to ensure that this dependence does not provide a threat to our nation's well-being.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 300 and its swift passage today.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN).

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas, and I certainly want to be associated with his fine remarks in congratulating Mr. John Koskinen for leading the executive branch in the Y2K effort, and particularly the Federal workforce. But I also wanted to be associated with the remarks of the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN) and the remarks of the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) and all of those folks on both sides of the aisle who made this such a successful bipartisan effort.

Mr. Speaker, this is one of the real success stories in terms of legislation, because we had nothing to read about on January 1. The old axiom with the media is if it bleeds, it leads, and there was no bleeding on January 1, because the Congress, the House and Senate leadership, and the executive branch recognized the importance, devoted their attention to it, came up with the legislation that was necessary, and certainly the executive branch came up with the resources and the leadership that was absolutely essential to make it a nonevent.

I do want to recognize the efforts of the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS) as well in a related matter. In the private sector it was the gentleman from Virginia who introduced the Y2K liability legislation which ensured that the prediction that the American Bar Association made, which was that there could be as much as $1 trillion of liability suits brought by trial lawyers on January 1, never came to pass because the Congress again enacted preventive legislation to see to it that that did not happen; that lawyers were required to warn companies 30 days in advance; that information was required to be shared; that, in fact, there was a cap on punitive damages; and that grants and loans were made available for small businesses.

So both in the private sector and in the public sector, the Congress did its job. That is the point I want to make. It was a nonevent, but both the legislative and the executive branch deserve a great deal of credit for the fact that it was a nonevent both here in the United States and worldwide. It would not have happened had it not been for the leadership on both sides of the aisle, and they deserve congratulations, as does the Federal workforce and Mr. Koskinen.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, today I support H. Con. Res. 300, a resolution recognizing and commending our Nation's workforce for successfully preparing for the Year 2000 date change.

Contrary to what some felt might happen when the clock struck midnight on January 1, 2000, planes didn't fall from the sky. Telephones retained their dial tone; water still ran from the faucets; and America's New Year celebrations were not left in the dark.

The smooth turnover from 1999 into 2000 is directly related to the hundreds, even thousands, of man-hours directed by our federal agencies toward preventing and correcting potential Y2K problems. Given the disruptions that did not occur, I would say these efforts paid off handsomely.

Y2K preparations paid off in other ways as well. As a result of Y2K concerns, there are now thousands more American families that own equipment needed to be adequately prepared for other types of emergencies, namely snow storms, floods and hurricanes.

Government leaders on every level now have a better understanding of technology management issues, and are more aware of the importance of cooperation between local, state and federal officials. What's more, the millennium bug provided a reason to upgrade government technology systems and to inventory resources.

Just being able to say some five months after Year 2000 rollover that it turned out to be a positive experience is a testament to the hard work of the federal workforce.

It is also a reflection of the extensive efforts of the House Y2K Task Force and to the leadership of the sponsors of this legislation, Representatives MORELLA and HORN. It is a tribute to the efforts of the President's Council on the Year 2000 Conversion, and to U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) as well.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this resolution recognizing the good work of our Nation's Federal Workforce and urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 300, Recognizing and Commending our Nation's Federal Workforce for Successfully Preparing our Nation to Withstand any Catastrophic Year 2000 Computer Disruptions.

I want to congratulate Federal Government employees for their efforts in successfully addressing the Y2K problem. I want stress that this Resolution recognizes the hard work of all Federal employees and Federal contractors in evaluating and testing government computer systems.

As was frequently stressed during the past three years, fixing the Y2K computer glitch was not a technical issue; it was a management issue. Therefore, I want to take this opportunity to commend the President and the Vice President for the management structure they developed to attack the Y2K problem. I specifically mention the Vice President because some of my colleagues were ready to blame Vice President GORE if there were any Y2K related problems. As we now know, computer systems were ready for January 1, 2000, and just as some were ready to lay blame so should we be ready to compliment for a job well done. One of their outstanding management decisions was selecting Mr. John Koskinen to be the Chair of the President's Council on Year 2000 Conversion. Mr. Koskinen galvanized and coordinated Federal activities. It is a tribute to Mr. Koskinen's management and diplomatic skills that the American public experienced no disruption of Federal services at the Y2K rollover.

So, to the President, the Vice President, Mr. Koskinen and to all Federal employees, all I have to say is congratulations on a job well done.

In closing, I want to say that it has been a pleasure working with Chairman HORN and Ranking Member TURNER on the Subcommittee on Government Management, Information and Technology on this issue during the past three years. And as always, it has been a pleasure working with Chairwoman MORELLA.

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, having no further requests for time, I urge the adoption of this resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 300.

The question was taken.

Mr. HORN. 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.

FEDERAL CONTRACTOR FLEXIBILITY ACT OF 2000

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3582) to restrict the use of mandatory minimum personnel experience and educational requirements in the procurement of information technology goods or services unless sufficiently justified.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3582

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Federal Contractor Flexibility Act of 2000''.

SEC. 2. APPROPRIATE USE OF PERSONNEL EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS IN THE PROCUREMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY GOODS AND SERVICES.

(a) AMENDMENT OF THE FEDERAL ACQUISITION REGULATION.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Federal Acquisition Regulation issued in accordance with sections 6 and 25 of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy Act (41 U.S.C. 405 and 421) shall be amended to address the use of personnel experience and educational requirements in the procurement of information technology goods and services.

(b) CONTENT OF AMENDMENT.—The amendment issued pursuant to subsection (a) shall, at a minimum, provide that solicitations for the procurement of information technology goods or services shall not set forth any minimum experience or educational requirement for proposed contractor personnel in order for a bidder to be eligible for award of a contract unless the contracting officer first—

(1) determines that the needs of the agency cannot be met without any such requirement; and

(2) explains in writing the basis for that determination.

(c) GAO REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date on which the regulations required by subsection (a) are published in the Federal Register, the Comptroller General shall submit to Congress an evaluation of—

(1) executive agency compliance with the regulations; and

(2) conformance of the regulations with existing law, together with any recommendations that the Comptroller General considers appropriate.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this Act:

(1) EXECUTIVE AGENCY.—The term ''executive agency'' has the meaning given that term in section 105 of title 5, United States Code.

(2) INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY.—The term ''information technology'' has the meaning given that term in the Federal Acquisition Regulation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN).

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS) to explain the legislation before us.

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN) yielding me this time.

I rise today in support of a piece of legislation I think is very important, H.R. 3582, the Federal Flexibility Act of 2000, legislation which will address an ongoing problem in Federal information technology contracts.

I would like to thank my colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Government Management, Information and Technology for his assistance in moving this important legislation forward.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3582 is necessary because Federal contracting officers frequently write into IT contracts minimum personnel requirements that hamper the ability of contractors to find qualified personnel to perform the contract. Oftentimes, this means government contractors cannot hire personnel who they believe can successfully perform the work, but instead they search for just simply qualified resumes. This is a burden on the information and technology industry, it is a burden on the American taxpayer, and it contributes to the chronic worker shortage faced by the technology industry because the Federal Government is the largest purchaser of IT products in the world, spending about $28 billion on goods and services each year.

The Fed-Flex Act would require Federal agencies to justify the minimum personnel requirements frequently written into government contracts. Federal agencies have been experiencing something called ''credential creep'' in the way they write contracts. The problem has become so significant that the Virginia Secretary of Technology, Don Upson, found in a report issued by his office this past September, that minimum personnel requirements are the second largest contributor to the IT workforce shortage in my home State of Virginia. This report was titled ''A Study of Virginia's Information Technology Workforce.'' It strongly recommended that both the government and private sector companies objectively evaluate alternative forms of training and focus on investments in training rather than on degrees or resumes. The nationwide shortage of IT workers is estimated at 364,000, and it is estimated at over 24,000 in the Northern Virginia region alone for the information technology worker shortage.

Now, what these minimum personnel requirements mean for the government is that a Bill Gates or a Michael Dell cannot perform work with the government on most contracts. Since neither one of them holds a college degree, many Federal agencies would not allow them to perform IT work for the government. When Federal agencies write credential creep into contracts, they hinder the ability of Federal contractors to hire qualified personnel to get the job done, and they increase the total cost of the contract to the government and, therefore, the American taxpayer.

In this era of serious labor shortages in nearly every sector of our economy, this practice drives up prices and it limits the flexibility of offers. The government will get better results if it issues performance-based statements of work and leaves it up to the offeror to propose how they will satisfy that requirement. The government should hold the winning offeror accountable for the quality of the cake, not dictate the ingredients that go into the recipe.

Another recent workforce study released by the Information Technology Association of America found that U.S. companies anticipate a demand for 1.6 million IT workers in the next year. According to that study, about 50 percent of the applicants for these jobs would not have the skills required to perform the jobs, meaning that up to 850,000 of these slots go unfilled. The private sector knows it has to adapt to address this shortage and invest in the training that will allow them to get the job done. Let us make sure the Federal Government is not the stumbling block to reaching that goal. The Fed-Flex Act requires agencies to realize that key skills are what matters the most to mission accomplishment within the agencies, not how those skills are acquired.

Recently, there has been ongoing debate about solving the labor shortage in the United States by lifting the cap on H1–B visas. I am a strong supporter of lifting this visa cap, and I am an original cosponsor of my colleague's, the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER), H.R. 3982, the HI–TECH Act, which raises the cap to 200,000 for H1–Bs. But we all know this is a short-term solution. We need to recognize the new types of training employees receive and encourage American businesses to hire employees who have received less traditional methods of training. We also need to encourage our Federal Government to be a leader in solving the workplace shortage and not remain behind the curve as is so often the case.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3582 recognizes the investment that firms make in their employees every day. Many IT firms spend a significant amount of time and dollars training their employees to be up to speed on the latest products and services. The Fed-Flex Act would require agencies to justify the use of such minimum mandatory personnel requirements before imposing such requirements on a particular solicitation for IT services. The Fed-Flex Act would require agencies to justify the use of such minimum mandatory personnel requirements before imposing such requirements in a particular solicitation for IT services. Where the contracting officer determines that the agency's need cannot be met without such requirement, the legislation would not preclude such requirements. Moreover, the legislation would not preclude the agencies from evaluating the advantages that may be associated with a particular employee's experience or education, including participation in an in-house training and certification program. This bill continues the many successes of recent procurement reforms and redirects government to focus on products, not process.

Recently, a study released by the American Association of Community Colleges indicated that 20 percent of community college attendees are pursuing degrees to work on technology issues. With the worker shortage we face in the Nation, it is of great concern to me that the Federal Government could prevent these highly motivated young people from pursuing a technology career. Credential creep is a Federal Government-wide problem. We have fallen behind in recruiting IT workers for the Federal workforce and training Federal workers to take part in the information technology revolution. Yet, the government demands a college degree for entry level positions that might be filled by individuals who have received another form of job training that may be superior. I believe that Federal flexibility is important to address the immediate need within the government, but I am also committed to working closely with my friends in the workforce community to look at credential creep problems as well.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to point to the many organizations that support H.R. 3582. Fed-Flex is supported by ITAA, American Electronics Association, Contract Services Association, Professional Services Council, and CapNet. I would like to quote from a letter sent over by Harris Miller, the President of ITAA. ''The Federal Contractor Flexibility Act is a home run

for practical, efficient, and effective government contracting.'' I would also like to submit a copy of the ITAA letter for the RECORD.

MAY 2, 2000.

Rep. TOM DAVIS.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN DAVIS: On behalf of the 26,000 direct and affiliate members of the Information Technology Association of America (ITAA), I write to urge quick passage of the Federal Contractor Flexibility Act of 2000. We applaud you for sponsoring this common sense bill. This is legislation that recognizes a critical demand for appropriately skilled high tech workers is one of the most vexing problems facing employers today—both in and outside of government. At the same time, it realizes that key skills—and not how they are acquired—are what matters most to mission accomplishment within agencies.

A few weeks ago, ITAA released Bridging the Gap: IT Job Skills for a New Millennium, a major national study on the workforce issue. We found that U.S. companies anticipate a demand for 1.6 million IT workers in the next 12 months. Because roughly fifty percent of applicants will not have the skills required to perform these jobs, over 850,000 IT positions will go begging. Our study suggests that in the private sector, this demand pressure has caused hiring managers to revisit the issue of ''what it takes'' to get the job done.

At one time, the federal government's preference for contractor staff with certain years of experience and a college degree was understandable. Unfortunately, what made sense five to ten years ago does not make sense in today's environment. Indeed, so much has changed in information technology that today's college graduates or those from community colleges are very prepared to take on immediate responsibilities at federal agencies. Talented people with skills in database design, programming, web development and other technical areas have invaluable skills that the federal agencies need today, not three or more years from now.

The agencies that do have specific needs should by all means be able to request certain skills sets and experience, but your legislation will eliminate the situation we find today where old boilerplate language with outmoded requirements is commonly used and reused in thousands of contracts. As you have mentioned your comments, it is more than ironic that some of the foremost leaders of the IT industry, Bill Gates, Michael Dell, and Larry Ellison, would be precluded from most Federal contracts since they did not complete their four year degree!

The Federal Contractor Flexibility Act is a homerun for practical, efficient and effective government contracting. We ask that all Members of Congress support its speedy passage into law.

Very truly yours,

HARRIS N. MILLER,
President.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3582 will help ensure that contracts are performance based rather than process driven. I am dismayed to hear that the administration is not ready to support the legislation at this time, and while I applaud OMB and my friend Dee Lee's commitment to performance-based contracting, I believe that the law does not need a clarification on these minimum personnel requirements. Additionally, the letter from OMB concerns me because it recognizes the problem but it does not support the legislative fix that gives it the authority it needs to ensure the problem is corrected.

In my conversations with local Chambers of Commerce in Northern Virginia, and national procurement organizations, I have heard many instances where these personnel requirements have hampered companies' ability to work with government. I have also been presented with evidence that these minimum personnel requirements have been used at various government agencies to favor incumbent contractors rather than promoting open competition. I have even heard of an instance where the contract employees who unpack computers at some agencies are required to hold college degrees.

Mr. Speaker, I will insert the rest of my comments in the RECORD at this time. I just want to urge my colleagues to support this important legislation. I want to thank my colleague next door, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN) for his leadership on this issue in cosponsoring this, and my colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER) for helping to bring this to the floor so expeditiously.

Mr. Speaker, in the new economy, we are all learning new management techniques and the government can not be last to the table in this effort. Earlier this year, the Department of Labor issued two advisory opinions that threatened to harm the operation of the engine driving our economy, the technology sector. Many of you may be familiar with both the telecommuting and stock options decisions. While we should have those problems solved in the short-term through clarifying Congressional legislation that even the Labor Department has now recognized as necessary, we need to ensure that the government does not continue to impede the development of IT products and services through its own contracting and management processes.

Mr. Speaker, I have also received contract examples from the Departments of Defense and Treasury, and the General Services Administration that include minimum personnel requirements. The Defense Department includes these cumbersome requirements for entry-level IT positions that include such basic tasks as data-entry, and they do not give contractors any opportunity to apply for a waiver. The Treasury contract includes these requirements but then says a company may apply for a waiver after contract award although the waiver requires a significant amount of paperwork to get approved. The GSA requirement is on an IDIQ contract that would affect several companies at the same time and drive-up costs of all of the competing bids.

Mr. Speaker, again I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation. I know it will provide important relief to Virginia and government contractors across the nation. It will also provide a tremendous cost-savings to the government.

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

I rise in strong support of the Federal Contractor Flexibility Act of 2000 which was introduced by our friend, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS), and I want to commend the gentleman for his hard work on this bill. It is a very important piece of legislation, and he did a great job with it.

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I also want to thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN), his neighbor, who also was the primary Democratic sponsor of this legislation.

As has been pointed out, this bill would restrict Federal departments and agencies from using mandatory minimum personnel and experience requirements for contractor personnel in the procurement of information technology goods and services, unless there is some justification for such a restriction.

Currently, Federal information technology procurement officers can require contractors to use employees who, at a minimum, have a college degree. As the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS) pointed out, Bill Gates and Michael Dell would not qualify under the current restrictions.

It is obvious I think to all of us that the Federal agencies oftentimes dictate more stringent educational requirements than are necessary to do the job. H.R. 3582 would require Federal agencies to justify those minimum requirements, but it would not preclude them from including such requirements if the contracting officer determined that the agency's needs could not be met without the requirements.

The legislation also would not preclude agencies from evaluating an employee's experience or education, including their participation in in-house training or other certification programs. But most importantly, this legislation will increase the number of information technology workers eligible to assume government contractor information technology jobs, and it would alleviate the current shortage of labor in this field.

Today, we take the first step by eliminating these arbitrary experience and educational requirements for the private IT sector contractors. But I look forward to working with my colleagues so that we can eliminate these same requirements for our Federal employees.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be a cosponsor of this bipartisan measure. Again, I commend the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS); the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN); the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN), our subcommittee chairman; as well as the gentleman from Indiana (Chairman BURTON); and the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), our ranking member, for their work on this bill.

I urge swift passage of H.R. 3582.

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

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA).

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN) for yielding me the time, and I rise in strong support of H.R. 3582, the Federal Contractor Flexibility Act of 2000.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the lead sponsor, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS), for introducing this

bill. I am proud to be a cosponsor of the legislation.

It would require Federal agencies to justify the use of minimum education and experience requirements in their solicitations for information technology services, which have virtually no relation to whether the individual can perform the required work.

Mr. Speaker, under current regulations, Bill Gates, as has been mentioned, would not be allowed to perform IT work for the Federal Government. That is right. The richest, and many would say one of the smartest, men in the world is not allowed to contract with the Federal Government under current law. Why? Because many Federal agencies currently put in place minimum education requirements in solicitations for IT services, and Mr. Gates does not hold a college degree.

This can be blamed on the fact that many agencies are now writing ''credential creep'' into contracts, hindering the ability of Federal contractors to hire qualified personnel who can get the job done. Frequently, these same agencies will require contractors to use employees who have a minimum of a college degree or even more stringent education requirements.

Additionally, Federal agencies dictate to companies the amount of experience employees must have working on certain IT systems. In this era of serious labor shortages in the information technology marketplace, this practice drives up prices and limits the flexibility of offers.

As a representative from Montgomery County, Maryland, which has many high-technology industries and research institutions, I understand the importance of skilled workers to our growing economy. However, I also understand that there currently exists a serious shortage of technology workers in not only the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area but throughout the Nation as well.

Mr. Speaker, passage of H.R. 3582 will enable the Government to get better results by issuing performance-based statements of work and leave it up to the job seeker to propose how he or she will get the job done. The Government's requirement should be on the merit and success of the job, not on dictating how the job is accomplished.

Finally, H.R. 3582 recognizes the investment that firms make in their employees today by not precluding agencies from evaluating the advantages that may be associated with a particular employee's experience or education, including participation in in-house training and certification programs.

Mr. Speaker, this is a common sense piece of legislation. I urge support of its passage.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN), the primary Democratic cosponsor of the resolution.

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to thank and acknowledge the leadership of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER) for his Federal management reform efforts. He is doing a very fine job on the Committee on Government Reform, and I congratulate him. And also, certainly, the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN), the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) for their efforts. In many areas, this is a committee that can work together and this is certainly an example of good, bipartisan constructive legislation.

I especially want to recognize the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS) and his fine staff for their terrific work on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, this ought to be a no-brainer. But it is designed to address something that for years has gone on. It is a classic example of the right hand not only not letting the left hand know what they were doing, but they were working at cross purposes. If we ask people working in the Federal Government, particularly in Labor or Commerce or HHS, they will say that one of the most serious problems today is the fallout from the new economy of people working in the old economy having their jobs replaced by automation or by competition from overseas.

Mr. Speaker, while 80 percent of them get jobs, and better paying jobs, there are 20 percent of them who do not, who are left by the wayside of the new economy highway. And these people want to work hard, they have got the will and the ability, but they do not have the opportunity.

In many cases, it is because they do not have a 4-year college degree. They do not have the preparation, the skills with computers. We are not providing sufficient opportunity for them. And then there are other people who cannot afford a 4-year college degree. They do not need a 4-year college degree.

On the other hand, we have the Federal Government here saying that if one wants to bid for Federal contracts, they have to have a 4-year college degree on many of these information technology contracts.

They do not have to. They do not need it. In fact, all this bill does is to say that if a contracting officer can justify these higher standards, then fine, go ahead with it. But if they cannot justify requiring these college degrees and these higher certifications, then do not require it. Allow companies to hire people that can perform the work. Put the emphasis on the quality product, not the process.

In Virginia, we are recognizing that this is one of the prime causes of the technology shortage. We have a shortage of almost 30,000 vacancies. We cannot fill them. Many of them are in Federal contract work. This is silly. We have the people, the warm bodies; but we do not have the preparation, and it does not make sense to require a 4-year degree.

Mr. Speaker, in this period of unprecedented labor shortage, certainly we ought to take the initiative. I wish the executive branch had taken the initiative itself, but this bill is necessary. I am sure that they are going to enact it because the current practice drives up prices and limits the competition for Federal contracts. We do not want that. That does not serve anybody's purposes.

It has already been said, and I do not want to beat up on Bill Gates, of all people. We keep talking about the fact that he does not have a college degree. Well, he does not; but he did not need it to be successful. He is a classic example. And there are any number of others as well. I think we made our case on that.

The Department of Commerce recently reported that there are more than 600,000 positions in the information technology field that have yet to be filled. And, in fact, they estimate that over the next 10 years we are going to need more than 100,000 a year. I saw a figure today of 130,000 a year. We do not have those people. We do not need to be sending those people through college. We need to be getting them into community colleges, junior colleges, computer training courses, whatever gives them the skills that are necessary.

Now, we are going to get a whole lot of flack when we bring up the H(1)(b) bill. People are going to say we are bringing in laborers from overseas and taking our jobs and so on. My response is going to be, look, raising the cap on H(1)(b) visas is a short-term solution. We have vacancies and we need to fill them and fill them with qualified people, and bringing these people in that can go to work immediately with skills just pumps iron into our economic bloodstream. We need to do this. It makes a lot of sense. But that is not the long-term solution.

Mr. Speaker, the long-term solution is to train people. And not with 4 years; give them the specific training they need. Give them the opportunities; give them the access to these information technology jobs.

If we do, we are going to enable our American workforce to realize its full potential. If we put these kinds of obstacles in the way, all we are doing is limiting our potential economically and socially.

So I think I have made my point. This bill needs to be supported strongly and unanimously, and I trust it will be.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to first commend Melissa Wojciak for her excellent staff work on H.R. 3582, the Federal Contractor Flexibility Act of 2000. Melissa is a true professional and put a lot of her heart into this legislation. That is the kind of people we want on Capitol Hill.

Let me just note a few things. I completely agree with the two gentlemen from Virginia, and if that ever makes this bipartisan, I do not know what does. The gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS) certainly reflected the

floor management's views of what is the essence of this particular legislation.

The fact is, performance-based contracting is a method of acquiring services that focus on successful results or outcomes rather than dictating how the work is to be performed.

Now, I also agree with the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN) about the need for education. I have been preaching that for the last 2 years. The community colleges of this Nation, public institutions, and the State universities of this Nation should be working with Silicon Valley east, west, south, north, wherever it is, to get the latest generation of equipment on which they can train people. State budgets never have enough, and as a former university president in charge of a State university for 18 years, I can assure my colleagues that is a true statement across the Nation, that very little money is invested in the technology that these students need to be exposed to.

They also need to be exposed to logic, to math, to science starting in the kindergarten. There ought to be concepts of science that a good public school system has, and that is exactly what is needed.

These are $60,000-a-year jobs, and if that should not wake somebody up, I do not know what it does wake up. We need more of our own citizens, and those who have newly arrived here, from Cambodia, the Vietnamese, the Latin American; and what we need are opportunities for the children of immigrants as well as opportunities for our own citizens.

So I completely agree with the gentleman from Virginia on this issue, and much more needs to be done on that. We cannot just have some fly-by-night operation that does this for individuals; we need a long-term investment by the Silicon Valleys, the computer industry, and they need to quit depending on people from abroad. They need to educate our own people.

Mr. Speaker, with those remarks, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER), who is the ranking member on the subcommittee, for all of his constructive comments during the hearings, during the markup, and now on the floor.

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

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Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3582.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GOLDEN SPIKE/CROSSROADS OF THE WEST NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2932) to authorize the Golden Spike/Crossroads of the West National Heritage Area, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2932

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. AUTHORIZATION OF STUDY.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—For the purposes of this section:

(1) GOLDEN SPIKE RAIL STUDY.—The term ''Golden Spike Rail Study'' means the Golden Spike Rail Feasibility Study, Reconnaissance Survey, Ogden, Utah to Golden Spike National Historic Site'', National Park Service, 1993.

(2) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of the Interior.

(3) STUDY AREA.—The term ''Study Area'' means the Golden Spike/Crossroads of the West National Heritage Area Study Area, the boundaries of which are described in subsection (d).

(b) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall conduct a study of the Study Area which includes analysis and documentation necessary to determine whether the Study Area—

(1) has an assemblage of natural, historic, and cultural resources that together represent distinctive aspects of American heritage worthy of recognition, conservation, interpretation, and continuing use, and are best managed through partnerships among public and private entities;

(2) reflects traditions, customs, beliefs, and folk-life that are a valuable part of the national story;

(3) provides outstanding opportunities to conserve natural, historic, cultural, or scenic features;

(4) provides outstanding recreational and educational opportunities;

(5) contains resources important to the identified theme or themes of the Study Area that retain a degree of integrity capable of supporting interpretation;

(6) includes residents, business interests, nonprofit organizations, and local and State governments who have demonstrated support for the concept of a National Heritage Area; and

(7) has a potential management entity to work in partnership with residents, business interests, nonprofit organizations, and local and State governments to develop a National Heritage Area consistent with continued local and State economic activity.

(c) CONSULTATION.—In conducting the study, the Secretary shall—

(1) consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer, State Historical Society, and other appropriate organizations; and

(2) use previously completed materials, including the Golden Spike Rail Study.

(d) BOUNDARIES OF STUDY AREA.—The Study Area shall be comprised of sites relating to completion of the first transcontinental railroad in the State of Utah, concentrating on those areas identified on the map included in the Golden Spike Rail Study.

(e) REPORT.—Not later than 3 fiscal years after funds are first made available to carry out this section, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate a report on the findings and conclusions of the study and recommendations based upon those findings and conclusions.

(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this section.

SEC. 2. CROSSROADS OF THE WEST HISTORIC DISTRICT.

(a) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this section are—

(1) to preserve and interpret, for the educational and inspirational benefit of the public, the contribution to our national heritage of certain historic and cultural lands and edifices of the Crossroads of the West Historic District; and

(2) to enhance cultural and compatible economic redevelopment within the District.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—For the purposes of this section:

(1) DISTRICT.—The term ''District'' means the Crossroads of the West Historic District established by subsection (c).

(2) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of the Interior.

(3) HISTORIC INFRASTRUCTURE.—The term ''historic infrastructure'' means the District's historic buildings and any other structure that the Secretary determines to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

(c) CROSSROADS OF THE WEST HISTORIC DISTRICT.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established the Crossroads of the West Historic District in the city of Ogden, Utah.

(2) BOUNDARIES.—The boundaries of the District shall be the boundaries depicted on the map entitled ''Crossroads of the West Historic District'', numbered OGGO-20,000, and dated March 22, 2000. The map shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the Department of the Interior.

(d) DEVELOPMENT PLAN.—The Secretary may make grants and enter into cooperative agreements with the State of Utah, local governments, and nonprofit entities under which the Secretary agrees to pay not more than 50 percent of the costs of—

(1) preparation of a plan for the development of historic, architectural, natural, cultural, and interpretive resources within the District;

(2) implementation of projects approved by the Secretary under the development plan described in paragraph (1); and

(3) an analysis assessing measures that could be taken to encourage economic development and revitalization within the District in a manner consistent with the District's historic character.

(e) RESTORATION, PRESERVATION, AND INTERPRETATION OF PROPERTIES.—

(1) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—The Secretary may enter into cooperative agreements with the State of Utah, local governments, and nonprofit entities owning property within the District under which the Secretary may—

(A) pay not more than 50 percent of the cost of restoring, repairing, rehabilitating, and improving historic infrastructure within the District;

(B) provide technical assistance with respect to the preservation and interpretation of properties within the District; and

(C) mark and provide interpretation of properties within the District.

(2) NON-FEDERAL CONTRIBUTIONS.—When determining the cost of restoring, repairing, rehabilitating, and improving historic infrastructure within the District for the purposes of paragraph (1)(A), the Secretary may consider any donation of property, services, or goods from a non-Federal source as a contribution of funds from a non-Federal source.

(3) PROVISIONS.—A cooperative agreement under paragraph (1) shall provide that—

(A) the Secretary shall have the right of access at reasonable times to public portions of the property for interpretive and other purposes;

(B) no change or alteration may be made in the property except with the agreement of the property owner, the Secretary, and any Federal agency that may have regulatory jurisdiction over the property; and

(C) any construction grant made under this section shall be subject to an agreement that provides—