

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Chairman, I rise today to offer an amendment to H.R. 6063, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2008. My amendment modifies section 1108, and it states:

(1) in subsection (a), strike "small businesses" and insert "small, minority-owned, and women-owned businesses"; and

(2) in subsection (b)(2), insert " , giving preference to socially and economically disadvantaged small business concerns, small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans, and HUBZone small business concerns" after "to small businesses."

My amendment clarifies that the NASA Outreach and Technology Assistance Program will include small, minority-owned, and women-owned businesses. It would also give preference, in selection of businesses to participate in the program, to socially and economically disadvantaged small business concerns, small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans, and HUBZone small business concerns.

Madam Chairman, I would like to thank my colleague and fellow Texan, Congressman LAMPSON, for his leadership in authoring the important section describing the NASA Outreach and Technology Assistance Program. As set forth in this legislation, this program is intended to support the mission of NASA's Innovative Partnerships Program to provide technical assistance through joint partnerships with industry, academia, government agencies, and national laboratories. It will facilitate technology transfer to the private sector, create a network of academic institutions, aerospace contractors, and NASA centers that will commit to donating technical assistance to small businesses, and create a network of economic development organizations to increase the awareness and enhance the effectiveness of the program nationwide.

My amendment would clarify that the NASA Outreach and Technology Assistance Program will include small, minority-owned, and women-owned businesses. It would also give preference, in the selection of businesses to participate in this program, to socially and economically disadvantaged small business concerns, small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans, and HUBZone small business concerns.

Small businesses represent more than the American dream—they represent the American economy. Small businesses account for 95 percent of all employers, create half of our gross domestic product, and provide three out of four new jobs in this country. Minority businesses are also crucial to our communities and our country. Black entrepreneurs owned 9.7 percent of all such businesses in the United States. Statistics gathered between 1997 and 2002 show substantial increases in the number of black-owned firms with receipts of \$1 million or more, as well as the number of black-owned firms with 100 employees or more. Black-owned firms accounted for 5 percent of all non-farm business in the United States in 2002.

In my home city of Houston, small businesses are vital to our economy. In 2002, Harris County ranked 6th in the nation for counties with the largest number of black-owned firms, with 27,770 firms with receipts totaling \$1,817 million. I have worked to introduce minority, women, and small business owners to

contracting officials at NASA to help promote and develop Houston small businesses.

Madam Chairman, the NASA Office of Small Business Programs sets forth, as its mission, "to promote and integrate all small businesses into the competitive base of contractors that pioneer the future of space exploration, scientific discovery, and aeronautics research." Today's legislation makes important strides toward working to realize this important goal, and I believe that my amendment would strengthen this objective. The legislation we are considering today reinforces the fundamental fact that the benefits of NASA's programming and innovation are felt far beyond scientific and academic spheres. Space technologies provide practical, tangible benefits to society, and NASA provides valuable opportunities to businesses in our community.

My amendment would help to ensure that the important program authorized by this legislation to develop technical partnerships with private industry will be readily accessible to these vital, but disadvantaged, enterprises. I would like to thank Congressman LAMPSON for his support of my amendment. I ask that my amendment be ruled in order, and that my colleagues join me in working to bring the benefits of this important legislation to all members of our community.

Madam Chairman, I would also like to thank my colleague Congressman UDALL for introducing this important legislation. After the *Columbia* disaster, NASA stands at a pivotal moment in its history. It is the responsibility of this Congress to ensure that the future of NASA is one of continued progress. Space exploration remains a part of our national destiny. It inspires our children to look to the stars and dream of what they too, one day, may achieve. Space exploration allows us to push the bounds of our scientific knowledge, as we carry out research projects not possible within the constraints of the planet Earth.

SUPPORT STEM DIVERSITY RELATED
AMENDMENTS TO H.R. 6063

DIVERSITY AND INNOVATION CAUCUS,
June 11, 2008.

DEAR COLLEAGUE: We write to bring your attention to several amendments that may be offered during consideration of H.R. 6063, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2008. Amendments presented by Representatives HODES and JACKSON-LEE are aimed at creating greater diversity in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) workforce through opportunity and access. As Co-chairs of the Diversity and Innovation Caucus, we have worked to expand the participation of under-represented groups in the STEM fields to help bolster U.S. competitiveness. The amendments that will help us accomplish this goal in H.R. 6063 include:

Hodes (NH)—VOTE YES: Establishes a scholarship program in honor of Christa McAuliffe, a teacher from Concord, New Hampshire who died in the 1986 Challenger Space Shuttle disaster. The scholarship would go to women pursuing degrees in mathematics, science, and engineering.

Jackson-Lee (TX)—VOTE YES: Clarifies that the NASA Outreach and Technology Assistance Program includes small, minority-owned, and women-owned businesses. It would also give preference, in selection for the program, to socially and economically disadvantaged small business concerns, small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans, and HUBZone small business concerns.

If America is to achieve its strategic objectives in STEM, then the enormous potential

of groups that are currently under-represented in the STEM fields must be utilized. STEM policies which encourage diversity help strengthen American innovation and competitiveness by expanding the STEM pipeline. We strongly urge you to support the amendments to HR 6063 listed above.

Thank you for our careful consideration of these important amendments.

I yield back my time.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr. GORDON. Madam Chairman, I want to thank everyone for this constructive and civil debate that we've had today.

I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas) having assumed the chair, Ms. BORDALLO, Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 6063) to authorize the programs of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

□ 1745

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WATSON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

GET YOUR FACTS STRAIGHT

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

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, Special Orders, such as I am now entered into, are a time when Members can fairly freely say things without fear of contradiction because generally no one is here. And as you listen to many of the Special Orders, there is a very good reason why no one is here: No one ought to want to pay any attention to them. And we have a certain amount of tolerance when it comes to Special Orders, but sometimes the stupidity level, it seems to me, is exceeded.

In a Special Order yesterday, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) said the following. He was denouncing the notion of financing public transportation from the gasoline tax. It does

seem to me that having public transportation available is one of the good ways to reduce the use of oil. High prices have driven more people to use public transportation, but that's a legitimate subject for debate. What is not a legitimate subject is to make things up.

The gentleman said yesterday, and I quote from the RECORD, "And if you go to Barney Frank's district and you jump on—I don't know what they call it, the subway, the 'Big Dig,' the major multibillion dollar boondoggle—and you buy a ticket to ride along on that thing, you get a cheap ticket because it's subsidized by H5321." Well, you can't buy a ticket to ride on the Big Dig, but if you could, it should be cheap because there's nothing to ride on.

In fact, quite contrary to what the gentleman from Iowa made up yesterday, the Big Dig is not a subway, the Big Dig is a highway. Now, it did cost a lot of money, but it was money that was spent on a highway. So when the gentleman says, "I don't know what they call it, the subway, the Big Dig, the major multibillion dollar boondoggle"—and by the way, it's not in my district. But that is such a small error compared to the major errors the gentleman made that I mention it only in passing. But I am baffled by why the gentleman would get up and purport to talk about something in Massachusetts and so mis-describe it.

So let me be very clear: The Big Dig is a highway, it is not a subway. A subway is a mass transit conveyor that goes underground. A highway is something on which cars go. So you can't buy a ticket on the Big Dig, and it is not a subway.

He said further, by the way, that you get a cheap ticket because it's subsidized by H5321. I don't know what H5321 is. There is a bill, H.R. 5321, which has absolutely nothing to do with public transportation, but accuracy does not appear to have been the governing principle in that conversation.

I do note that the gentleman from Iowa singled out three districts to discuss: San Francisco, represented by the Speaker, New York City—and he imputed all New York City to the gentleman from New York, Mr. RANGEL—and myself. Why we three districts were singled out—myself, San Francisco, the gentleman from New York, Mr. RANGEL—I don't know what emotions the gentleman from Iowa was seeking to evoke by, out of all of the public transportation districts, picking the three of us. Again, that's something he is entitled to do, but he is really not entitled to call a highway a subway and denounce us for that.

So, as I said, I understand that when you are here under Special Orders, you can generally get away with a great deal because there is no one to point things out. And I actually felt sufficiently concerned about the accuracy of what's said in the House that I wait-

ed around for a while. And I learned many interesting things about NASA, more than I had planned to, but that was an educational experience. But I would hope that Members in the future, when they want to go and attack things, would put a little effort into trying to know what they are talking about. It might elevate the debate.

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

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

BORDER PATROL AGENTS RAMOS AND COMPEAN

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

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today is the 512th day since a great injustice took place in this country. On January 17, 2007, two U.S. Border Patrol agents entered Federal prison to begin serving 11 and 12 years, respectively. Agents Compean and Ramos were convicted in March of 2006 for wounding a Mexican drug smuggler who brought 743 pounds of marijuana across our border into Texas.

These agents never should have been prosecuted, yet the U.S. Attorney's Office prosecuted the agents and granted immunity to the drug smuggler. I want to repeat that, Mr. Speaker, yet, the U.S. Attorney's Office prosecuted the agents and granted immunity to the drug smuggler, who claimed he was unarmed. The illegal drug smuggler received full medical care in El Paso, Texas and was permitted to return to Mexico.

Mr. Speaker, today I would especially like to thank House Judiciary Chairman JOHN CONYERS and his staff for their interest in investigating this case. Last week, I spoke to Chairman CONYERS about this case, and I was so grateful to learn that the chairman is seriously considering holding hearings to thoroughly examine the prosecution of these two Border agents. The American people have not forgotten Agents Ramos and Compean, who should have been commended instead of indicted. The hundreds of thousands of Americans who have supported these two heroes will greatly appreciate a decision by Chairman CONYERS to hold hearings on this injustice.

These two agents have given years of their life in service to this Nation, yet they have been unjustly punished for doing their job to protect our homeland. Those of us—and there have been many on both sides of the political aisle—who have spoken out on behalf of these agents for more than a year are waiting on the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans to render its decision in this case.

When those who bravely defend our borders are prosecuted, it sends a confusing message to law enforcement, who are trying to protect the American people. Mr. Speaker, it is my hope and prayer that one day soon this injustice will be corrected and these two heroes will be home with their families.

Mr. Speaker, I want to close by saying that we have called on the President of the United States to pardon these two agents, and yet nothing has happened. The last hope for this Congress is in the hands of Chairman CONYERS. And I have great respect for Chairman CONYERS, he is a man of integrity and honor.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I will ask God to continue to bless these two Border agents and their families. And I will also ask God to continue to bless our men and women in uniform, and ask God to continue to bless America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

NASA REAUTHORIZATION BILL

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. Mr. Speaker, we just finished a historic debate for historic legislation, H.R. 6063, and I look forward to my colleagues enthusiastically supporting the NASA Reauthorization Bill.

Let me highlight what this bill will generate for science in America. Funding for science will be some \$4.932 billion. Aeronautics will be \$853 million. Space exploration will be \$3.886 billion. Education will be \$128 million. Space operations will be some \$6 billion. Cross-Agency Support Programs, some \$3 billion. And Inspector General, which is very important to ensure the integrity of the program, some \$35 million. This is an investment not for this Congress, but for America, and that is why this debate is so important.

As we move this bill forward, I am very pleased that this body supported my amendment. And I wanted to ensure that we had record clarity to know that this amendment was worked on by the Science Committee and the Small Business Administration Committee, and was timely submitted to the Rules Committee and, as well, was, if you will, approved by the Rules Committee. And I was very pleased to have this listed as an approved amendment in the structured rule process.

And so all is well now that this amendment has been passed and that this bill now has been passed, if you will, out of this body. And of course there will be votes to finalize the passage of the bill.