

500-mile motor sport international sweepstakes that draws the attention of millions of American racing fans and racing fans around the world every February.

Often referred to as "The Great American Race," the Daytona 500 is NASCAR's biggest, richest and most prestigious race and has been won by stock car racing greats such as Dale Earnhardt and Jeff Gordon.

Mr. Speaker, given the monumental occasion of the 50th running of the Daytona 500, I think it is only appropriate that we express our support of NASCAR and "The Great American Race" by passing this measure.

I urge passage of this bill.

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

□ 1500

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge support for this resolution designating February 17, 2008, as "Race Day in America."

Next Sunday over 200,000 people from all 50 States and around the world will convene at Daytona International Speedway in Daytona Beach, Florida, for the 50th running of "The Great American Race," the Daytona 500.

The most prestigious stock car race in the United States, the Daytona 500 is a 200-lap, 500-mile grand opening to the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series. Boasting the largest purse and stock car racing's most coveted trophy, the Harley J. Earl Trophy, the Daytona 500 has become the "Super Bowl of Stock Car Racing."

Each year millions of fans, both at home as well as those serving overseas, tune in to the race by television and radio. Since 1995, the television ratings for the Daytona 500 have been higher than any auto race, and in 2006 the race drew the sixth largest television audience of any sporting event that year.

For 50 years, the popularity of Daytona, and car racing in general, has grown throughout American society. I believe it is fitting that we celebrate this rising American tradition by passing this resolution in honor of the golden anniversary of its most prestigious event. I invite anybody who's free this Sunday to come to Daytona Beach and enjoy this great tradition with us.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HODES. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. HODES) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 931.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REMEMBERING THE SPACE SHUTTLE "CHALLENGER" DISASTER AND HONORING ITS CREW MEMBERS

Mr. MELANCON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 943) remembering the space shuttle *Challenger* disaster and honoring its crew members, who lost their lives on January 28, 1986.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 943

Whereas January 28, 2008, marks the 22-year anniversary of the tragic accident of the space shuttle *Challenger*, Mission 51-L, and the loss of seven of America's bravest and most dedicated citizens;

Whereas the space shuttle *Challenger* disaster occurred off the coast of central Florida, at 11:39 a.m. on January 28, 1986;

Whereas the space shuttle *Challenger* disintegrated 73 seconds into its flight after an O-ring seal in its right solid rocket booster failed at lift-off;

Whereas the seven-person crew on the shuttle included Commander Francis R. Scobee, Pilot Michael J. Smith, Mission Specialist Judith A. Resnik, Mission Specialist Ellison S. Onizuka, Mission Specialist Ronald E. McNair, Payload Specialist Gregory B. Jarvis, and Payload Specialist Sharon Christa McAuliffe;

Whereas Christa McAuliffe, a schoolteacher from Concord, New Hampshire, was on board as the first member in the Teacher in Space Project;

Whereas the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) selected Christa McAuliffe from a field of 11,000 applicants to be a part of the *Challenger* crew and teach lessons to schoolchildren from space;

Whereas the Committee on Science and Technology of the House of Representatives conducted oversight hearings on the *Challenger* disaster and released a report on October 29, 1986, on the causes of the accident; and

Whereas the House of Representatives continues to support NASA and its ongoing efforts to explore and educate the American public about space: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) honors the 22nd anniversary of the space shuttle *Challenger* disaster;

(2) celebrates the courage and bravery of the crew of the *Challenger*, and Christa McAuliffe and her passion for encouraging America's children to pursue careers in science and mathematics;

(3) commits itself and the Nation to using the lessons learned in inquiries into the space shuttle *Challenger* accident to ensure that the space agency always operates on a strong and stable foundation; and

(4) recognizes the continued dedication of the United States to the goal of space exploration for the benefit of all mankind.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. MELANCON) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FEENEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MELANCON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to in-

clude extraneous material on House Resolution 943, the resolution now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to support House Resolution 943, a resolution honoring the astronauts of the space shuttle *Challenger* and honoring its crew members, who lost their lives on January 28, 1986. And I congratulate Mr. HODES for preparing this resolution.

The tragic loss of the *Challenger* and her crew of seven serves as a continuing reminder that space flight is anything but routine. As we continue to explore outer space, we here on the ground must do our part to ensure that we have learned the lessons of the *Challenger* accident and work tirelessly to make space travel as safe as possible for future generations of explorers.

In addition, I believe we can best honor the sacrifices of the crew of the *Challenger* made by our commitment to renewing America's space program, continuing the Nation's journey into space, a goal to which they dedicated their lives.

Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate that we pause today to honor the memory of the *Challenger* crew, and I urge all my colleagues to support this resolution.

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

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

I want to thank my colleague Mr. MELANCON for shepherding this memorial to the floor today. With this resolution, the House of Representatives joins with all Americans to solemnly remember the loss of the space shuttle *Challenger* 22 years ago on January 28, 1986.

Many Americans remember where they were on that cold January morning when the shuttle *Challenger* leapt from its launch pad. After receiving the call "*Challenger* go at throttle up," *Challenger* disintegrated in clear blue skies just 73 seconds into its flight.

We were stunned. One moment *Challenger* was flawlessly flying on a beautiful winter morning. Then, without warning, it was gone.

America turned to mourn its seven astronauts who gave the ultimate sacrifice for the advancement of exploration and discovery: Michael Smith; Dick Scobee; Judith Resnik; Ronald McNair; Ellison Onizuka; Gregory Jarvis; and Christa McAuliffe, a schoolteacher from Concord, New Hampshire, selected to be the first member of the teaching profession in a space project.

That evening, President Reagan spoke from the Oval Office to comfort a grieving Nation. Millions of children had watched the launch because Christa McAuliffe was to later teach science lessons from space. Instead, we were reminded of a deeper lesson. Reagan said:

"I want to say something to the schoolchildren of America who were watching the live coverage of the shuttle's takeoff. I know it is hard to understand, but sometimes painful things like this happen. It's all part of the process of exploration and discovery. It's all part of taking a chance and expanding man's horizons. The future doesn't belong to the fainthearted; it belongs to the brave. The *Challenger* crew was pulling us into the future, and we'll continue to follow them."

Reagan concluded his address by saying this:

"The crew of the space shuttle *Challenger* honored us by the manner in which they lived their lives. We will never forget them nor the last time we saw them, this morning, as they prepared for their journey and waved good-bye and slipped the surly bonds of Earth to 'touch the face of God.'"

Twenty-two years have passed. America has kept its word. We haven't forgotten the *Challenger* crew. Human space flight is mankind's most difficult endeavor. America has achieved so many successes, space flight seems routine; yet every generation unexpectedly bears witness to space flight's inherent dangers.

Before the *Challenger* disaster, the *Apollo I* crew was lost on Pad 34 on January 27, 1967, in an accident known simply as "The Fire." After *Challenger*, we waited on February 1, 2003, at the Kennedy Space Center's landing strip for the voyagers of *Columbia* who never returned home. January and February are NASA's cruellest months.

On each occasion the people of NASA grieved terribly, but they learned from adversity, and then they rededicated themselves to their mission. America landed on the Moon after The Fire. After *Challenger*, the shuttle flew again to pursue scientific discovery and begin constructing the international space station. After *Columbia*, we returned to flight, and we will complete and use the international space station. Then we will turn our dreams to exploring beyond Earth's orbit by establishing outposts on the Moon and then going further beyond.

Exploration, journey, and bravery define the American people. Each of us comes from a heritage where someone with great courage took a passage to a new beginning, many times with disastrous endings. But the living stubbornly persevered, pushed back vast frontiers, and built a great and glorious Nation. Adversity, including the loss of the *Challenger* crew, can never extinguish this American spirit.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to support this resolution honoring the brave and dedicated crew of *Challenger*. I urge my colleagues to support House Resolution 943.

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

Mr. MELANCON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. HODES).

Mr. HODES. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Resolution 943.

January 28, 2008, marked the 22nd anniversary of the *Challenger* space shuttle disaster. On January 28, 1986, at 11:38 eastern standard time, the *Challenger* took off from the Kennedy Space Center and disintegrated just 73 seconds into its flight, killing all seven members of its brave crew. The accident occurred on what would have been the *Challenger*'s 10th trip into space.

I introduced House Resolution 943 to honor the courage and bravery of all seven crew members who died as a result of this tragic accident. The crew of the *Challenger* embodied the goals of the United States space program and our highest ideals: a commitment to knowledge of our universe and inspiring a new generation of scientific pioneers.

The tragic accident that day was especially poignant for those of us in New Hampshire. New Hampshire is a small State, and we pride ourselves on our sense of community. And one of those crew members was Christa McAuliffe of Concord, New Hampshire, my hometown. She was a friend. She was someone who was woven deeply into the fabric of our community. She touched the lives of countless students. She was a mom. She was somebody who was loved and admired. And she was on board the *Challenger* as the first participant of the Teacher in Space program, the pride of New Hampshire and of Concord and of the Nation, for the first teacher in space was enormous and seemed to magnify the tragedy of the accident.

Christa dedicated her life to education. She taught at Rundlett Junior High School, Bow Memorial Middle School, and Concord High School between 1978 and 1985. On July 19, 1985, she was selected from a field of roughly 11,000 applicants as the primary candidate for the Teacher in Space Project. Her mission as a crew member was to teach schoolchildren lessons from space and to encourage students to pursue careers in science and mathematics.

Twenty-two years after the *Challenger* disaster, Christa McAuliffe's goal of promoting scholarship in the sciences is more important than ever as our Nation works to stay at the forefront of global innovation.

I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the anniversary of the *Challenger* disaster and to support House Resolution 943.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 943, "Remembering the space shuttle *Challenger* disaster and honoring its crew members, who lost their lives on January 28, 1986," introduced by my distinguished colleague from New Hampshire, Representative PAUL W. HODES. This important legislation will honor the lives, the work, and the memory of the seven men and women who lost their lives on the 1986 Space Shuttle *Challenger* mission. I

would like to thank Representative HODES for introducing this bill, of which I am proud to be an original cosponsor, as well as Chairman GORDON for his leadership in bringing this important and timely bill to the floor today.

On January 28, 1986, Ellison S. Onizuka, Sharon Christa McAuliffe, Greg Jarvis, Judy Resnik, Michael J. Smith, Dick Scobee, and Ron McNair commenced on a risky journey, which only a select few have had the opportunity to travel. Twenty-two years ago, these extraordinary men and women embarked on what they knew would be a perilous flight, in pursuit of knowledge and driven by the spirit of scientific discovery. As we stand here today, on the floor of the House of Representatives, and commemorate the 22nd anniversary of the *Challenger* tragedy, I believe we should take a moment to recall the purpose to which the crew was dedicated. Astronauts Onizuka, McAuliffe, Jarvis, Resnik, Smith, Scobee, and McNair represent the best in all of us, and it is in their memory that we should devote ourselves to continuing what they began.

Mr. Speaker, as we mourn the tragic loss of these extraordinary men and women, I would also like to praise those individuals who continue to accept the challenges posed by the exploration of space and the dedication of all connected with the manned space program. However, while space exploration continues to be a part of our national destiny, it is vital that safety is made our first priority, in order to protect future astronauts and ensure the tragedy of 22 years ago never happens again.

From the beginning, our Nation has recognized the importance of the exploration of space and has always taken a leading role in its development and exploration. The expansion of our horizons has been essential for reasons beyond the technological advances it may provide. Moreover, it represents mankind's capability to turn distant dreams into a practical reality.

However, safety must remain our first priority. In June of last year, we watched as the Space Shuttle *Atlantis* and the International Space Station both experienced serious safety scares. The shuttle's mission had to be extended following the discovery of a rip in the shuttle's thermal blanket. The space station experienced the failure of a Russian-operated computer system controlling a crucial portion of the station's navigational system. These recent incidents clearly indicate the need for improved safety standards and oversight. Space exploration must be coupled with satisfactory safety assurances.

Because of my ongoing commitment to the safe exploration of space, I was proud to introduce an amendment to H.R. 3093, the Departments of Commerce and Justice and Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations for FY 2008, reaffirming our strong commitment to ensuring adequate safety standards for the International Space Station. My amendment emphasizes the importance of safety standards by ensuring that none of the funds made available in this Act may be used to limit the safety provisions enumerated in the recent NASA Authorization Act. If the recently delivered recommendations of the congressionally mandated International Space Station Independent Safety Task Force are to be successful in identifying and mitigating future risks to the International Space Station, Congress, together with the administration, must firmly reaffirm its commitment to pursuing safety as a

top priority. My amendment was overwhelmingly approved, by a vote of 422 to 3, and accepted into the bill.

At a time where our televisions, newspapers, radios and other forms of media are dominated with discussions of presidential nominations, housing foreclosures, economic stimulus packages, Middle Eastern conflicts and the war in Iraq, it would be all too easy to disregard our commitment to the enterprise of space exploration and its value to the United States and abroad. Let us look to the sky to honor the memory of these fallen heroes who gave their lives for the cause of pushing the limit of human exploration for the enrichment of all of mankind.

Mr. Speaker, words cannot convey adequately repay the debt that is owed. We cannot sufficiently articulate the feelings of sorrow that are universally felt; however, we can pay those seven souls no greater tribute than to carry on the work they believed in and paid the ultimate sacrifice for. The contributions to space exploration and service these great astronauts provided are priceless and will never go unrecognized.

I strongly urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation, and in so doing, giving the men and women of our space program the respect and recognition they deserve.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 943, a resolution that remembers the space shuttle *Challenger* disaster and honors its crew members on the 22nd anniversary of their tragic flight.

On January 28, 1986, the space shuttle disintegrated shortly after takeoff, killing seven crew members. One of those astronauts, Ellison Onizuka, was born and raised in my State of Hawaii and served as Hawaii's first astronaut.

Mr. Onizuka was very enthusiastic about our space program and never hesitated to share his knowledge and experience with the people of Hawaii. He recognized the importance of education and encouraged students to pursue an interest in space and science-related fields. Four major space programs and centers in Hawaii carry on the legacy of this inspiring explorer: the Astronaut Ellison S. Onizuka Space Center, Astronaut Ellison Onizuka Science Day, the Hawaii Space Grant Consortium, and Challenger Center Hawaii.

I urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 943, which honors Mr. Onizuka's contributions and celebrates the courage and bravery of the *Challenger* crew.

Mr. FEENEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MELANCON. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. MELANCON) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 943.

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. MELANCON. 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.

□ 1515

CELEBRATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE EXPLORER I SATELLITE

Mr. MELANCON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 287) celebrating the 50th anniversary of the United States Explorer I satellite, the world's first scientific spacecraft, and the birth of the United States space exploration program.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 287

Whereas January 31, 2008, is the 50th anniversary of the launch of Explorer I, the first United States satellite to be successfully lofted into space and the world's first scientific satellite;

Whereas the launch of Explorer I marks the birth of the era of United States space exploration, a half-century of advances in both robotic and human exploration of space, including the first footsteps by humanity on another world;

Whereas, since the launch of Explorer I, the United States has launched spacecraft—

- (1) to explore each of the solar system's planets and the Earth's Moon;
- (2) to observe the Earth and the interactions of its atmospheric, oceanic, and land systems;
- (3) to conduct studies of the Sun and its interactions with Earth;
- (4) to investigate asteroids and comets;
- (5) to peer deeper into space to understand the origin of the universe and the formation of the stars, galaxies, and planets; and
- (6) to extend human presence into space;

Whereas Explorer I and the impetus for scientific satellites occurred as part of the International Geophysical Year, a major scientific initiative of 67 nations to collect coordinated measurements of the Earth, whose spirit continues to be embodied in the international partnerships that enhance space endeavors;

Whereas Explorer I carried a scientific instrument designed and built by Dr. James A. Van Allen of the University of Iowa to detect cosmic rays;

Whereas the cosmic ray measurements from Explorer I led to the discovery of regions of energetic charged particles trapped in the Earth's magnetic field, later named the Van Allen radiation belts;

Whereas the combined efforts of Dr. James A. Van Allen and his science team, individuals at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, and individuals at the Army Ballistic Missile Agency made possible the successful development and launch of Explorer I and ushered in a new age of United States scientific and human exploration of space;

Whereas the next 50 years of United States accomplishments in outer space will rely on individuals possessing strong mathematics, science, and engineering skills and the educators who will train such individuals;

Whereas the United States space program enables the development of advanced technologies, skills, and capabilities that support United States competitiveness and economic growth;

Whereas Dr. Van Allen, commenting on the future of space science a decade ago, said

“there is no shortage of great ideas on what we'd like to do. . . . There is virtually no limit to what can be investigated in interplanetary science and astronomy.”; and

Whereas over the next 50 years the United States will attain additional exciting and significant achievements in robotic and human space exploration: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Congress—

(1) celebrates the achievement of the late Dr. James A. Van Allen and his science team and all of the individuals at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory and Army Ballistic Missile Agency who, through the successful launch of Explorer I, brought the United States into the space age and science into the realm of space;

(2) supports science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education programs, which are critical for preparing the next generation to lead future United States space endeavors;

(3) recognizes the role of the United States space program in strengthening the scientific and engineering foundation that contributes to United States innovation and economic growth; and

(4) looks forward to the next 50 years of United States achievements in the robotic and human exploration of space.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. MELANCON) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FEENEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MELANCON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on House Concurrent Resolution 287, the resolution now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MELANCON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 287. This resolution celebrates the 50th anniversary of *Explorer I*, the first successful launch of a U.S. satellite into space, which took place on January 31, 1958, a date that also marks the 50th birthday of our U.S. space program.

With the launch of *Explorer I*, the United States was the first to send a scientific instrument into Earth's orbit. The measurements from that instrument led to the significant discovery of the Van Allen radiation belts.

We owe our profound appreciation and gratitude to the late Dr. James Van Allen and science team and those individuals from the Jet Propulsion Laboratory and Army Ballistic Missile Agency who made possible the success of *Explorer I*.

Their pioneering efforts launched the beginning of America's journey beyond Earth, a journey that continues to generate remarkable accomplishments in