

universities increased by a whopping 234 percent. In comparison, the Consumer Price Index increased by 74 percent and median household incomes—the measure of a family's ability to pay for college—increased by 82 percent over the same period.

With tuition increases outpacing inflation and the growth in family incomes, it has become harder and harder for students to pay for college without taking out loans and going thousands of dollars into debt. As a result, the average student loan has increased from \$518 in 1980 to \$2,417 in 1995.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation that addresses this serious problem by strengthening the Federal work-study program. Under current law, earnings from this program are taxed. My bill, the College Student Tax Relief Act of 1997 excludes these earnings from the Federal income tax.

The Federal work-study program enjoys strong bipartisan support because it rewards those who are willing to help themselves. This program provides jobs to needy students who must earn money to help pay their college expenses.

By allowing these students to keep more of what they earn, my bill will significantly increase the take-home pay of working students and ease the financial burdens created by the aforementioned increases in college tuition.

Consider the following example:

Jennifer, an undergraduate student at a public university, qualified for a work-study award of \$2,600. To earn her award, Jennifer worked 18 hours a week during the school year—28 weeks—at the library and was paid \$5.15 an hour for her services. During the summer—12 weeks—Jennifer earned \$3,600 by working as a receptionist in a law firm.

Therefore, Jennifer's total earnings for the taxable year were \$6,200.

Under current law Jennifer would be able to deduct \$4,000—the standard deduction for individuals who can be claimed as a dependent—from her taxable income, leaving her with a tax burden of \$332.

Under my proposal, Jennifer's tax liability would be eliminated because she would also deduct \$2,600—the amount of her work-study earnings—from her taxable income.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to cosponsor the College Student Tax Relief Act of 1997. While \$332 might not sound like a lot of money, it would help students like Jennifer make ends meet and minimize their student loan debt.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION

HON. DANA ROHRBACHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 1997

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, today I am proud to introduce H.R. 1275, the Civilian Space Authorization Act. This bill authorizes appropriations in fiscal years 1998 and 1999 for, and provides policy direction to, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Office of Commercial Space Transportation in the Federal Aviation Administration, and the Office of Space Commerce in the Department of Commerce.

This is an aggressive but responsible bill. Based on the Committee on Science's Views

and Estimates, which calls for strengthening our Nation's research and development investment while pursuing the bipartisan goal of balancing the budget, this bill provides a slight increase in funding for NASA above their fiscal year 1997 level, while holding the other two agencies essentially constant.

This bill reflects priorities set by the Science Committee and its Space and Aeronautics Subcommittee over several years, under both parties' leadership. We strongly support human spaceflight, space science, and the aeronautics and space technology efforts which will keep American industry No. 1, and open the frontier of space to commercial enterprise.

With a few exceptions, we have approved the President's budget request for NASA. It is a greatly improved budget submission than the one he made in fiscal year 1997, especially with regard to the outyears. In two areas, we have added the funds necessary to achieve important goals. In others, we have made small reductions or limitations on the use of funds.

After preserving the safety of the Space Shuttle Flight Program, NASA Administrator Goldin has repeatedly stated to the Congress and audiences all over the country that his most important goal is dramatically reducing the cost of transporting people and cargo into space. NASA has made an excellent start in that direction with the X-33 program and its smaller sibling, the X-34. We are fully funding those programs, and indeed specifically funding the X-33 amount. Unfortunately, the NASA budget only has funds to develop and flight-test one concept for the X-33. NASA has indicated, both in testimony and direct conversations with me and staff that they wish to pursue additional X-vehicles in the future to continue pushing down the cost of space transportation. They also wish they could have funded more than one X-33 concept. This bill uses most of our increase over the President's request to fully fund a different, competitively chosen X-vehicle concept using the most advanced technologies possible. This will provide technical redundancy to the X-33, enable downstream competition in the reusable launch vehicle industry, and accelerate the drive toward cheap access to space.

Another important goal of the subcommittee is preserving steady funding for Space Science. We are providing some small increases to the Space Science accounts in this bill, particularly for analysis of the data coming back from science missions, and also for important initiatives like asteroid detection and NASA participation in the Air Force's Clementine II asteroid intercept mission.

Perhaps the most well known program in this bill is the International Space Station program, which we are fully funding at the President's request, so it will enable important science and help open new frontiers to American free enterprise. Of course, the station program is currently facing the challenge of lack of funding from the Russian Government for their share of the hardware. The Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics held an excellent hearing on April 9 which discussed both the problems with the Russian partnership and the great importance of completing the space station on schedule for scientific and commercial reasons. I am hopeful that the White House will work with us over the next week so that when this bill is marked up in the full Science Committee on April 16, we can address the problems with Russia in this legislation.

Now, this bill doesn't just fund NASA. As commercial space activities continue to grow, creating high wage, high technology jobs here in America using private capital, it is vital that the Government provide a stable and streamlined regulatory and positive business environment for this emerging industry. That's why President Reagan created the Office of Commercial Space Transportation and the Office of Space Commerce. This bill funds and directs the Office of Commercial Space Transportation, now part of the Federal Aviation Administration, to license commercial space transportation vehicles and spaceports. We also fully fund and permanently establish, the Office of Space Commerce, which promotes the growth of current, and the emergence of new, commercial space activities.

As I said earlier, this bill provides significant policy direction as well as authorizing appropriations. That direction boils down to two important themes: ensuring NASA's accountability in spending nearly \$14 billion each year in taxpayer funds, and improving the cost effectiveness of all government civil space spending.

Regarding accountability, this bill gives NASA four major directives. First, in the International Space Station program, the Congress should be better informed as to the thinking behind, and the commercial impact of, the international hardware barter agreements NASA is negotiating with various foreign entities. Second, we want to make sure that as NASA consolidates its nonshuttle operational contracts and moves those activities more into the private sector, that NASA fully consider and inform the Congress regarding the issues of competition and fixed-price versus cost-plus-fee contracting. Third, we direct NASA to pursue independent cost analyses of its programs which include all costs to the taxpayer. And finally, we direct NASA to provide the Congress with a detailed report on the status of the Earth Observing System's Data Information System.

Of course, all of us on the committee and in this body want to ensure that our constituents' tax dollars are spent as effectively as possible, particularly as we drive toward a balanced budget in 2002. So for civil space, like all other so-called discretionary programs, the Congress and administration must work hard to continually improve and reform the cost effectiveness of all Federal space activities. To that end, this bill does several things to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of the taxpayers' investment. We include an initiative to improve NASA's procurement of new technology. We direct NASA to actively pursue the greatest possible commercial participation and use of the International Space Station program. We direct NASA to purchase space science data from commercial providers. We fund a continuing program at the Stennis Space Center to purchase commercial remote sensing data to more cheaply meet the needs of the Mission to Planet Earth program. We strongly state our commitment to move from government-operated space launch vehicles to the purchase of commercially provided launch services, including the possible option of a privatized Shuttle fleet. And we place in statute a very important provision of the President's National Space Policy mandating the purchase of, and preventing NASA competition with, commercially available space goods and services.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is quite a bill. We fund vital Federal space activities in three agencies, and set a positive policy direction for the future of American enterprise, as well as Government projects, in space. I look forward to speaking on the floor for its adoption as soon as possible after the Committee on Science reports it to the full House.