to support programs designed to train and manage them after they get there. The current national climate requires decisive action to implement solutions. This legislation initiates the reforms necessary to restore public trust and accountability to law enforcement.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000

SPREAD OF
Hon. Charles F. Bass
Of New Hampshire
In the House of Representatives
Thursday, July 22, 1999

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2561) making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes:

Mr. Bass. Mr. Chairman, I rise to speak on the FY00 Defense Appropriations Act and to express my support for the Air Force's F–22.

I wish to commend the distinguished gentleman from California, Mr. Lewis, for producing a bill that addresses the serious and evolving challenges facing our military. Under his guidance, the Subcommittee has worked very hard to promote our national security within a constrained budget, and I believe the bill before us goes a long way toward addressing many of our most urgent military requirements.

I am, however, troubled by the Subcommittee's recommendation to cut $1.8 billion from the F–22 program. I certainly appreciate the Subcommittee's concerns about the program and am fully aware of the substantial challenges it faced as it sought to reconcile military requirements with available resources. Nevertheless, I believe that the F–22 remains critical to maintaining the air superiority that has proven invaluable to the United States throughout its history. In short, the F–22 program is the Air Force's number one priority.

Mr. Chairman, although I support the bill before us, I look forward to working with the Subcommittee Chairman and other members of the Committee to ensure that the F–22 is fully funded in the final bill.

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT PLAN

Hon. Fortney Pete Stark
Of California
In the House of Representatives
Friday, July 30, 1999

Mr. Stark. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleague Albert Wynn (D-MD) on behalf of the citizens of the United States and their requests for a much-needed Medicare prescription drug benefit plan.

Some of the greatest financial difficulties faced by seniors today come as a result of increasingly exorbitant medication prices. As the price of prescription drugs continue to rise, access to these vital drugs decrease concurrently.

Just this week, we received the following petition from the Homecrest House Resident Council of Silver Spring, Maryland. This petition was sent to various members of Congress as well as President Clinton urging us to work together for the institution of a Medicare prescription drug benefit plan. Close to 300 of the residents signed this letter which stretches some seven feet long. It is an urgent plea that not only lays out their own concerns, but also those of seniors nationwide who are consistently restricted financially from obtaining vital prescription drugs.

The petition notes that decreased access to vital medications only contributes to prolonged illness and more frequent hospitalization, which subsequently increases the government's costs of caring for these elderly and disabled citizens.

We ask our colleagues to join with us today in protecting our seniors and in aiding them in gaining access to the prescription drugs to which they are entitled. This petition is yet another example of the need for Congress to actively improve and protect the Medicare program. All seniors deserve access to prescription drug medications. It is our duty today to guarantee that access through prompt enactment of legislation that adds a prescription drug benefit to Medicare.

I am submitting a copy of the petition we received which clearly illustrates the Homecrest House residents' concerns and requests.

HOMECREST HOUSE RESIDENT COUNCIL,
Silver Spring, MD, July 8, 1999.

Hon. Peter Stark,
Chairman, Community Affairs Committee.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE STARK: We are enclosing our petition signed by most of our 300 resident.

All acknowledgment would be greatly appreciated.

We are sure that we voice a concern of our friends around the nation, seniors and disabled, who do not have the means to buy needed medications.

We are confident that you will help us and that you and your party will get our vote, because you recognize how critically important it is to make prescription drugs more affordable for senior and disabled persons. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Virginia Benson,
President.
Mary Rydelel,
Chair, Community Affairs Committee.

Enclosure.

Copies of this petition have been either hand-delivered or mailed to President Clinton as well as several legislators.

As Members of Congress, you hold in your hands the future quality of life of retired disabled Americans, most of whom worked hard all their lives and contributed to the greatness of our beloved country!

The 300 Residents of a retirement community in Silver Spring, Maryland who signed this petition, reflect the strivings of most elderly and disabled Americans all over the country.

We are sending to you our urgent plea to address the most vital problem affecting our segment of population and that is the skyrocketing cost of prescription drug!

The fact that many vital medications are out of financial reach of most seniors and disabled contributes to the misery of protracted illness and more frequent hospitalization, which—in turn—increases the government cost of caring for millions of elderly and disabled.

Please keep in mind that we, seniors, take full advantage of the privilege of voting.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2605) making appropriations for energy and water development for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes.

Mr. Castle. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of H.R. 2605, the FY 2000 Energy and Water