

request for earth science programs. These programs have taken a significant cut in recent years even though they have delivered important scientific data.

I am a strong supporter of the servicing of the Hubble Space Telescope and am happy to see that this bill expresses support for a fourth servicing mission to Hubble. However, I had hoped the bill would provide more detailed guidance regarding the amount of funds to be used for the Hubble servicing mission. I will continue to work with my colleagues to ensure that a Hubble servicing mission takes place and that it is provided with necessary funding.

This bill also provides significant funding for the President's exploration initiative. I support the President's Vision for Space Exploration and believe human space exploration is a worthwhile undertaking. However, NASA's exploration plans are currently in flux. NASA Administrator Michael Griffin has expressed a desire to accelerate the development of the Crew Exploration Vehicle, and Project Prometheus is being restructured. These are just a few examples of the possible changes to the Exploration program at NASA. So in light of the relatively immature state of the Exploration program, I believe we need to proceed cautiously and thoughtfully while ensuring that the demands of the exploration mission do not take away from other core missions.

We are currently faced with a tight budget, and I realize we need to make very difficult decisions about the Federal budget. However, I am concerned that we are not investing enough in science and research and development, which has the effect of strengthening and expanding our economy.

I am also pleased that the bill includes \$106 million for the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP). MEP serves small and medium sized manufacturing companies nationally to enhance their ability to compete globally. Every Federal dollar appropriated for MEP leverages \$2 in state and private-sector funding, which means that a small federal investment of \$106 million translates into billions of dollars in benefits for the economy in terms of jobs created and retained, investment, and sales. The appropriators' acknowledgment of MEP's importance is welcome—especially as manufacturers continue to experience tough economic times.

And, because of its importance for my own Congressional District, I am glad to note that the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) budget includes \$45 million for construction and specifically \$9.4 million for the completion of the Boulder Central Utility Plant. NIST's Boulder laboratories were built in the 1950s and are in critical need of modernization to ensure the continuation of world-class research.

However, my support for the bill is reluctant for the reasons I have expressed year after year—namely, that it provides inadequate funding for the Department of Commerce laboratories in my district in Colorado—NIST and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The NOAA budget took a cut of 13 percent over the FY05 level and has been the target to draw from for other programs in the bill during debate on the floor. The office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR), which funds the important work being conducted in the labs in my district, is funded at \$326 million in the bill—down from \$337 million in

FY05. NOAA performs vital research in climate change, cooperates with NASA on Earth observations, monitors our oceans and provides Americans with important weather forecasting that affects one-third of all industries in our country. A 13-percent cut to this agency means not only cuts to important research but also to Americans jobs. If we do not support and protect this research and these jobs, we cannot continue to be a leader in oceanic and atmospheric research.

NIST also fared poorly in this bill—receiving a cut of \$150 million from the FY05 budget. I am specifically concerned that the Advanced Technology Program (ATP) received no funding. While I believe this is an important and worthy program, if this body intends to eliminate its funding, at a minimum we need to provide close-out costs associated with its termination. The Views and Estimates of the FY06 budget signed by Democratic and Republican members of the House Science Committee identified at least \$33 million in close-out costs which will have to be absorbed by NIST labs, resulting in cuts to research programs.

The Small Business Administration also has not fared well. I am disappointed by the anemic investment made by the Bush Administration and Congress in our Nation's small businesses. Although small businesses are the top job creator in this country, the Small Business Administration (SBA) budget is one of the hardest hit in the bill. While the bill improves upon the budget request by reinstating the microloan program and 7a loan program, more needs to be done. We must not turn our back on America's economic future.

My reactions are also mixed regarding the Justice Department portion of the bill.

For example, I was glad to see that under the bill as it came to the floor the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) would have received an increase of \$54 million over the FY05 budget. I was supportive of this increase because I think it is important that we provide states with this reimbursement. However, I could not support the Dreier amendment that took funds out of the already dramatically cut NOAA budget to further fund SCAAP. Year after year, NOAA programs have faced budgetary cuts, which translate into degraded ability to perform its world-class research, and a loss of American jobs.

I voted for some amendments intended to improve the bill. Some were adopted, including the Baird amendment to increase funding for the COPS program, but others were not.

In particular, I am very glad that the House approved the amendment to limit the use of Section 215 of the "Patriot Act" to obtain information from libraries and bookstores. I hope that the approval of this amendment demonstrates that the Congress will take a similarly thoughtful approach when we consider whether to extend or revise that Act.

However, I was disappointed by the rejection of the amendment to bar prosecution on Federal drug charges of people using marijuana for medical purposes in ways permitted by the laws of Colorado or any other state that permits such use.

I am not a doctor or a lawyer. My support for the amendment was not based on a judgment about the medical value of marijuana or a disagreement with the Supreme Court's decision upholding the constitutionality of the Controlled Substances Act as applied to its

use pursuant to a state medical-marijuana law. Instead, it was based on my respect and support for the people of Colorado who voted to allow medical use of marijuana in our state. I think that the Federal government ought to share that respect and not seek to overrule that decision. That would have been the effect of the amendment, which is why I voted for it.

Finally, I am not encouraged by funding levels in the bill for State Department activities.

The State Department as a whole is funded 10 percent less than in FY 2005. Funding for peacekeeping missions is decreased from this year's levels when we take supplemental funds into account, making it harder for the international community to support activities that are ongoing in the Middle East, Afghanistan, Liberia, West Africa, East Timor, Cambodia, Western Sahara, Kosovo and Bosnia. Funding for education and cultural exchange programs is higher than last year but less than the request, which is disappointing at a time when our investment in the non-military sources of foreign policy is more important than ever. Even more disappointing at a time when the President is speaking out about the importance of U.S. democratization efforts is the 15 percent cut to National Endowment for Democracy programs.

In summary, this bill is not all that it should be—but it is not so bad that it should be rejected. I will vote for it and hope that it will improve as the legislative process continues.

COMMENDING ED MESSER FOR
EXEMPLARY COMMUNITY SERVICE

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 17, 2005

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the exemplary public service of Ed Messer, a resident of the Chautauqua County Town of Carroll, upon the occasion of the celebration of his years of dedicated community involvement.

As a young man Ed demonstrated his strength, courage and devotion to his country as a member of the United States Marine League.

Ed's patriotism continues to be evident today, as he devotes his time as an avid member and past Commander of the Frewsburg American Legion and the Chautauqua County American Legion.

Mr. Messer became active in the Town of Carroll Democratic Committee in mid 1970's. During that time he served as the election machine custodian for the Town of Carroll for many years.

Presently Ed serves as the Chairman of the Town of Carroll's Democratic Committee. His success in that role is apparent in the fact that currently, except for town justices, every office in the Town of Carroll including the County Legislator position is held by Democrats.

I ask that we pause to consider the contributions Mr. Ed Messer has made, not just to the Democratic Party in general, but to the people of his community, his county and to western New York as well. Chautauqua County is a better place because of Ed Messer's commitment to public service, and I am proud, Mr. Speaker, to have an opportunity to honor him today.