

people in America and around the world to live better lives. We dare not walk away from that responsibility.

Another development that has been gratifying to me has been the emergency—allbeit somewhat unevenly—of a healthy and growing commercial space sector. Can anyone dispute the importance of commercial satellite communications to the world's economy, both directly and indirectly? I expect to see similar developments in commercial remote sensing, launch services, and in areas we do not even contemplate at present.

Yet, a world with a large, global commercial space sector offers challenges to policymakers. I would gently note that those who argue for unleashing the private sector to commercialize space on a global scale should not then attempt to demonize companies for pursuing their interests globally. Loose allegations of unpatriotic behavior against American companies are not helpful as we attempt to sort out the complex issues associated with commerce in a multipolar world.

Next, I must say that I consider one of NASA's finest achievements to have been its continued adherence to the principle that "activities in space should be devoted to peaceful purposes for the benefit of all mankind." NASA has made international cooperation an integral part of its mission, and I think it has paid dividends to our nation over the past four decades. As I testified to the House space subcommittee fifteen years ago on NASA's 25th anniversary:

"We have tended to cut back on these activities when budgets are tight, or when we get nervous about technology transfer to other nations. My view is that international cooperation serves many functions and is important to support; political, scientific, and economic benefits can be derived from international cooperation."

I continue to stand by those sentiments.

Before I close, I must confess that I have been disappointed by what we have not accomplished in our space program since its inception. Among my frustrations is our sorry record in the development of low-cost space transportation. For too long, we have seen advances in transportation come in fits and starts, instead of being an integral part of the space agency's R&D portfolio. That approach has seriously impeded the progress of our nation in space exploration and utilization. I believe that we are making some improvements in our approach to developing new transportation systems; however, we must not go overboard in the other direction and make our programs dependent on the delivery of revolutionary advances by a date certain. Innovation does not work that way—especially under constrained budgets.

Speaking of budgets, those who know me know that I long have been troubled by the nation's inconsistent support of our civil space program. Both Congress and the White House have at various times over the last forty years, wreaked havoc on NASA's ability to make and carry out long-range plans. While some have argued that there is no long-term vision or plan for NASA, I would submit that over the years there have been no lack of plans, studies, and recommendations both from the space agency and from distinguished panels of outside experts—my files are filled with them! Rather, the nation—and I most definitely include Congress in this criticism—has been

unable or unwilling to establish institutional mechanisms for providing a stable budgetary and programmatic framework in which long-term (i.e., over multiple Administrations and Congresses)—and possibly multinational—R&D initiatives can be carried out successfully. Until we address that situation, I am not optimistic that we will be able to achieve many of the ambitious goals that NASA is contemplating for the 21st century.

One of those goals, of course, is human exploration beyond low Earth orbit. I believe that this is one of the areas in which we have fallen most short, to my intense disappointment. I still consider it extremely short-sighted for the Nixon Administration to have canceled the nation's program of lunar exploration just as it was transitioning from an amazing technological and managerial achievement to a sustained program of scientific and human exploration.

Then, when President Reagan approved the development of a Space Station in 1984, I never would have believed that almost fifteen years later we still would not have launched even the first elements of the Station into orbit. Still, there are no easy villains in the Space Station saga—as much as some would like to find them. The simple truth is that NASA, successive Congresses, and successive Administrations all have had their fingerprints on this program, and any blame for the slow progress of this program needs to be shared. At the same time, all of us will have to now work together for this program to be completed successfully.

However, I would like to look forward to the future of human space exploration and not just dwell on past missteps. There are no lack of worthy goals for human exploration. Those goals need to be a fundamental part of our vision for NASA's future.

While there is more that I could say, I will conclude my statement on that note. I have offered these observations with the intention of stimulating some discussion on how best to proceed as our space program enters the 21st century. We must learn from our past if we are to avoid becoming captive to our past.

HONORING THE INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF THEATRICAL STAGE EMPLOYEES LOCAL UNION 51 OF HOUSTON, TEXAS

HON. KEN BENTSEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 2, 1998

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate The International Alliance of Theatrical State Employees Local Union 51 as they celebrate their 100th Anniversary on February 23, 1999. Local 51, which is an integral part of Houston's highly successful arts community, will celebrate with a Gala Program in the Brown Theater of the Wortham Theater Center in Houston, Texas.

The International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Moving Pictures Technicians, Artists and Allied Crafts of the United States and Canada (I.A.), which began in 1893, represents people behind the scenes in the manifold media of show business and exhibitions. Today, there are over 800 local unions throughout the United States and Can-

ada. The local chapter of the Galveston-Houston Theatrical Stage Employees Protective Union was chartered on May 1, 1899. Houston's own Local 51 broke away from that larger group and is today the only stage crafts union in Harris County. In the early part of this century, members of Local 51 set up the traveling vaudeville shows and performances by touring companies that came to the Bayou City first by train, later by truck. Local 51 even supplied the personnel for the backstage work at the downtown movie houses. By the time Houston's major arts organizations presented their first performances, the Local was already in place to provide professional, behind-the-scenes service.

Every stage craft is practiced by these dedicated men and women, making each a valuable link in the production of any show. From the moment a production or meeting is conceived until the last truck pulls away, I.A. technicians are on the job. Today, Local 51 boasts a work roster of over 400 technicians and can fill a producer's or promoter's crew needs with only one telephone call. The local provides a network of qualified technicians for projects of any magnitude.

The members of Local 51 are known and respected worldwide for the quality of the work they provide. They have traveled from China to Singapore to Cairo and throughout the United States with the road tours of hits such as "Phantom of the Opera", "Jesus Christ Superstar", "State Fair", "Carousel", and with David Copperfield. The talents of Local 51 are not limited to the stage. The local has provided convention and exhibit support for several local audio visual companies and in every major hotel and meeting facility in Houston.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Local Union 51 as they celebrate this special time in their history, and extend to all members my personal appreciation for their contributions to the arts in Houston.

ASSESSING TAX CUTS

HON. LEE H. HAMILTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 2, 1998

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert my Washington Report for Friday, October 2, 1998 into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

ASSESSING TAX CUTS

With the new congressional session approaching and a projected \$1.6 trillion surplus in the U.S. Treasury over the next ten years, it is not surprising to see Washington politicians crafting and talking about tax cuts which will appeal to constituents. People will naturally be eyeing the several proposals to determine how they affect their own pocketbook. That is an entirely appropriate perspective, but people ought also to be looking at another question: What impact will the tax proposals have on the distribution of income and wealth in the country?

Broad income trends: Tax proposals need to be assessed in light of two broad trends in our country—the widening income gap between the haves and the have nots, and the difficulty middle-class families have had in improving their status despite the current economic boom.

There is not much doubt but that the gap between the nation's poorest and richest workers has widened. Adjusted for inflation,