

February has been the designated time for honoring the Black contribution. It serves as a reminder that we must be ever vigilant of the Black experience in this country, and the African roots of our shared concepts of freedom, hope, and justice. This year's theme for Black History Month is fittingly, "From Slavery to Freedom: The Story of Africans in the Americas."

As Chair of the Congressional Ethiopia and Ethiopian American Caucus, I am particularly interested in the history of Africans in this country. My experience with this community has taught me that the history of the Diaspora is as complex and divergent as the communities themselves. Our challenge this month is educate ourselves about the Diaspora and to understand how African Americans embrace and explore their heritage.

This February, let us broaden our understanding of the myriad ways people of African descent arrived here—beyond the slave trade. Let us be honest and open about the impact that slavery has had on African descendant communities today, but let us also celebrate the African contribution to our culture in spite of it. The best way to honor the African American experience is to educate oneself and one's community. I urge you to use this month to expose yourselves to the ways in which the African American experience has already been made a part of your life.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.J. RES. 20, FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS, FISCAL YEAR 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 31, 2007

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as we consider this important legislation to highlight several matters of critical importance within the funding allocations for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, NASA.

Over past years several of my colleagues and I have worked hard to ensure that NASA fulfills its commitment to its science mission, as well as its commitment to the excellent men and women who daily carry out NASA's cutting-edge missions. In particular, I want to acknowledge and pay tribute to my constituents at NASA Ames Research Center, one of the world's premier research facilities located in my district in California's Silicon Valley.

As we pass this continuing resolution, which we are forced to do by the inaction of the previous majority leadership, it is important that NASA recognize and adhere to the clear intent expressed by both the House and Senate under H.R. 5672, the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2007, and the accompanying committee reports—House Report 109–520 and Senate Report 109–280. I would like to highlight some important points from these bills.

Within the House-passed version of H.R. 5672, Congress included the following points:

Recognizing the disproportionate reduction proposed by NASA to its research and analysis budget, a recommended \$50 million increase was included.

Following NASA's misguided attempt to discontinue funding the Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy, SOFIA project, the House concluded that should NASA's internal review of the program result in a recommended continuation of the program, NASA should accordingly reallocate funds to SOFIA.

Building on the priorities expressed by the House, the Senate Appropriations Committee subsequently included the following high-priority points:

In addressing NASA's management of the SOFIA project, Senate Appropriators stated:

"The budget request eliminates funding for the SOFIA mission in fiscal year 2007. Since the budget was released, NASA has completed a review of its decision and has concluded that there are no scientific or technical reasons for canceling the mission . . . This calls into question the credibility of the science directorate in making budget decisions and determining scientific priorities.

"The Committee expects NASA to come up with a plan to fund the SOFIA mission in 2007 from within available funds through a reprogramming request subject to section 505 of this act. In determining the funding strategy for this program, the Committee directs NASA to follow the recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences Decadal survey in Astronomy and Astrophysics when setting mission and budget priorities. Missions that are ranked higher in the surveys should be given priority over missions that are ranked lower in priority with launch dates."

To ensure the protection of NASA's critical workforce, the current moratorium on involuntary reductions in force, RIF, was extended from its current expiration date of March 2007 until the end of fiscal year 2008.

These provisions are unequivocal and must be honored by NASA as such. In particular, given Congress's stated and clear questioning of NASA's guidance of the SOFIA project to date, NASA should refrain from making significant changes to SOFIA without Congress first having the opportunity to review their proposals.

Additionally, it is critical that the existing prohibition on the transfer of funds between major accounts is observed consistent with the NASA Authorization Act of 2005. The reprogramming of funds across accounts has in the past been used to change funding allocations within NASA in ways that counter the legislative intent of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, NASA and its institutional capabilities are a critical component of our Nation's high-technology research and development infrastructure and must be protected for the sake of our future innovative capability. Ensuring these provisions passed by the Congress are honored as part of this fiscal year 2007 funding process will ensure NASA's continued excellence.

MATH AND SCIENCE INCENTIVE ACT OF 2007

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 5, 2007

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, today I introduced with Congressmen EHLERS the Math and Science Incentive Act of 2005. This legis-

lation would pay—over the life of the loan up to \$10,000—the interest on the undergraduate student loans of math, science or engineering majors who agree to work 5 years in their respective fields. The idea for this legislation came from the book *Winning the Future*, by my friend and our former colleague Newt Gingrich. America's dominance in science and innovation is slipping, but this legislation can help combat this trend.

We are facing today a critical shortage of science and engineering students in the United States. Unfortunately, there is little public awareness of this trend or its implications for jobs, industry or national security in America's future. We need to make sure we have people who can fill these science and engineering positions. In an era in which students are graduating college with record levels of debt, I am hopeful that this incentive will be a significant motivator in attracting or retaining math, science and engineering students.

How do we know that our Nation is slipping in the areas of math, science, engineering and technology? Americans, for decades, led the world in patents. But we can no longer claim that lead. The percentage of U.S. patents has been steadily declining as foreigners, especially Asians, have become more active and in some fields have seized the innovation lead. The United States share of its own industrial patents now stands at only 52 percent. Foreign advances in basic science now often rival or even exceed America's. Published research by Americans is lagging.

Physical Review, a series of top physics journals, last year tracked a reversal in which American scientific papers, in two decades, dropped from the most published to minority status. In 2003—the most recent year statistics are available—the total number of American papers published was just 29 percent, down from 61 percent in 1983.

Another measuring stick: Nobel prizes. From the 1960s through the 1990s, American scientists dominated. Now the rest of the world has caught up. Our scientists win now about half of the Nobel prizes, the rest go to Britain, Japan, Russia, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and New Zealand. According to the National Science Foundation, the United States has a smaller share of the worldwide total of science and engineering doctoral degrees awarded than both Asia and Europe.

This is a real problem. In 2000, Asian universities accounted for almost 1.2 million of the world's science and engineering degrees. European universities—including Russia and eastern Europe accounted for 850,000.

North American universities accounted for only about 500,000. Since 1980, science and engineering positions in the U.S. have grown at five times the rate of positions in the civilian workforce as a whole.

The Math and Science Incentive Act augments the recently approved National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent grants—National SMART grants. National SMART grants provide grants of up to \$4,000 to Pell Grant-eligible students in their third and fourth academic year of undergraduate education at a 4-year, degree-granting institution of higher education. The student must be pursuing a major in the physical, life, or computer sciences, math, technology, or engineering or a foreign language. The student must also have a grade-point average of at least 3.0.

SMART grants are an important tool for attracting and retaining lower-income students in