

at the International Space Symposium. A question raised at this event was how the United States' position, as a leader in both government sponsored and commercial space industry and exploration, is to be maintained in the future in light of emerging competitors and markets around the world.

As a partner in the construction of the International Space Station, we have entered into the greatest example of international cooperation to date. As NASA director Dan Goldin remarked at the Symposium, the Space Station will be a partnership of 16 countries, including the U.S., Russia, Japan, the eleven members of the European Union, and Brazil. The Expedition 1 crew left for the Space Station at 1:53 AM, Tuesday morning, marking October 31, 2000, as the date that humanity began its permanent residence in space. American astronaut Bill Shepherd and Russian cosmonauts Yuri Gidzenko and Sergei Krikalev will dock with the Space Station on Thursday and begin assembly tasks as new elements are added to the orbiting outpost. At completion, the Space Station will have a pressurized volume larger than the cabin and cargo hold of a 747 airliner. Of the seven modules, six will house laboratories. With these, the United States and the nations of the world will have the opportunity to use the resources and capabilities of the Space Station for scientific and technological research. The U.S. laboratory module will have racks, or lab space, for individual experiments, as well as sites where independent research payload can be attached. Some portion of each will be dedicated to commercial use.

As expected, a host of physical science experiments will use the research racks, payload sites, and Earth-viewing windows. Platforms will also be available to test communications systems. Exciting experiments are proposed in the life sciences and other fields only now recognizing the opportunities that exist in space. Studies in porous-ceramic bone replacement, gene transformation, and drug design will all benefit from extended experiments in the weightless environment of the Space Station. The ISS also provides an avenue for other countries to have access to space, for experimentation and exploration, thereby diminishing the need for their own space launch vehicle and potential missile capabilities. We must seize this opportunity for international cooperation, fair access to space, and limitless scientific and technological advancement.

As the International Space Station demonstrates, the future poses many opportunities for the United States in space. However, it likewise presents several risks. Also discussed at the International Space Symposium were the threats facing the U.S. space industry. One of the largest and most worri-

some for our long-term health and viability is a lack of trained, competent, technically skilled workers. The space sector employs between 400,000 and 1,000,000 people. Assuming a 25 year career span, this indicates a need for about 150,000 new employees a year. This does not take into account the fact that the space industry workforce is aging and that the skills used in the space sector, such as system level engineering, problem solving and trouble shooting, and general technical aptitude, are needed in other industries as well. A recent study found that the space sector dropped from being the third most popular field for young people to enter in 1990 to seventh in 1999. The space industry is finding it harder to both recruit and retain technically skilled workers.

I bring this to our colleagues' attention, Mr. President, because the federal government is facing a similar threat. Shortages in workers with scientific and technical training are being faced by many Executive agencies and government labs, as well as the federal space community. As difficult as it is for the commercial space industry to recruit and retain qualified employees, it is even harder for the federal government. Now, and for the foreseeable future, the federal government will continue to be the biggest client for the space industry with its civil and military space ventures. The federal government needs to be able to make decisions regarding selection of products, services and systems and have the personnel to use them. It must also have the personnel to advise Congress and federal regulatory agencies in making intelligent, informed and prudent decisions that will encourage competition and success in the commercial space industry.

The Federal and commercial space industry recognize the risk the shortage of technically skilled workers present to the nation's long-term prosperity and viability. As the ranking member of the Subcommittee on International Security, Proliferation and Federal Services, I am interested in how we can avert what most certainly poses a threat to our national security and economic well-being. The Federal Government is attempting to address those factors in its work environment that make it less attractive to technically skilled workers, while emphasizing the rewarding and fulfilling public service careers available. A way for the Federal Government to increase the number of qualified workers could be a partnership with universities to encourage the skills and training needed to enter the field. The Federal Government should aggressively promote its student loan repayment program to attract young college graduates who may turn away from Federal service because they are burdened with school debts. This program, which has been

authorized since 1991, was never implemented due to budget cuts, hiring freezes, and downsizing over the past decade. Since last March, Senators DURBIN, VOINOVICH, and I have urged the Office of Personnel Management to implement the loan repayment program because we viewed it as an opportunity to encourage young people to join the Federal Government. We were successful in expanding the benefit beyond the scope of the initial authorization through an amendment to the FY01 DoD Authorization Act, which was signed by the President on October 30, 2000.

The loan repayment program will be a critical component for the Federal Government in its effort to recruit and retain highly qualified professional, technical, or administrative personnel by allowing Federal agencies to repay up to \$40,000 of an employee's student loans. In addition to attracting recent college graduates, efforts to retain experienced federal employees will include loan repayment programs for those who pursue additional academic training. We stand at the threshold of an age of opportunity and challenge. Our future as a global leader in space depends on having the people to meet this challenge. I urge my colleagues to join me in fostering an interest in public service among our nation's youth so that they will pursue careers that further our nation's federal space programs.

THE SMALL BUSINESS, HEALTH, TAX, AND MINIMUM WAGE ACT

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I am deeply concerned that important efforts to support small businesses are jeopardized by the many unrelated amendments that have been added to H.R. 2614 the Small Business, Health, Tax, and Minimum Wage Act. I ask my colleagues to join me in working to pass important legislation vital to preserve the Certified Development Company Program, the Small Business Innovation Research Program, and the reauthorization of the Small Businesses Administration. As Congress prepares to adjourn, it is irresponsible to prevent action on these important issues.

I am very concerned that innocent provisions that support small businesses and job creation are being held hostage in a debate over unrelated issues. H.R. 2614 was introduced as a bill to amend the Small Business Investment Act to make improvements to the certified development company program. This program provides gap financing which is vital to foster entrepreneurship and create economic opportunities. In recent days, however, this bill has been loaded down with numerous provisions that completely overshadow this program and threaten to shatter our chance to authorize