

This mission has been supported by Congress in the last two years and by the Academy Decadal Astrophysics reports in 1990 and 2000. To this point NASA has spent approximately \$300 million on the program. Unfortunately, the President's 2008 budget request for NASA drastically scaled back funding for the program—essentially putting it on ice. Thankfully, Chairman MOLLOHAN has restored funding for SIM and directed NASA to proceed with development.

JPL has also been the epicenter of our efforts to explore Mars. The rovers Spirit and Opportunity have been exploring the Red Planet for the past 3½ years and next month the Mars Phoenix Lander will begin its journey to Mars. I am happy to report that the bill fully funds the Mars program, which allows for a new mission to be launched about every 2 years.

Finally, NASA does not currently have an outer planets mission in development and I am happy that the bill provides \$10 million to begin work on such a mission.

Mr. Chairman, I know that many of my colleagues have expressed support today for NASA and its mission and have elaborated at length on the technological and other spinoffs from the space program. I would like to urge all of you to remember another crucial spinoff from the space program—international goodwill.

The United States is not universally loved around the world at the moment. However, one area in which our prestige remains undiminished is in space exploration. The ESA, the Canadians, the Japanese, the Indians and many others want to partner with us. Our space program also continues to generate enormous interest and enthusiasm worldwide. In the first 2 months after Spirit and Opportunity landed on Mars in January 2004, JPL's rover website registered almost 9 billion hits from around the world. At a time when America needs ways to communicate with a growing and increasingly younger global audience, our space program is an important public diplomacy asset.

I thank the Chairman and urge my colleagues to support the bill.

TRIBUTE TO BLOUNT MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 27, 2007

Mr. DUNCAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a hospital that embodies the spirit, standard, and strength of the community it serves.

Blount Memorial Hospital in Maryville, Tennessee first opened its doors 60 years ago with 50 beds and 12 doctors. Now, with hundreds of beds and doctors and numerous outreach facilities, the hospital sets a new standard for community healthcare.

The citizens of Maryville are blessed to have at their disposal such quality care close to home. People of many other communities its size must often travel to bigger towns for full care, but this is not so in Blount County, Tennessee.

I am extremely honored to represent the fine men and women who work hard every

day to make Blount Memorial hospital a source of community pride.

The hospital's transformation into a premiere medical facility could not have occurred without the outstanding leadership of its longtime administrator. Joe Dawson has witnessed many milestones in his 22 years at Blount Memorial, and I am sure he will spearhead many more. I thank him for his leadership.

Madam Speaker, in closing, I would like to call to the attention of my colleagues and other readers of the RECORD the article from the Daily Times newspaper, which is reprinted below.

[From the Daily Times, July 25, 2007]

BMH TURNS 60

(By Jessica Stith)

With 50 beds and 12 physicians, Blount Memorial Hospital opened its doors to the community 60 years ago. Now, the hospital houses over 304 licensed beds, not including the 76 beds in their transitional care center or the 92 beds in MorningView Village, a senior community. The hospital currently employs more than 280 physicians on active and courtesy staffs.

On Tuesday, 24 American flags were unveiled down East Lamar Alexander Parkway in front of the hospital in celebration of the hospital's 60th anniversary and in honor of those who have died in the line of duty, those missing in action and those who served and continue to serve our Nation.

Past and present employees, board members, physicians, volunteers, hospital partners from the past and friends of the Blount Memorial Hospital family joined to celebrate and recall the history of the hospital.

Two proclamations were presented to the hospital—one from Blount County and the cities of Maryville and Alcoa and a second from the Tennessee House of Representatives.

Joe Dawson, who became the hospital's sixth administrator in 1985, opened the ceremony by welcoming guests in the birthday celebration of the hospital. "This is the actual first day (July 24) Blount Memorial took their first patient," Dawson said.

Dawson said the 24 honor flags would be displayed on patriotic holidays and the hospital's anniversary each year.

Robert Redwine, president of the hospital's board of directors, said this year's anniversary theme was, "Honoring the past. Ensuring the future." Redwine pointed out the rich history and milestones of the hospital. He said the need for the hospital arose in the early 1940s when ALCOA Inc.'s North Plant was built.

The hospital's "founding fathers," Judge George Roberts, Joe Gamble and A.D. Huddleston, were appointed to investigate the feasibility of building a publicly owned hospital in the county.

In 1945, the Federal Works Agency agreed to finance about 50 percent (\$200,000) of the \$400,000 needed to build it. The community raised \$200,000 that included a \$100,000 donation from ALCOA. The aluminum company's contribution included a day's pay given by every worker, Redwine said.

A 14-acre site was purchased, and Maryville College donated 0.675 acres of land in front of Walland Highway, where construction began.

On Blount Memorial's first day of operation, 40 patients were brought to the hospital by ambulance and six were admitted. The staff performed two operations, dealt with two emergencies and delivered a baby boy, Richard Brown.

Since that day, the hospital has grown significantly in its size and services offered. In the past 10 years, The Good Samaritan Clin-

ic, Blount Memorial Health Center at Tellico West in Vonore, Home Equipment Services office, MorningView Village, Transitional Care Center, Breast Health Center, Atrium Cafe and an outpatient diagnostic center at Springbrook have been opened—not to mention many additions and renovations.

Redwine thanked many partners and friends of the hospital for their continued support. "And of course we want to thank the community for your continued support," Redwine said.

"We are here to serve you." "Please remember this is your hospital. We want you to be proud of it, and we want you to use it."

Proclamations read:

Blount County Mayor Jerry Cunningham, Alcoa Mayor Don Mull and Maryville Vice Mayor Tom Taylor presented a joint proclamation to the hospital on behalf of the county and cities. The proclamation "declares July 24, 2007, as Blount Memorial Hospital's 60th Anniversary Day," and encourages the community to join the celebration.

State Rep. Doug Overbey and Rep. Joe McCord presented a proclamation to the hospital stating that the "General Assembly is privileged to recognize Blount Memorial Hospital for its countless contributions to the well-being of the citizens of Tennessee."

Senator and retired physician Raymond Finney spoke at the celebration about how he was glad to be "back home" as he was on staff at Blount Memorial Hospital for 33 years. He talked about the hospital's accomplishments and credited many of those to great leadership who have been there for years.

"One of the things that makes this hospital so good is capable people that stay put," Finney said. "I really appreciate what's been accomplished here. I know what is going on across the state in health care, and we have an exemplary hospital here."

Dawson said he expects the hospital to continue growing and believes the hospital will reach many more goals by its 70th anniversary. "We're very much a reflection of Blount County and the changes of Blount County," Dawson said.

In the next 5 to 10 years, Dawson said he expects the hospital will have new technology and said the hospital will be "reaching out into the community" more by building more primary care and outpatient facilities.

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 25, 2007

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3093, making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce and Justice, and Science, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes:

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of this bill.

The bill includes funding for many important programs, and while I think some do deserve more funding than the bill provides, I recognize that the appropriators had a challenging task in shaping the bill because of budget constraints. Overall, I think the bill is a good one and I congratulate Chairmen OBEY and MOLLOHAN for making these difficult decisions in a very constructive manner.

As Chairman of the Space and Aeronautics Subcommittee of the House Committee on Science, I am pleased that the bill includes \$17.6 billion for National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) funding. NASA's work in human space exploration, space and earth science, and aeronautics plays an important role in advancing our knowledge, expanding our economy and inspiring Americans both young and old. I believe NASA performs important research which allows us to better understand our climate, our planet and the universe beyond.

I am pleased that the Committee funds NASA's Science Mission Directorate at \$5.7 billion, an increase of \$180 million over the President's request. This increase will help reverse the recent decline in funding for science at NASA. NASA research helps us better understand the universe at large, but it also greatly contributes to our knowledge of our own planet.

I am especially encouraged that the Committee recognized the recommendations of the National Research Council's recent Decadal Survey on Earth Science by targeting \$60 million towards the highest priority missions recommended in that survey, as well as ensuring that work on critical climate instruments that were de-manifested from the National Polar-orbiting Operational Environmental Satellite System (NPOESS) can continue. The Committee specifically noted the importance of the Total Solar Irradiance Sensor (TSIS), which is being built by the University of Colorado's Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics in my district, and instructs NASA to continue to support this program. TSIS will ensure that we continue to receive important information on the sun and how it interacts with our climate—a data stream that has been continuous since 1979 and has contributed to our understanding of climate change.

I am also pleased that the Committee increases NASA's aeronautics budget by \$146 million over the President's request. Progress in aeronautics is crucial to the health of the Nation's air transportation industry, which in turn is critical both to the continued strength of our domestic economy and to our international competitiveness. The additional funding will help NASA contribute meaningfully to the development of the Nation's Next Generation Air Transportation System, which will enhance the capability of our air transportation system to handle the enormous increases in air travel projected over the next 20 years. Moreover, this bill recognizes that aeronautics R&D at NASA can help develop more environmentally compatible commercial aircraft, with significantly lower noise, emissions, and energy consumption compared to aircraft in commercial service today, and the bill provides funding to support that R&D.

This bill also provides significant funding for the President's exploration initiative at NASA by providing the President's full request of \$3.9 billion. I support the President's Vision for Space Exploration and believe human space exploration is a worthwhile undertaking. The funding in this bill will keep the Crew Exploration Vehicle on track in FY 2008. However, I am concerned that the administration's current plan for the shuttle replacement system, the crew exploration vehicle (CEV), is not scheduled to be finished until 2015. This will leave a potential 4 to 5 year gap when the United States will be dependent on other

countries to travel to and from the International Space Station. It is within the administration's power to send over budget requests in FY 2009 and FY 2010 to address this gap within the context of a balanced overall NASA program, and I hope that the administration will do so.

I am pleased that the Committee increases NASA's education programs to \$217 million, up \$64 million over the President's request. This increase will provide additional funds for the Space Grant program, which helps undergraduate students participate in cutting-edge research, and in the process trains and inspires the next generation of scientists. The Committee also provides \$2 million for the NASA Aeronautics Scholarships program, which encourages more students to pursue graduate degrees in aeronautics. I helped create this program in the 2005 NASA Reauthorization Act and am pleased that the Committee has recognized its importance.

The Committee provides \$6.7 billion for space operations, which is a \$100 million cut relative to the President's request. I understand that the Committee had difficult decisions to make, but I am concerned about the impact that these cuts will have on the International Space Station's reserves posture, as well as on the upcoming Tracking and Data Relay Satellite System (TDRSS) procurement. I hope that it will be possible to address these problems when the House and Senate move to conference on this legislation.

Funding for the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), which has one of its two laboratories based in my district in Colorado, is also an improvement on past years. I am pleased that the Committee met the President's request of \$500 million for research, which will help fund components of the Innovation Agenda, such as nanotechnology and materials science.

I also support the bill's inclusion of \$109 million for the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) and \$93 million for the Advanced Technology Program (ATP). MEP serves small- and medium-sized manufacturing companies nationally to enhance their ability to compete globally. Every federal dollar appropriated for MEP leverages \$2 in state and private-sector funding, which means that a small federal investment of \$109 million translates into more millions of dollars in benefits for the economy in terms of jobs created and retained, investment, and sales. ATP helps businesses develop high-risk, high-reward research into commercial applications that often have wider social benefits.

And, because of its importance for my own Congressional District, I am glad to note that the NIST budget includes \$129 million for construction and specifically \$28 million for the extension of building 1 at the Boulder facilities. NIST's Boulder laboratories were built in the 1950s and are in critical need of modernization to ensure the continuation of world-class research.

After several years of disappointing funding for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), I am pleased that this bill will set NOAA back on the right track. The Committee funds NOAA at \$3.950 billion, an increase over both the President's budget and the fiscal year 2007 spend plan. There is certainly still room for improvement, but I hope that this is the first step forward for increasing NOAA funding.

The office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR), which funds the important work being conducted in the NOAA labs in my district, is funded at \$410 million in the bill—an increase of \$52 million over the President's request and \$46 million over the FY 2007 spend plan. This funding will help NOAA continue to perform vital research in climate change and other areas.

In particular, I am encouraged that the Space Environment Center is being funded at the President's request of \$6.2 million. While this funding is still below the \$7.2 million that the SEC received in FY 2002, it is an increase over what Congress appropriated in FY 2006 and indicates that the Committee realizes the important work that the SEC does on space weather monitoring and prediction.

The bill also includes important funding for law enforcement, at both the federal and state level.

It rejects the President's proposal to slash the COPS program by 94 percent and instead provides \$725 million, \$183 million above 2007. This includes funding for such items as: \$100 million for the COPS hiring program; \$175 million for expanding DNA analysis and forensic crime lab capacity; and \$85 million for beefing up enforcement in "meth hot spots," places where meth is a serious problem.

Similarly, the bill includes \$600 million for Byrne Justice Assistance Grants to assist local law enforcement agencies and which the President's budget proposed to terminate. It also includes continued funding for the State Criminal Alien Assistance program (SCAAP), which assists state and local governments with the costs of jailing undocumented immigrants who have committed crimes not related to their immigration status—another vital program the President's budget proposed for elimination.

The bill also rejects proposed cuts in the Violence Against Women programs and includes vital support for competitive youth mentoring grants, delinquency prevention grants, and Justice Accountability Block Grants.

In summary, Mr. Chairman, this is a good bill that provides funding for many important purposes. It is good for Colorado and good for the country, and it deserves approval.

IN OPPOSITION TO H.R. 980 PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYER-EMPLOYEE COOPERATION ACT OF 2007

HON. VIRGINIA FOXX

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 27, 2007

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, the first responders of our Nation deserve our great respect and admiration for their commitment to keep the public safe from harm. They play a vital role in securing our communities against our time's many threats to peace. I fully support our public-safety community in its increasingly complex and difficult task.

The measure before the House, H.R. 980, would allow the Federal Government to assert itself on an issue that has typically been left to State legislatures. H.R. 980 would establish a national system of collective bargaining for most of the Nation's public safety officers, including but not limited to, law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other emergency service