

There was no objection.

Mr. BASS. Mr. Speaker, following on my friend of Rhode Island, I had the pleasure of joining him and you, Mr. Speaker, in Atlanta a week and a half ago to witness the 15th international FIRST Competition. It was truly an extraordinary experience. There were 1,133 teams represented there, 904 of them were returning teams, and 229 new teams there.

Let me explain, as my friend from Rhode Island talked about how this works. What happens is a mentor or a company or a small businessman or anybody outside an engineer, outside of a school system, will go to a school, a high school and say they want to start a FIRST team there.

You get together a group of kids, the kinds of kids that you might not see on the football field or the baseball field, the kind of kid who might not be the biggest, most popular person in the school. You get together with them, and you tell them about how you could build a robot, go to a competition, win that competition, go to a regional, go to the nationals and really do something that is exciting.

This foundation was started by, as my friend from Rhode Island said, Dean Kamen, a constituent of mine from New Hampshire. Dean Kamen didn't get a college degree. He spent quite a bit of time in college, but he used the skills that were available to him to learn, what was important to learn in order to become successful, a business person, an inventor, an entrepreneur, and obviously an engineer and a physicist.

His dream is not only to be successful in his own life but to be able to communicate that kind of success to kids who may not have the kind of advantages that many of us enjoy. So he put together this organization which he called FIRST. It is designed to give kids, many of whom come from disadvantaged school systems and disadvantaged neighborhoods, and are from families that may have problems, but to give these kids the excitement that one gets from baseball or from football or from other sports, and, indeed, he succeeded.

My friend from Rhode Island went to the Boston regionals and saw how excited these children were, as I did, when I went to the regional in Manchester, New Hampshire, with their team screaming for them in the audience and the robots competing against one another in a ring with referees dressed in stripes judging them.

They handed out over 2,000 awards to these kids nationally this year. Dean Kamen himself made a beautiful clock out of Plexiglass, a beautiful grandfather clock that is given each year to the winner.

Indeed, Dean is a great entrepreneur, a great businessman, and he has brought a lot of great products to society. But his real passion in the world, I believe, is bringing education and excitement in engineering and physics to children.

Now you may ask, is this just the work of one individual and one person's dream? Well, back in 2002, the FIRST Foundation contracted with Brandeis University to do a study about what happens to their graduates. Here are some of their conclusions, key conclusions.

Participants in the FIRST program were more likely to attend college than an average high school graduate. Eighty-nine percent of the FIRST competition alumni attended college. That compares with a 65 percent national average. Once at college, a high proportion of FIRST alumni took courses at internships that were related to math, science, technology. Eighty-seven percent took a math course in college. Seventy-eight took at least one science course. That compares with a 66 percent average in these fields.

Perhaps the most striking finding is that 41 percent of the alumni that went to FIRST actually ended up majoring in engineering in college. Their educational aspirations were well above the national average; 78 percent of the FIRST alumni reported they expected to earn a graduate degree versus 58 percent among college students nationally.

FIRST alumni were more likely to pursue careers in science, technology and engineering. Compared to students in a comparison group, 45 percent versus 20 percent. FIRST alumni also reported continuing involvement in their communities. FIRST alumni were more than twice as likely to report volunteering in the community in the past years than were students in the matched comparison group, 71 percent versus 30 percent. Site visits indicate also that a variety of positive public impact in schools, including new classes, improve school spirit and other great benefits.

My friends, this is a wonderful program that is in its fifteenth year now, has handed out almost \$8 million in scholarships, has business, educational institutions and students working together for science and education.

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It is a great partnership. I have two challenges: I want my colleagues to get involved in their first regionals, and I want the first participants to contact their Members of Congress and get them involved. This is a great program that is good for America and good for education.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. EMANUEL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

NSA DATABASE OF AMERICANS' PHONE CALLS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the news reports released today that the National Security Agency has been collecting telephone data on tens of millions of Americans. With these news reports, we have discovered that the NSA, in conjunction with some of our country's largest telecommunications providers, now has a database with the phone records of millions of Americans.

While the creation of this database does not involve the NSA listening to or recording our conversations, the agency now has detailed records of calls people have made to business associates, to maybe a family physician, to friends, to family. This program is a significant violation of the privacy of all Americans.

Unfortunately, this is not the first time the administration has had the National Security Agency spy on Americans. We discovered just this past December that the President had authorized the NSA to spy domestically. While we still do not have much information on the domestic spying program, we know that hundreds, possibly thousands, of Americans had their telephone conversations and e-mails monitored.

President Bush asserts that he authorized the NSA only to intercept the international communications of people with known links to al Qaeda and related terrorist organizations. Yet we find out months later that during the same period of time, the NSA has been creating the largest database ever assembled, with information from millions of people. We can hardly say that millions of people here in the United States whose privacy has been invaded have suspected ties to terrorism.

The President did this yet again without seeking warrants. This administration has long sought to extend its power and authority at every available opportunity, and this is no exception. If the administration truly needed these phone records, they could have, at the very least, obtained warrants from the FISA court.

The fourth amendment clearly states: "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrant shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation."

I strongly believe that gathering information on millions of American citizens without first obtaining warrants or any judicial oversight clearly violates this core principle of our Constitution.

I have to ask, where is the oversight? A program of this magnitude must be considered by Congress. While the President has stated that appropriate Members of Congress have been briefed on intelligence activities, this does not constitute oversight. Congress should