

and most advanced generation of air craft carrier, to lead the U.S. Navy into the 21st century.

Mr. Speaker, the voyage of the "Great White Fleet" has proven to be a pivotal event in the history of this great Nation. While impacting the entire United States, the impression of the "Great White Fleet" can be most felt in Hampton Roads, Virginia. In addition to being home to one of the Nation's most important shipbuilding facilities at Newport News, the world's largest naval base is located just across the Hampton Roads in Norfolk, Virginia. The citizens of Hampton Roads should feel very proud about the role of our region in one of the most important nautical voyages in American history. I urge my colleagues to support this important concurrent resolution.

Mrs. DRAKE. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. I yield back my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Kansas (Mrs. BOYDA) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 261.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 7, 2007.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker, House of Representatives, The Capitol,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on December 7, 2007, at 3:39 p.m.:

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 4252.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

LORRAINE C. MILLER,
Clerk of the House.

□ 1445

FAIR TREATMENT FOR EXPERIENCED PILOTS ACT

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4343) to amend title 49, United States Code, to modify age standards for pilots engaged in commercial aviation operations.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4343

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Fair Treatment for Experienced Pilots Act".

SEC. 2. AGE STANDARDS FOR PILOTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 447 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"§ 44729. Age standards for pilots

"(a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the limitation in subsection (c), a pilot may serve in multicrew covered operations until attaining 65 years of age.

"(b) COVERED OPERATIONS DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'covered operations' means operations under part 121 of title 14, Code of Federal Regulations.

"(c) LIMITATION FOR INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS.—

"(1) APPLICABILITY OF ICAO STANDARD.—A pilot who has attained 60 years of age may serve as pilot-in-command in covered operations between the United States and another country only if there is another pilot in the flight deck crew who has not yet attained 60 years of age.

"(2) SUNSET OF LIMITATION.—Paragraph (1) shall cease to be effective on such date as the Convention on International Civil Aviation provides that a pilot who has attained 60 years of age may serve as pilot-in-command in international commercial operations without regard to whether there is another pilot in the flight deck crew who has not attained age 60.

"(d) SUNSET OF AGE 60 RETIREMENT RULE.—On and after the date of enactment of this section, section 121.383(c) of title 14, Code of Federal Regulations, shall cease to be effective.

"(e) APPLICABILITY.—

"(1) NONRETROACTIVITY.—No person who has attained 60 years of age before the date of enactment of this section may serve as a pilot for an air carrier engaged in covered operations unless—

"(A) such person is in the employment of that air carrier in such operations on such date of enactment as a required flight deck crew member; or

"(B) such person is newly hired by an air carrier as a pilot on or after such date of enactment without credit for prior seniority or prior longevity for benefits or other terms related to length of service prior to the date of rehire under any labor agreement or employment policies of the air carrier.

"(2) PROTECTION FOR COMPLIANCE.—An action taken in conformance with this section, taken in conformance with a regulation issued to carry out this section, or taken prior to the date of enactment of this section in conformance with section 121.383(c) of title 14, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect before such date of enactment), may not serve as a basis for liability or relief in a proceeding, brought under any employment law or regulation, before any court or agency of the United States or of any State or locality.

"(f) AMENDMENTS TO LABOR AGREEMENTS AND BENEFIT PLANS.—Any amendment to a labor agreement or benefit plan of an air carrier that is required to conform with the requirements of this section or a regulation issued to carry out this section, and is applicable to pilots represented for collective bargaining, shall be made by agreement of the air carrier and the designated bargaining representative of the pilots of the air carrier.

"(g) MEDICAL STANDARDS AND RECORDS.—

"(1) MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS AND STANDARDS.—Except as provided by paragraph (2), a person serving as a pilot for an air carrier engaged in covered operations shall not be subject to different medical standards, or different, greater, or more frequent medical examinations, on account of age unless the Secretary determines (based on data received or studies published after the date of enactment of this section) that different

medical standards, or different, greater, or more frequent medical examinations, are needed to ensure an adequate level of safety in flight.

"(2) DURATION OF FIRST-CLASS MEDICAL CERTIFICATE.—No person who has attained 60 years of age may serve as a pilot of an air carrier engaged in covered operations unless the person has a first-class medical certificate. Such a certificate shall expire on the last day of the 6-month period following the date of examination shown on the certificate.

"(h) SAFETY.—

"(1) TRAINING.—Each air carrier engaged in covered operations shall continue to use pilot training and qualification programs approved by the Federal Aviation Administration, with specific emphasis on initial and recurrent training and qualification of pilots who have attained 60 years of age, to ensure continued acceptable levels of pilot skill and judgment.

"(2) LINE EVALUATIONS.—Not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this section, and every 6 months thereafter, an air carrier engaged in covered operations shall evaluate the performance of each pilot of the air carrier who has attained 60 years of age through a line check of such pilot. Notwithstanding the preceding sentence, an air carrier shall not be required to conduct for a 6-month period a line check under this paragraph of a pilot serving as second-in-command if the pilot has undergone a regularly scheduled simulator evaluation during that period.

"(3) GAO REPORT.—Not later than 24 months after the date of enactment of this section, the Comptroller General shall submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report concerning the effect, if any, on aviation safety of the modification to pilot age standards made by subsection (a)."

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The analysis for chapter 447 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"44729. Age standards for pilots."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on the pending bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, this legislation will raise the retirement age for commercial airline pilots from age 60 to age 65. For more than three generations, pilots have been required to retire from commercial aviation when they reach age 60. There have been a number of changes in both the medical condition, the medical examination of pilots, recurring, more intensive medical reviews, that argue for a longer period of time for the age of retirement of commercial pilots. There have been

changes in the economics of aviation that have rearranged the retirement plans for pilots in midstream, in some cases wiping out retirement plans altogether, in other cases totally restructuring them, which two factors argue for a change in the retirement age.

We responded to those changed circumstances in the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2007, which moved from our committee through the House on September 20th. It was our hope that the other body would move ahead with an FAA reauthorization bill. That hasn't happened.

As time went on and the other body continued to be locked in whatever difficulties they encounter, there were increasing appeals from pilots, from airlines, from the traveling public, frankly, to separate out this provision from our reauthorization bill. I was very reluctant to do that, in hopes that we would use this provision, among others, as leverage and as part of our integral package on FAA reauthorization. Clearly, the other body is not going to even move a bill through committee in the waning days of this session. It then became clear to me there was no reason further to delay action on this matter of justice for commercial airline pilots.

Furthermore, the FAA forecasts an increase in airline travel to more than 1 billion passengers in the next 7 to 8 years, and retirements among airline pilots are up 173 percent. We are seeing almost every day five or more of the most senior experienced pilots retiring. We ought to provide this relief. We ought to separate this provision out from our House-passed bill and provide a measure of justice and economic relief for pilots.

In the reauthorization bill, the provisions that we included for this age relief are drawn out and included in H.R. 4343. One, pilots who have reached age 60, to serve beyond that time frame, must have a first-class medical certificate renewed every 6 months. Second, they must continue to participate in FAA pilot training and qualification programs to ensure acceptable levels of skill and judgment. Three, they must submit to a line check every 6 months. That assures that pilots who are continuing to serve beyond age 60 will meet all the threshold requirements of skill, capability, alertness and responsiveness to their ever-increasingly difficult challenges.

In addition, our bill requires international flights leaving the U.S. to have at least one pilot under the age of 60. That applies international standards in the flight deck. This requirement would terminate if the international standard were changed.

The increased pilot age limit is not retroactive, however, and does not allow pilots who reached age 60 prior to enactment to serve as commercial pilots unless they are employed by an air carrier as a required flight deck crew member, or are newly hired on after the date of enactment without credit for prior service.

I believe that moving this legislation now, if we can also get it through the other body in quick order, will have a profound and personal effect on the lives of thousands of pilots who otherwise would be forced to retire. We have had consensus within the committee on this issue. The question is whether we should take it out at this time or leave it in the House-passed bill for consideration later in conference with the other body.

Clearly, as I said earlier, we are not going to get to that point, and Mr. COSTELLO has advocated strongly that we consider at an appropriate time moving the legislation separately, and he is the Chair of the Aviation Subcommittee. Mr. MICA has been a strong advocate for early action on this legislation, apart from our authorization bill. Mr. PETRI, the same, and other pilot members of our committee have similarly advocated.

So I think we move ahead with a broad consensus measure that should pass the House readily and hopefully the other body as well.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I would first like to welcome the chairman of our committee back. It is good to see you standing strong and firm after elective surgery and a couple of weeks hospitalization, and bringing a Christmas present with you to the pilots of our country, especially those who otherwise might be forced to retire if this is unnecessarily delayed.

As you pointed out, we hoped to move it in a timely fashion. A year ago, the international community lowered the standard to 60. Now we are in a transition period, and we hope this passes today and the Senate acts in a speedy fashion, because each day we delay, a few more people's careers are disrupted unnecessarily. So I thank you for scheduling this.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the ranking Republican on the Public Works and Transportation Committee, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA).

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

First of all, I too want to welcome back Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. OBERSTAR, he and I have had the great experience of working since 15 years ago when I came to Congress. He was chairman of Aviation. I became the ranking member on the Republican side when he became Chair of the committee.

We had a great year. We probably passed more legislation than any other committee. We passed an historic water resources bill. We actually did, I think, the 107th override of a Presidential veto. We agreed in a bipartisan fashion to invest in our Nation's infrastructure. I am sorry Mr. OBERSTAR wasn't here to see that glorious day.

It is very lonely not having either him fighting with you or not having

him here to fight with. But we are pleased he is back, and hopefully had an experienced Republican physician doing all those titanium additions to his spine. But he looks great and we are pleased to have him here.

I am also pleased that through his leadership, and a joint bipartisan effort, and I wrote him on December 5, and I will include this letter as part of the RECORD, saying while I oppose taking other measures out of the pending FAA reauthorization, I want to keep the pressure on, we need to pass that bill, that there is a particular provision whose interest is paramount to that legislation, and that is doing away with an obsolete and unfair FAA mandatory retirement rule that every day is penalizing our pilots. In fact, more than 50 of our Nation's most experienced pilots of commercial airliners are forced to retire.

Now, this bill is entitled the Fair Treatment for Experienced Pilots Act. I would like to also give a personal example of why I think this is important. The title is important. I might even want to amend the title in honor of one of the guys I went to college with, a buddy of mine. His name is Bob Fobes.

Most people in Congress don't know Bob Fobes, but Bob and I were fraternity brothers, went to the University of Florida. Let me tell you, there is nobody more devoted as far as a pilot. I think the only thing that Bob is devoted to, other than his wife Laurie and his family, is flying, and Bob has not failed on any occasion to mention to me that he is going to be affected by this particular outdated rule that was passed nearly a half a century ago when males and females didn't live as long as they do in our society.

So we are addressing something that personally affects folks like Bob Fobes and thousands of other pilots who are dedicated to one of the great professions that has given the world and America in particular a magic carpet to get around to places that people would not have even imagined they could be 50 years ago.

As of November 2006, we also know that foreign airline pilots are allowed to fly up to age 65, so our counterparts across the Atlantic are doing this. The U.S. sets up a double standard, unfortunately, and I think it is a disadvantage to the flying public to, again, not have our most experienced individuals in the cockpit and being able to fly.

As Chairman OBERSTAR pointed out, there are additional protections here for the flying public that these individuals will be subject to, even more medical exams, making certain that they are fit and capable even in these additional years that we grant.

The Freedom to Fly Act, H.R. 1125, was introduced earlier into the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee by one of our outstanding leaders in aviation, also a pilot, ROBIN HAYES, the gentleman from North Carolina, and he has 313 bipartisan sponsors on his legislation. ROBIN

HAYES cannot be here, so I also wanted to give credit to not only Chairman OBERSTAR, Mr. COSTELLO and Mr. PETRI, but also ROBIN HAYES, who has worked tirelessly to make certain that this legislation and this particular measure comes before the House.

This is the right thing to do at the right time. I would like to thank again all those who have been involved, and some of the staff members on both sides of the aisle who helped bring this measure forward. I encourage Members to vote "yes" on this very sensible and desperately needed legislation.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE,

Washington, DC, December 5, 2007.

Hon. JAMES L. OBERSTAR,
Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN OBERSTAR: It is very clear that legislation to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration will not be signed into law before the end of this year. Therefore, I strongly believe it is our obligation and this Committee's responsibility to see to it that our most experienced pilots are permitted to continue flying commercial aircraft.

You and I have both received bipartisan request letters from our colleagues urging passage of legislation to increase the current retirement age for thousands of commercial airline pilots across the country. Moreover, H.R. 1125, The Freedom to Fly Act, has 313 bipartisan cosponsors, including many Members who serve on our Committee.

I look forward to working with you to move a compromise bill before Congress adjourns this session.

Sincerely,

JOHN L. MICA,
Ranking Republican Member.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds to express my appreciation to Mr. PETRI and Mr. MICA for their good wishes and the welcome back. It is a good feeling to have recovered from rather extensive surgery. I am fond of saying now I have more metal in my neck than in some of my bicycles, because they are carbon fiber and these are titanium rods and screws, and I am learning to live in a different way with this new architecture in my cervical spine. But it is a good feeling to recover use of hands and arms and be able to function fully and normally. I am grateful to both gentlemen for their good wishes and for all those colleagues who sent good wishes and cards and good eats.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished chairman of the Aviation Subcommittee, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. COSTELLO).

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I too would like to join our colleagues on the other side the aisle in welcoming our chairman back. Let me say that on this legislation, I think Chairman OBERSTAR, as he always does, has summarized the legislation very well. We have a similar provision in H.R. 2881 that we passed out of the House on September 20, and, unfortunately, as Chairman OBERSTAR indicated, it is pending in the other body.

It makes sense to pass this legislation at this time. We are hopeful that by doing so today that the other body will act quickly and we, in fact, can get this over to the President and signed into law.

□ 1500

Many changes have taken place since the FAA arbitrarily imposed the age 60 rule in 1960. The age expectancy of a person living in the United States then versus today goes from 60-something-years-old, in the early 1960s, to 77 years today. We have other provisions in the legislation, as Chairman OBERSTAR indicated, on international flights that make certain that there is at least one person in the flight crew 60 years old or under 65. Secondly, we have provisions to make certain that physicals and other health care issues are addressed by pilots that will qualify.

Let me say that I strongly support this legislation. As Chairman OBERSTAR indicated, both Mr. PETRI and Mr. MICA, myself, Mr. HAYES, and other members of the committee have broached this subject and attempted to bring it to the floor before today. I am very pleased that we are moving on this legislation. I urge a "yes" vote.

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this needed legislation.

Since 1959, the Federal Aviation Administration, FAA, has required commercial airline pilots to retire at age 60.

This mandatory retirement rule was initially put in place for safety reasons, although some have argued that the FAA had little scientifically backed data in 1959 to support the safety mandate.

In any event, the "Age 60 Rule," as it is known, soon became accepted practice.

For many years the International Civil Aviation Organization, ICAO, also required commercial airline pilots to retire at age 60. However, in November 2006, a new ICAO standard went into effect, allowing a pilot to fly up to age 65, as long as the co-pilot is under age 60.

This change in ICAO standard resulted in an immediate double standard.

Regardless of FAA's policy, as of November 23, 2006, foreign pilots flying into the U.S. are allowed to fly up to age 65, provided the co-pilot is age 60 or younger. Yet, U.S. pilots must retire as soon as they reach 60 years of age.

Clearly, we now have a fairness issue that must be addressed.

This new double standard has caused a groundswell of U.S. pilots close to retirement to push for a similar change to FAA standards.

In response to the change in the ICAO standard, the FAA announced that it would initiate an "Age 60" review and rulemaking process. The FAA no longer assumes that once a pilot reaches age 60 they are automatically unsafe.

All the groups involved have done excellent work to save not only their careers and the careers of their colleagues, but to keep the skies as safe as possible.

The FAA has forecasted that by 2015 the U.S. will have 1 billion passengers flying annually. We also are facing a pilot shortage in the near future.

Clearly, we must do everything we can to ensure that our most experienced pilots are able to continue to fly as long as safety is not compromised.

This legislation provides for additional medical and training requirements for pilots ages 60 through 65 to address any possible safety concerns. It is a well-thought-out bill, which evens the playing field while ensuring aviation safety.

I would like to thank the chairman of the full committee, Mr. OBERSTAR, the ranking member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Mr. MICA, and the chairman of the Aviation Subcommittee, Mr. COSTELLO, for all their hard work on this long sought after legislation.

This is a good, bipartisan bill, and I encourage members to vote "yes" on H.R. 4343.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I do want to join Mr. MICA in sending compliments to Mr. HAYES, a member of our committee, who has been a strong advocate, even before we began our reauthorization legislation, for changing the age. But he along with other pilots on the committee, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. SALAZAR, formed a united front and a bipartisan front well before we began our work on the FAA reauthorization bill. So we give them joint credit and appreciation for their support from this initiative.

It is our hope in passing this bill today that the other body will act quickly on it without much ado. That would be a great initiative, a great sign of progress at these penultimate hours of the first session of the 110th Congress.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Fair Treatment for Experienced Pilots Act of 2007.

This legislation will help address America's pilot shortage and improve airline safety, by enabling experienced pilots to continue flying instead of being forced into retirement.

Every week, 50 of our most experienced pilots are forced to retire as they reach the current mandatory retirement age of 60.

The Fair Treatment of Experienced Pilots Act would raise the retirement age to 65, in recognition that pilots who are 60 are still fully capable of flying. In fact, their experience often makes them better and safer pilots. This commonsense legislation includes requirements for pilots' health, training and evaluation.

Tourism is Hawai'i's major industry, and millions of visitors come to Hawai'i by air every year. We recognize the importance of the airline industry to our visitors as well as our residents who travel often for business, to visit family and friends and go on vacations.

Clearly, having experienced pilots on our nation's airlines is important to Hawai'i and America.

Many of our older pilots are also veterans who served our country in the military. So we are not only talking about the fair treatment of pilots, but also the fair treatment of veterans. Fairness requires us to allow experienced, highly capable pilots to continue flying—and not to be forced into retirement once they turn 60.

This legislation has bipartisan support because it is good policy. This legislation helps

airlines and the flying public by improving safety and mitigating the pilot shortage.

As a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the Subcommittee on Aviation, I want to acknowledge the leadership of Chairman OBERSTAR, the sponsor this bill.

I urge my colleagues to join me in support of the Fair Treatment for Experienced Pilots Act of 2007.

Mr. OBERSTAR. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4343.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2007

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3986) to amend the John F. Kennedy Center Act to authorize appropriations for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3986

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "John F. Kennedy Center Reauthorization Act of 2007".

SEC. 2. TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.

Section 2(a)(2)(J)(ii) of the John F. Kennedy Center Act (20 U.S.C. 76h(a)(2)(J)(ii)) is amended by striking "Public Works and Transportation" and inserting "Transportation and Infrastructure".

SEC. 3. PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEM.

The John F. Kennedy Center Act (20 U.S.C. 76h et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 6 the following:

"SEC. 7. PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEM.

"(a) IN GENERAL.—The Board is authorized to study, plan, design, engineer, and construct a photovoltaic system for the main roof of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

"(b) REPORT.—Not later than 60 days before beginning construction of the photovoltaic system pursuant to subsection (a), the Board shall submit a report to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate on the feasibility and design of the project."

SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Section 13 of the John F. Kennedy Center Act (20 U.S.C. 76r) is amended—

(1) by striking subsections (a) and (b) and inserting the following:

"(a) MAINTENANCE, REPAIR, AND SECURITY.—There are authorized to be appro-

priated to the Board to carry out section 4(a)(1)(H)—

"(1) \$20,200,000 for fiscal year 2008;

"(2) \$21,800,000 for fiscal year 2009; and

"(3) \$22,500,000 for fiscal year 2010.

"(b) CAPITAL PROJECTS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Board to carry out subparagraphs (F) and (G) of section 4(a)(1)—

"(1) \$23,150,000 for fiscal year 2008;

"(2) \$16,000,000 for fiscal year 2009; and

"(3) \$17,000,000 for fiscal year 2010."; and

(2) by redesignating subsection (d) as subsection (e), and by adding after subsection (c) the following:

"(d) PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEM.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Board such sums as may be necessary to carry out section 7, with such sums to remain available until expended."

SEC. 5. EXISTING AUTHORITIES.

Nothing in this Act shall be construed to limit or affect the authority or responsibility of the National Capital Planning Commission or the Commission of Fine Arts.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. 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 therein.

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

There was no objection.

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

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is a national memorial to a fallen President, one of the most loved, respected, and admired Presidents of our history. The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts was initially proposed as a national cultural center during the tenure of President Dwight Eisenhower. It moved its way through the legislative process and took firm root and forward progress during the brief tenure of President John F. Kennedy and then sprang forward under President Lyndon Johnson. It has become an extraordinary cultural center for the Nation.

Our committee has had the good fortune to hold jurisdiction over the physical facility of the Kennedy Center and of its operations, and we have managed that responsibility very thoroughly and very effectively through the tenure of many previous Chairs of this committee. In particular, in the current context I thank the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON), who is the Chair of the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management, for her leadership on this bill as well as our ranking member of the full committee, Mr. MICA, and the subcommittee ranking member, Mr. GRAVES, and Mr. PETRI who is here today managing the bill on the Repub-

lican side, for crafting what has historically been in our committee bipartisan legislation dealing with the operations of the Kennedy Center.

Since opening its doors September 8, 1971, the Kennedy Center has continued each year to gain national and international renown for its performance arts, programming, and for the education programs at the Kennedy Center that reach out across the Nation so that high schools, colleges, and universities can participate by satellite and live performances or recorded performances at the Kennedy Center.

The center has crossed the threshold in the last couple of years by performing over 3,000 performances, hosting millions of theater-goers, visitors, tourists. But of all of those accomplishments, none matches the international outreach of the Kennedy Center under President Michael Kaiser. In the aftermath of the Iraq war, Michael Kaiser personally traveled to Iraq to meet with the musicians of the Iraqi symphony who were, in many cases, without instruments or had somehow sheltered them from the post-invasion trauma, and secured instruments for them and secured funding to travel the Iraqi symphony to the Kennedy Center to perform jointly with the National Symphony Orchestra, an extraordinary gesture of international brotherhood and sisterhood of the arts.

President Kaiser has traveled to Africa, to the Far East, Japan, China to mobilize interest in the arts, joint initiatives with the Kennedy Center, and has actually established programs of arts management in countries well beyond our shores to help particularly Third World countries where arts have fallen well below the threshold of national concerns where people are more concerned about starvation and disease than they are about the arts. President Michael Kaiser has raised the threshold, raised the vision of arts managers in other countries, and created a great future for the arts wherever he has traveled.

Over the past decade, a great deal of work at the Kennedy Center has focused on life safety and accessibility projects. Many of those are completed. The Kennedy Center's capital building plan, which was updated earlier this year, emphasizes facility infrastructure. Over the next several years, the Kennedy Center will focus on replacing mechanical and electrical systems that consist of original equipment that is well beyond its useful life or should be replaced by more efficient equipment, and we provide authority for that work to continue to prevent failure or breakdown of essential equipment.

The bill before us today authorizes appropriations for maintenance and capital projects of the Kennedy Center for fiscal years 2008 to 2010. For maintenance, repair, and security, the bill authorizes \$64.5 million over 3 years. For capital projects, the bill authorizes \$56.2 million through 2010. Those are numbers derived from the Kennedy