Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank the President for clearly identifying America's priorities in his fiscal year 2005 budget. There is no doubt that we are in a time of war and I am pleased President Bush's budget sent a clear signal that our Nation's defense and homeland security must remain the top priority of the Federal Government. However, I believe we can and must do more.

That is why last week I introduced an updated version of legislation that I introduced last year, the Common Sense Spending Act. This legislation will continue to fund nondefense, nonhomeland security and hold discretionary spending at fiscal year 2004 levels for the next year, then increase at the rate of inflation over the next 4 years. It is all common sense. The spending act will slow the growth of mandatory spending by 1 percent, holding Social Security harmless, and reauthorizes PAYGO requiring offsets for direct spending. It also tightens the definition of emergency spending. Again, it is all common sense.

Mr. Speaker, if Members are serious about getting control of Federal spending, then I ask them to join me in support of the Common Sense Spending Act. It is time to limit our spending to reflect the priorities we have set.

HONORING COLONEL JESSE THOMAS, COMMANDER, 167TH AIRLIFT WING, WEST VIRGINIA AIR NATIONAL GUARD, ON HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE MILITARY

(Mrs. CAPITO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Colonel Jesse A. Thomas, the Commander of the 167th Airlift Wing of the West Virginia Air National Guard based in Martinsburg, West Virginia.

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Colonel Thomas is retiring after 33 years in our Armed Forces. Colonel Thomas began his military service as a T–37 instructor pilot in 1971. He then joined the West Virginia Air National Guard when he became a C–130 aircraft commander. Colonel Thomas has logged approximately 11,000 flight hours as a command pilot, including 5,000 hours as an instructor.

During Operation Desert Shield, Thomas deployed to Europe as an aircrew member and unit commander. He also flew airdrop and air defense missions in Yugoslavia and Central America and Southwest Asia.

Mr. Speaker, in our current war on terror, the National Guard has been called upon to fight in Iraq and Afghanistan, and thousands of brave men and women have answered that call. I thank all of the men and women of the National Guard who give so much in service to our Nation. Colonel Jesse Thomas, who has dedicated 34 years to the defense of freedom, deserves the respect of all of us in the House, and I thank him for his devoted service to the people of West Virginia and his country.

THE PROSPECT OF PEACE IN CYPRUS

(Mr. KIRK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, after decades of intercommunal violence between Turkey and Greece, there is now hope for peace on Cyprus.

On February 3, President Bush met with U.N. Secretary-General Annan to restart the peace process. Following talks between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders on February 13, Annan announced the resumption of negotiations, saying, ''I really believe that, after 40 years, a settlement is at last in reach.''

Since February 19, the two sides have been discussing a U.N. peace plan in Cyprus. Despite predictably difficult negotiations, the Annan blueprint is secure. If there is no agreement by the two parties by March 22, Turkey and Greece will join the negotiations to broker a deal. If there is still no agreement by March 29, Annan will ''fill in the blanks,'' and Greek and Turkish Cypriots will then vote on this plan in separate referenda in April. If all goes well, a reunited Cyprus will enter the European Union on May 1.

Having long supported peace efforts in Cyprus, the United States must now extend a helping hand to the Cypriots as they confront the difficulties of implementing an agreement. In 1984, Congress authorized President Reagan's $250 million Cyprus Peace and Reconstruction Fund. The money was not provided because we did not reach a settlement. Europe is home to the last ''Berlin-style'' wall in Cyprus. Let us make this the year that it comes down forever.

THE ''H.L. HUNLEY''

(Mr. BROWN of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 140th anniversary of the final voyage of the *H.L. Hunley*. On February 17, 1864, the *Hunley* embarked on a dangerous mission when Lieutenant George Dixon led his crew to do what no other submarine had ever done before, successfully sink another ship in combat. That night in Charleston Harbor, the *Hunley* rammed her spar torpedo into the hull of the USS *Housatonic*. The ship sunk shortly thereafter, forever securing the *Hunley*'s place in history.

The crew, however, never returned and vanished into the harbor. The location of the crew and ship remained a mystery for over 130 years until 1995 when the submarine was found. It was placed under the care of the Warren Lasch Conservation Center in North Charleston in my district. Through the efforts of the Hunley Commission and the Friends of the Hunley, the vessel will be preserved for generations to come. All eight crew members' bodies have been recovered and will receive a military burial on April 17, 2004, at Magnolia Cemetery in Charleston. I welcome all Americans to take the opportunity to marvel at this archeological wonder.

HAITI

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, yesterday was Texas Independence Day, March 2. This Nation and our people value both independence and democracy. But it is sad to note that a small nation by the name of Haiti has not received the same amount of respect, collegiality, and assistance that this country could be called to do. It is shameful that we have in the dark of night the question of whether or not a duly elected democratic President, President Aristide, was taken away from his home without his free will.

People are dying in the streets of Haiti. The question becomes what happened to President Aristide and why he was removed against his will. The question becomes whether or not this Nation will engage with insurgents and thugs and drug dealers, as the opposition represents; whether or not we will tolerate the continued pillaging and the loss of life; whether or not we will grant temporary protective status for Haitians who are here in fear of their life; and whether or not we respect those who are fleeing from persecution by granting individual asylum hearings.

Mr. Speaker, this Nation can do better. We can do better with our allies and friends. Why are we not doing better for Haiti?

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHAW). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later today.

CHARLES ''PETE'' CONRAD ASTRONOMY AWARDS ACT

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the