

Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of the 21st century, our Nation's space program is at a

crossroads. I urge my colleagues to grasp this historic opportunity, and join me in support of this vision that will reinvigorate our Nation's space program.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I support NASA's new space exploration vision. Americans might ask: What is that vision? It means we are committed to these goals—

- Return the space shuttle to flight;
- Complete the International Space Station;
- Develop the Crew Exploration Vehicle;
- Go back to the Moon;
- Go to Mars;
- Increase NASA funding by almost 6 percent.

This new space exploration vision is a turning point for NASA.

We know there are inherent risks that come with space exploration, which is the pursuit of new knowledge and new worlds. Skepticism and doubt are often linked to NASA and its goals. But history provides the answers to those concerns.

The *Mercury*, *Gemini* and *Apollo* programs culminated in a great achievement: landing an astronaut on the moon.

In the past 45 years, NASA's explorations and scientific experiments have led to technological breakthroughs that have changed our lives. They include a heart pump implant system that prolongs lives, smoke detectors that have saved thousands from death and shape memory metal used in eyeglasses and golf clubs that make them bendable. Advancements have also included the unexpected, such as a new line of shock-absorbing athletic shoes.

I believe the new space exploration vision is affordable and achievable. To succeed it requires congressional support, leadership from the White House, and an unwavering belief that the impossible can one day become the possible.

Mr. Speaker, NASA has inspired the public since the *Mercury 7* astronauts had "the right stuff" to launch our space exploration program. Their legacy is secure.

Our challenge today is to honor the legacy and build upon it with a new vision. I believe we can. America still has the right stuff to make other giant leaps for mankind.

— HOUR OF MEETING ON TUESDAY, JUNE 8, 2004

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourn tomorrow, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, June 8, 2004, for morning hour debate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FEENEY). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

— 30-SOMETHING DEMOCRATS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to address the House of Representatives and also the American people on issues of importance. A part of our democracy is being able to provide information to the

American people so that they can make the right decisions at the right time when they are given the opportunity. Also, to hopefully have an opportunity to speak to our colleagues about some of the issues that are facing this Congress and the American people, that they can also make the right decision at the right opportunity and at the right time.

We have more opportunities, the American people do, to make major decisions. They get an opportunity every couple of years as it relates to the House of Representatives, and in many cases every 6 years as it relates to the other body. But every 4 years they get an opportunity to vote for the leader of the free world, the President of the United States; and it is important that we understand exactly what is going on in our country, what is going on in the world.

This is an hour, Mr. Speaker, that the minority leader, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), has put together for our 30-something Caucus that we have on the Democratic side on the aisle. The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is my co-chair as it relates to our working group.

We have a number of members, some 14 Members of this House, that take time out every week to come to the floor. We have an opportunity to talk about issues that are facing young Americans and also middle-aged Americans and older Americans, because when we start talking about education, we start talking about health care, we start talking about jobs.

I think it is important we talk about Iraq. It is also important to all Americans, but we try to make sure that we be able to give voice to those individuals that are young parents and those individuals that are going into college and even young people that are looking to go to college to make sure that they have a great opportunity to do what they have to do.

I am so glad that my good friend from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is here with me, who is just an outstanding gentleman. We both serve on the Committee on Armed Services together, and we sit next to each other, almost next to each other, but we are there on the same level on the bottom row.

I thank the gentleman for being here. Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much.

Over the past week, we had a break. We normally are doing our 30-something event on Tuesday nights, but we are here on Thursday night tonight, and we are going to take a little different twist here. Normally, we talk about issues that are facing young students, young people trying to make their way in the workforce.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Can I just, when the gentleman mentioned that, because we need to get into what we are getting ready to discuss right now, but I know the gentleman has a couple of e-mails. If we can just take 5 minutes and talk about this voter suppression issue.

As you know, over the last couple of weeks we have been getting phone calls and e-mails about students throughout the country going to supervisor of elections offices and being told that they cannot register to vote there. Those students that are now in summer school, students that would like to go into the fall and be able to have the opportunity to vote in the primary elections in many States and also in the general election. They are being told that they can not register to vote in that State because they are not a permanent resident. But, as you know, in 1975 the Supreme Court said you can register. It is legal.

So we got a response back from a number of people saying this has happened to me, and we asked them to go to rockthevote.com.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Rockthevote.com to help with voter suppression across the country. It will inform you about whatever your situation may be locally.

I just brought a couple of these that I wanted to read, because we are going to, obviously, move to another topic. We received a couple of e-mails that we pulled out here, one from a Luther Lowe from the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, and one also from Alleyn Harned from Columbus, Ohio, who lives in Delaware. I am going to read a couple of paragraphs out of the e-mail we got, because most adults will say why are kids not participating and being active in the process? There is youth voter apathy.

I just want to read these. This is Luther Lowe from William and Mary. "Rather than sit and watch our local representatives make laws which are unfair to young people, I decided to participate in my local democracy. I applied to register to vote at Williamsburg which required I also fill out a detailed two-page questionnaire in addition to the normal form. One week later, I received a notification of my registration denial. The reasons? I was claimed on my parents' income taxes. I drove a car owned by my mom who lives in Arkansas. According to the local registrar, I should have been voting in my parents' hometown. The problem with that is I have never voted in my parents' hometown. I voted for Al Gore from my boarding school in high school. I spend less than 2 months a year in Arkansas, so why should I be participating in local elections there? With the help of a local attorney from the ACLU, I fought back. It was only after two lawsuits that I was able to register on a technicality that I am a member of the Virginia National Guard and Governor Mark Warner is my primary commander in chief."

Give me a break. Here is a kid that wants to participate in the system, and he has got to hire a lawyer from the ACLU to get a right to vote from the university.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. And he is a National Guardsman.