

May 4, 2000

an important role in our communities and that America's community spirit continues to hold tremendous promise for the future. Again, I offer my congratulations to Meredith for this outstanding achievement.

HONORING ARNOLD D. ANDERSON
OF ONTARIO, CALIFORNIA

HON. GARY G. MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2000

Mr. GARY MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise to celebrate the contributions that Mr. Arnold D. Anderson, of Ontario, California, has made to his community.

Over the last 62 years, Mr. Anderson has dedicated much of his time to the needs of Ontario. He has served as president of numerous civic organizations, including the Ontario Host Lion's Club, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, and the Ontario Junior Chamber of Commerce. From 1959 to 1963, Mr. Anderson served as a Member of the Board of Trustees of the Chaffey High School Trust. For the past 34 years, Mr. Anderson has served on the Chaffey College Trust Board.

As a result of his extensive community service, Mr. Anderson has received numerous awards and honors. In the 1940's, he received several awards from the U.S. Department of Treasury and the U.S. Department of War for selling war bonds. His contributions have been commended by his Lion's Club, the California Department of Corrections, the West End YMCA, members of the California State Legislature, the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors, and the City of Ontario.

Although recently confined to a wheelchair, Mr. Anderson has continued to make valuable contributions to those in need, placing his needs second to those of others. It is with great honor that I join the community of Ontario as the Ontario Host Lion's Club celebrates Mr. Anderson's 62 years of perfect attendance with an Honorary Lifetime Membership.

By constantly striving to improve his community, Mr. Anderson has become a true American hero, worthy of our praise and gratitude.

EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM TO
RESHAPE AIR FORCE WORKFORCE

HON. TONY P. HALL

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2000

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleague from Ohio, Mr. HOBSON, in introducing the Air Force Workforce Renewal Act, a bill to stabilize employment within the Air Force and bring more current technical skills into the Air Force workforce. The measure will give Air Force managers expanded use of voluntary early retirement incentives to create job openings to be filled by new employees with cutting edge technological skills.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

The rapid pace of technology development and its importance to our economy and national defense is well recognized. At the same time, the Defense Department is faced with a rapidly changing and uncertain threat. The convergence of these trends means that the technical challenges faced by defense personnel will be greater than at any other time in our history. Defense employees must be capable of meeting these challenges if our armed services are to remain the most superior fighting force in the world.

Unfortunately, existing personnel laws do not give Defense Department managers the flexibility they need to keep up with rapidly changing personnel needs, especially in the scientific and technical fields. After more than ten years of much needed draw down and virtually no new hiring, the military services have been stymied in their efforts to acquire such personnel.

Since 1989, the Defense Department has reduced the size of its workforce by more than 400,000 positions, or 36 percent. To make this astounding reduction possible, only a small number of new employees have been hired in the last decade. Thus, there has been an alarmingly disproportionate reduction in younger employees. The number of employees below the age of 31 has dropped 76 percent since 1989 and more than a third of the workforce will be eligible for retirement over the next 4 years.

A crisis is looming in the Defense Department. Unless personnel practices are changed, the Pentagon will lurch from a predominantly senior workforce to one that is largely inexperienced. Without a smooth transition, vital institutional knowledge will not be passed on.

This problem is particularly acute for the Air Force because of its historically heavy reliance on science and technology. The preservation and advancement of our Air Force's high tech advantage is more important than ever as new and uncertain threats to the country develop. The Air Force's dominant role in recent operations in Iraq and Kosovo also makes the case for continued improvement of our technological edge.

To prevent a sudden workforce vacuum and allow for the orderly transfer of corporate knowledge to the next workforce, Mr. HOBSON and I have crafted a temporary, experimental program. The measure makes a simple modification to the Voluntary Early Retirement Authority [VERA] and Voluntary Separation Incentive Pay [VSIP] programs that are already in existing law for Defense Department employees. Because of our special concern for the Air Force and the Air Force's strong support for personnel system reforms, this demonstration program would be conducted by that service.

Under the measure, for a limited time period, Air Force leaders would have the power to offer financial incentives without having to eliminate workforce numbers. The amount of the incentive that an employee could be offered will be determined by the same formula that the current VERA/VSIP law uses, which could be as much as \$25,000. Under this measure, work

The test program is limited to no more than 1,000 employees annually and terminates after five years.

In addition to permitting the Air Force to reshape and stabilize its workforce, it will also save substantial amounts of money because the salary of a retirement-eligible employee averages almost twice that of a replacement hire. Therefore, despite the initial outlays required for retirement incentives, the Air Force estimates the Hall-Hobson bill will save about \$68,000 over a 5-year period for each senior slot opened for an entry level worker and over a seven year period, the cumulative savings could be as much as \$120 million.

The measure also includes a provision that allows the Air Force to hire entry level personnel more quickly provided that they have strong academic records. It is not enough for us to create positions for new high tech employees. If we are going to get the best, we also have to make the Air Force competitive with high tech industry in hiring them. The hiring process takes too long to attract new college graduates in scientific and technical fields who can get jobs in the private sector in only a fraction of the time it takes in the military services. I am familiar with attempts by the Air Force Research Laboratory to hire new graduates that took more than a year. In many of these cases, the job prospects gave up and took other jobs.

To further strengthen the workforce, the bill also gives the Air Force the authority to hire a small number of eminent scientists from the private sector for periods of 4 years or less. These experts will bring unique cutting-edge skills into the research laboratory that will jump start new efforts in critical technology areas. The temporary nature of these positions gives the Air Force the agility to move at the pace of technology development, rotating experts through as they are needed. This provision is modeled after existing legislation for the Defense Advanced Research Project Agency [DARPA] which has been successful in infusing this defense agency with creative new scientific ideas.

This legislation is a win-win situation for everyone. The Air Force will get the skills it wants and those people considering retirement are given the financial boost that allows them to retire early. The Air Force also saves money in the long term and our country will be better positioned to maintain our national security.

Moreover, this experimental pilot program will provide valuable information that can be used to address similar workforce problems in the other services and non-defense Federal agencies.

H.R. —

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Air Force Work Force Renewal Act".

SEC. 2. TEMPORARY AUTHORITY REGARDING VOLUNTARY SEPARATION INCENTIVES AND EARLY RETIREMENT FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE.

(a) SEPARATION PAY.—Section 5597(b) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following: "Under such program separation pay may also be offered for the purpose of maintaining continuity of skills among employees of the Department