

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 4635,
DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND
URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND
INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2001

SPEECH OF

HON. F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, JR.

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 19, 2000

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, as the House proceeds to consider the Conference Report accompanying H.R. 4635, the Veterans Administration and Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Act of Fiscal Year 2001, I wish to highlight several provisions of this legislation that are important to our nation's science enterprise.

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

By providing a total of \$14.3 billion for NASA in FY01, this bill increases NASA's budget above the President's request by some \$250 million and represents an increase of \$683 million over the previous fiscal year. This is a significant increase for NASA and represents continued strong Congressional support for the agency's mission, following on the heels of passage of H.R. 1654, the NASA reauthorization bill, which is now awaiting the President's signature.

The bill fully funds the Space Shuttle, the International Space Station, Mars exploration, and the Space Launch Initiative. Equally significant, this bill provides the resources necessary to permit NASA to fund a broad range of space science programs, life and microgravity research activities, earth science, and aeronautics research. It is vitally important that NASA continue to maintain an array of ongoing, basic research and development programs.

There are some areas of concern NASA must continue to deal with, including serious programmatic slips in the X-33, X-34, and the X-37 programs. NASA must also endeavor to improve its management under the "faster, better, cheaper" paradigm, insuring that missions are designed without taking on unreasonable levels of risk.

I am also greatly concerned about NASA's apparent efforts to sole-source a \$600 million research contract under the "Living With a Star" program. NASA appears to be bending acquisition rules to preclude our national community of research and development laboratories from competing for this very important initiative. I am disturbed by NASA's actions and will continue to monitor this contract to insure that their justification for sole-source meets the spirit and letter of the law.

That being said, I support increased funding for NASA as provided in H.R. 4635 and compliment Veterans Administration and Housing and Urban Development Subcommittee Chairman WALSH for his efforts to strengthen NASA's programs. The funding levels and initiatives contained in this bill bode well for NASA's future.

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Concerning the National Science Foundation, I support the provisions in the conference report providing a Fiscal Year 2001 funding level of \$4.4 billion, the largest NSF budget ever and an increase of \$529 million over the previous fiscal year.

I think it is important that the role of NSF in providing the intellectual capital needed both for economic growth and biomedical research be more widely recognized. We are in the midst of one of the Nation's longest economic expansions that owes much to the technological changes driven by basic scientific research conducted 10 to 15 years ago. Many of today's new industries, which provide good, high paying jobs, can be linked directly to research supported by NSF in the 1980s and 1990s. Moreover, many of the breakthroughs in biomedical research have their underpinnings in research and technologies developed by investigators under NSF grants.

I wish to emphasize, too, the critical research in information technology carried out under the National Science Foundation's auspices. Future developments in computational research will help scientists in the U.S. advance the boundaries of all fields of science, and is vitally important that the U.S. maintain a leadership role in information technology. Reflecting this commitment, the Science Committee successfully passed H.R. 2086 through the House, legislation calling for new government emphasis in this important field. H.R. 4635 significantly increases funding for information technology research, and again I commend Mr. WALSH for his support of NSF and IT research spending.

Mr. Speaker, while I support the funding levels provided for National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the National Science Foundation, there are also provisions in this bill that I oppose. Unfortunately H.R. 4733, the Energy and Water Appropriations bill, has been added to the Veterans Administration and Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill. Of particular concern is the National Ignition Facility. The Department of Energy has badly mismanaged this program, potentially wasting over \$900 million of taxpayers' money without any clear indication that NIF will actually work. NIF is over budget, behind schedule, and may not work. In the face of these difficulties, I think it is wrong to reward DOE's incompetence by providing—as this conference report does—\$199 million for the project.

I voted against overturning the President's veto on the Energy and Water Conference Report just last week and I will vote against this measure today. I regret that H.R. 4733 has been made part of the Veterans Administration and Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill.

AIR FORCE RESEARCH
LABORATORY

HON. WILLIAM M. THOMAS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 24, 2000

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, on November 14th the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) will award Air Force Research Laboratory Rocket Site facilities at Edwards Air Force Base a historic aerospace site designation. The AIAA is absolutely right: the Research Lab truly is one of the nation's most important aerospace facilities and it does have a rich history of service to the nation.

The significance of the role the Air Force Research Laboratory has played in our de-

fense and conquest of space is illustrated by the other places the AIAA will name historic sites this year. The AIAA is naming Tranquility Base on the Moon, where Americans first touched down, as an historic site. Similarly, they are honoring Dutch Flats Airport, where Lindbergh tested the Spirit of St. Louis, the original Aerojet Engineering Company plant in Pasadena and the Massachusetts farm where Dr. Robert Goddard tested the first liquid propellant rocket in 1926, as historic sites. Including the Research Laboratory in this group shows the value knowledgeable people place on the Air Force Research Laboratory's over 50 years of research, testing and development.

A brief review of the work that has been done and is being done at the Research Laboratory makes it easy to understand why the AIAA regards the Research Laboratory as important. Nearly every U.S. rocket system used today uses technology based on the Air Force Research Laboratory's work. The laboratory has tested and developed rocket propulsion technologies for defense and space systems. The Saturn rockets that powered America's Apollo flights were tested there. There are unique facilities for continuously testing space satellite propulsion thrusters for up to 7 hours and immense rocket stands that are still valuable research and testing tools. In fact, Research Laboratory personnel are now working on new technologies in coordination with industry and other government agencies through the Integrated High Payoff Rocket Propulsion Technology program.

For over half a century, a quiet, dedicated group of people have joined together on a remote part of Edwards Air Force Base to pioneer the concepts that have made modern space flight and defense technologies possible. AIAA's recognition is one we should all agree with and one in which Air Force Research Laboratory personnel past and present can take just pride.

REGAS RESTAURANT

HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 24, 2000

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, one of America's finest dining eateries, Regas Restaurant, in Knoxville, closed its doors after 81 years of service to East Tennessee.

The Regas family has had a tremendous impact on the lives of just about everyone in the community. I can assure you that I am a true example of that as I met my wife, Lynn, there. Many families have made dozens of memories that will be cherished for a long time.

Regas Restaurant was always the place to go for a special event, anniversary, or birthday.

Frank and George Regas began the Restaurant in July of 1919 as a coffee shop named the Astor Cafe. It later became known as the Regas Brothers Cafe. The restaurant was renamed once again in 1938 as Regas Restaurant. From then until now, the family business has changed, but their attentiveness to every person that walked through their doors will always be remembered.

Bill Regas, son of Frank Regas, began helping out in the restaurant in the 1950's up until