justification. This will mean that police officers and firefighters and teachers and other public employees will get the fair pension for which they bargained and to which they are entitled.

I would like to express my appreciation to the minority and majority staff for their hard work on this bill. I think it well serves the country. I would urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support it.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Georgia, my colleague on the Ways and Means Committee, Mr. LEWIS.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my good friend Mr. POMEROY for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, people are suffering, people are barely getting by. Some people are using their retirement savings today to pay their credit card bills or to avoid foreclosure on their home. This is a choice people should not have to make. Today, we offer just a little bit of help.

Mr. Speaker, after a lifetime of hard work, people need to know that they can retire and their pensions will be there for them. This bill will help thousands of Delta employees who live and work in my district, thousands of pilots and airline workers, whose retirement savings slipped away when the airline went bankrupt.

The payments they are receiving through the bankruptcy agreement are not going to make up for that loss. This bill will allow these workers to take their bankruptcy payment and put their money into a retirement account. Pilots and airline workers are asking for this help so they can help put their money back where it belongs, growing into a nest egg for retirement.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman RANGEL and the great staff of the Ways and Means Committee and my own staff who worked with me to help pilots and airline workers in this bill today. We must do more to help people earn enough money and save enough money so they can live well when they retire. We must protect the hopes and dreams of America's workers.

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

Just briefly, I rise again in strong support of the Pension Protection Technical Corrections Act. It truly is a vital piece of legislation for the people of America. I want to again thank Chairman RANGEL, Chairman MILLER, Ranking Member MCCRERY, Mr. POMEROY, and Mr. ANDREWS for their collaboration on this legislation, and last but not least the unsung heroes who worked tirelessly to put this product together, all the staff members of the respective committees.

I urge passage of the bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ANDREWS. I would just reiterate that we urge passage of this well-thought-out bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from North Dakota has 30 seconds remaining.

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank Mr. RAMSTAD, a committee member who meant so much to the Ways and Means Committee, Mr. LEWIS for his work with the Delta pilots and the provision he speaks to, as well as Mr. ANDREWS, the pension retirement benefits expert on the Ways and Means and the Ed and Labor Committee.

I would like to think that, as we get this finished today, this sets the stage for joint collaboration further as we work on pension and advancing retirement security.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Ways and Means Committee for sheparding this bill, the Pension Protection Technical Corrections Act, to the floor.

The Pension Protection Act contained major changes to the funding rules for defined benefit pension plans. The final bill was over 900 pages long.

As can be expected with any massive legislative vehicle, the final law contained dozens of mistakes, some technical and some not so technical.

The bill before us today primarily fixes only the technical errors that have been found in the bill. It does not seek to make any changes in pension policy.

The bill was put together by the staffs of all the committees of jurisdiction, both in the House and Senate and on both sides of the aisle. The bill has been vetted by the key regulatory agencies—the Department of Labor, Treasury Department, and the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC).

The bill mostly fixes incorrect punctuation and citations. It also contains a few substantive changes in places where the language of the PPA was unclear and clarification was needed for the agencies to be able to carry out the purposes of the law.

I would like to address some confusion created by the Treasury Department, in which it, as part of its PPA interpretation, provided guidance on the wear-away of workers' accrued pension benefits in cash balance plans.

An important part of the Pension Protection Act was to make clear that the wear-away of workers' benefits was illegal in cash balance plans, not only with respect to normal retirement benefits, but also with respect to early retirement benefits. As a political compromise, Congress made this rule prospective only, with the question of wear-away under the pre-PPA law to be decided by the Federal courts.

The Treasury Department issued a first ruling last year that undermined this carefully crafted compromise. Treasury recently issued new rules in which it indicated it will not rule on pre-PPA wear-away. There are many court cases pending on this matter and it must remain solely to the courts to decide whether pre-PPA pension law permitted employers to wear-away workers' otherwise legally protected accrued benefits.

Although I did not support the PPA, I hope that the House can pass these technical changes and then move on to the more pressing retirement issues of the day.

With the faltering economy and housing market crisis, more and more individuals are withdrawing their 401(k) pension monies in order to pay their mortgages and other bills.

These families are being forced to sacrifice their retirement security in order to survive day to day.

The Congress needs to address the real retirement security crisis facing working families.

The Pension Protection Act only made the problem worse. The law forced companies to speed up pension plan funding regardless of the financial status of the company or the pension plan. While faster funding had some superficial appeal, the real result is to encourage employers to terminate their pension plans or seek access to the accumulated assets.

Workers are increasingly dependent on 401(k) savings plans for their retirement security.

But as my Committee has found over the past year, 401(k) plans are being decimated by below average investment returns and excessive fees.

The Congress needs to start thinking about these more pressing issues.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. POMEROY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6382.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 6382.

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

There was no objection.

HONORING THE GOAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF ASTRONOMY

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 375) to honor the goal of the International Year of Astronomy, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 375

Whereas the year 2009 represents the 400th Anniversary of Galileo's astronomical use of the telescope;

Whereas the year 2009 has been designated the International Year of Astronomy (IYA) by the United Nations and UNESCO;

Whereas astronomical observations and discoveries have profound implications for the development of science, philosophy, culture, and our general conception of our place in the Universe;

Whereas astronomy is one of the oldest basic sciences and contributes fundamentally to the ultimate context of all other sciences;

Whereas astronomy and astronomical discoveries continue to capture the imagination of the American people;

Whereas the United States is the home of the most advanced astronomical research in the world;

Whereas the many creative programs and activities planned in the United States for IYA 2009 are strongly supported by the staff, missions, and observatories of the National Science Foundation and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration;

Whereas science and technology awareness and education play a critical role in the economic success of the United States; and

Whereas the astronomical sciences inspire students to study science, mathematics, engineering, and technology: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) honors the goal of the International Year of Astronomy to celebrate astronomical discoveries;

(2) encourages the public to participate in IYA celebrations and activities and discover more about the Universe and the science of astronomy; and

(3) applauds the efforts of the employees, centers, and laboratories of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the National Science Foundation in promoting public understanding of the astronomical sciences during the celebration of the International Year of Astronomy.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LAMPSON. 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 375, the resolution now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 375, honoring the goal of the International Year of Astronomy. Astronomy seems to capture the imagination of the public more than almost any other discipline of science. Children everywhere gaze with wonder and amazement at the night sky. Images from the Hubble telescope grace the screensavers and wallpaper of our computers.

Millions of people every year visit the many planetariums around the country, including the historic Adler Planetarium in Chicago, and the Burke Baker Planetarium in Houston, which is also used to train space shuttle astronauts in identifying starfields.

The International Year of the Astronomy Committee is taking advantage of the public's enthusiasm by engaging ordinary citizens in real scientific projects, such as tracking binary stars and their eclipses from many different locations. In fact, three of the major goals for IYA 2009 are: One, increase scientific awareness; two, promote widespread access to new knowledge and observing experiences; and, three, support and improve formal and informal science education. These are also priorities for the Science and Technology Committee as reflected in last year's landmark COMPETES Act.

I applaud the astronomy community for making the 2009 International Year of Astronomy not just a celebration of science by scientists but an opportunity to share the wonders and relevance of science with all citizens across the globe.

As a Texan, I am particularly proud of the role that NASA and NASA centers, including the Johnson Space Center in my district, will have in celebrating the International Year of Astronomy and in promoting astronomy and space exploration. I thank Ms. GIFFORDS for offering this resolution to recognize these important efforts and honor the goals of the International Year of Astronomy.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FEENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 375, to honor the goal of the International Year of Astronomy, along with the gentleman from Texas.

In 1609, Galileo Galilei turned a telescope to the night sky and saw an amazing array of astronomical wonders. From that point on, mankind has been fascinated by the secrets of the universe and has been committed to understanding Earth and everything beyond through extraordinary scientific leaps.

In honor of the 400th anniversary of Galileo's discovery, the United Nations has designated 2009 the International Year of Astronomy. The purpose of the International Year of Astronomy is to help citizens of the world discover the impact astronomy has had on their daily lives and create a greater knowledge of what the universe has to offer. The International Year of Astronomy will be a worldwide celebration aiming to stimulate interest in astronomy and science, particularly in younger generations, coalescing around the central theme of, ''The Universe, Yours to Discover.''

There are eight major goals of the International Year of Astronomy. They include:

Increasing scientific awareness in the general public through the communication of scientific breakthroughs;

Promoting widespread access to the universal knowledge of fundamental science through astronomy and sky-observing experiences;

Empowering astronomical communities in developing countries by engaging in international collaboration;

Supporting and improving formal and informal science education in schools and science centers;

Providing a modern image of science and scientists to reinforce the connection between science education and science careers;

Facilitating new and strengthen existing astronomical networks by connecting amateur astronomers with educators and scientists on a local, regional, and national level;

Improving the gender balance of scientists at all levels and promote greater involvement by underrepresented minorities in scientific and engineering careers; and, finally

Facilitating the preservation of the world's dark skies in places such as national parks and astronomical sites.

The U.S. is taking a lead role in the International Year of Astronomy by heading up four of the 11 cornerstone projects outlined by the International Astronomical Union. They include the Galileoscope initiative, which aims to provide millions of people with an inexpensive telescope in order to make their own discoveries just as Galileo did so many years ago; and Dark Skies Awareness, a wide-ranging effort to preserve and protect the world's heritage of Dark Night Skies in astronomical observation sites.

The U.S. is also taking part in From the Earth to the Universe, an exhibit of astronomical photographs from ground and space-based observatories to be displayed in public locations accessible to all. These projects are designed to help achieve one or more of the eight main goals that I went through before.

The International Year of Astronomy is an effort in which the United States is pleased to take a leading role, and I applaud the efforts of the United Nations and the International Astronomical Union. Therefore, I am pleased to join today with the gentleman from Texas, and I urge all of my colleagues to support House Concurrent Resolution 375.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as the gentlelady from Arizona (Ms. GIFFORDS) would consume.

Ms. GIFFORDS. I thank the gentleman.

Next year will be the 400th anniversary of when the Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei first pointed a telescope into the night sky. Galileo did not invent the telescope, but he was the first one to use it for astronomy. The observations he made ultimately revolutionized humanity's understanding of the solar system and of the universe.

Though his telescope was crude, certainly by modern day standards, he was able to see craters and shadows and mountains on the Moon. He also saw the planet Venus go through phases just like our moon does. And he saw moons orbiting the planet Jupiter. He saw all of this at a time when conventional wisdom held that all celestial objects orbited our planet, the planet Earth. These discoveries marked the beginning of modern astronomy.

It is because of the importance of these discoveries that countries all around the world have chosen to recognize the 400th anniversary year, 2009, as the International Year of Astronomy. This celebration of astronomical discoveries is designed to increase interest in astronomy and science. Throughout next year, a wide variety of events

and activities and meetings at parks and museums and other public spaces will promote a greater understanding and appreciation of astronomy and science throughout the United States and throughout the world.

It is only befitting that the United States is taking a lead role in this international celebration, because today the United States is at the forefront in astronomical research. We have built telescopes that would astound Galileo and his contemporaries. We have telescopes on earth with mirrors 400 inches across. We also have telescopes that orbit our planet far above the earth's surface. Indeed, NASA's space-based telescopes, including Hubble Space Telescope, Spitzer, Chandra, and many others, regularly produce images that amaze and inspire people around the world and yield scientific discoveries on everything from the formation of stars and the solar systems to the fate of our universe itself.

Now, I am particularly excited about the opportunity to use the International Year of Astronomy to engage and inspire young people in mathematics and science generally and particularly. I am pleased that the 110th Congress has come to great lengths to increase our Nation's emphasis on science and math, most notably by passing the America COMPETES Act last year. But we can always do more. And nothing captures and engages the mind of students, young and old alike, than the process of discovery. This is the fundamental essence of astronomy, and it is my hope that the events and the activities sponsored by the International Year of Astronomy will inspire many new young people to embrace worlds that will open them through the study of math and science.

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Astronomy has a strong history in my southern Arizona district, and one of the brightest stars we have is Dr. Roger Angel, a professor of astronomy and recipient of a MacArthur Foundation genius award. In Dr. Angel's own words, ''from the study of astronomy, students today can learn about energy in all of its forms, as well as gain an appreciation for the beauty of the universe. They learn practical tools needed to address the energy and climate crisis. Astronomy know-how even has practical value. I am using it to figure out good ways to harness the sun's energy on Earth with big, telescope-like mirrors.''

Thus, we see an example of how students today can build a foundation, and exactly the kind of scientific understanding and technological skill that we need to solve some of society's most pressing problems, climate change, global warming, and our energy needs in the future.

In the United States, some key organizations sponsoring, promoting and organizing events and activities for the International Year of Astronomy include the American Astronomical Society, the Astronomical Society of the Pacific, the Astronomical League, the American Association of Variable Star Observers, NASA, and the National Science Foundation.

Ultimately, astronomy is the study of everything that is not on Earth. It appeals to our sense of wonder and curiosity and our place in the vast cosmos. The German astronomer Johannes Kepler, whose laws of planetary motion are still used today said, ''The treasures hidden in the heavens are so rich that the human mind shall never be lacking in fresh nourishment.''

It is those treasures of the heavens, and the men and women who study them, that we will celebrate and honor and discover in 2009 with the International Year of Astronomy.

Mr. FEENEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank again the gentleman from Texas. All humanity has a common interest in what astronomy can provide to us, and I encourage all of my colleagues to support the bill.

I want to thank staff on both sides for their work on this bill, including a young woman named Susan Gleiser. This is one of the first bills she has had a chance to work on. I urge unanimous adoption of this resolution.

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

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I concur with Mr. FEENEY and would ask that this bill pass.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SERRANO). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LAMPSON) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 375.

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.

CELEBRATING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST AMERICAN WOMAN IN SPACE, DR. SALLY K. RIDE, AND HONORING HER CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SPACE PROGRAM AND TO SCIENCE EDUCATION

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1313) celebrating the 25th anniversary of the first American woman in space, Dr. Sally K. Ride, and honoring her contributions to the space program and to science education.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1313

Whereas Sally K. Ride of Los Angeles, California, a physicist by training and an accomplished athlete, was selected as a National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) astronaut candidate in 1978, as part of the eighth class of NASA astronauts and one of only six women in the class;

Whereas on June 18, 1983, Dr. Ride was lofted into space aboard the Space Shuttle Challenger as part of the STS–7 crew, making her the first American woman in space;

Whereas the STS–7 crew launched two communications satellites from the Shuttle and accomplished many first steps for the United States space program, including the first release and capture of a satellite using the Shuttle's robotic arm, the first demonstration of a Shuttle's flight in formation with a free-flying satellite, and the first United States-German cooperative material science experiments aboard the Shuttle, as well as the conduct of other science experiments;

Whereas on October 5, 1984, Dr. Ride made her second spaceflight as a mission specialist on STS 41–G, a mission that demonstrated the ability to refuel satellites in orbit and launched NASA's Earth Radiation Budget Satellite, which spent over 20 years providing valuable scientific data on the Earth's absorption and re-radiation of solar energy;

Whereas when training for Dr. Ride's third spaceflight assignment ceased after the tragic loss of the Space Shuttle Challenger and her crew in 1986, Dr. Ride was called to serve on the Presidential Commission on the Space Shuttle Challenger Accident;

Whereas Dr. Ride has continued to serve the Nation's space program with distinction, authoring the 1987 report, Leadership and America's Future in Space, and serving on the Columbia Accident Investigation Board;

Whereas, as an educator, author of children's books, and advocate for the next generation of women in science, mathematics, and technology, Dr. Ride's work has contributed to the wellbeing of our youth; and

Whereas Dr. Ride has worked tirelessly and passionately to encourage young women to follow the sciences, mathematics, and technology by promoting science festivals, camps, and other opportunities through which young women can acquire hands-on learning about science: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) celebrates the 25th anniversary of Dr. Sally K. Ride as the first American woman in space; and

(2) extends its appreciation and gratitude for Dr. Ride's excellence in service to the Nation as an astronaut, educator, and advocate for the next generation of women scientists and engineers.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 1313, the resolution now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I introduced H. Res. 1313 which celebrates the 25th anniversary of the first American woman in