stand around the world, and medical advances that cannot be compared to any other time in our world.

What a magnificent legacy he left us. Today we have satellites that spin above our atmosphere around the Earth. We have the International Space Station that the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WELDON) spoke of, but today that dream is somewhat clouded.

Mr. Speaker, I want to challenge my colleagues today that it is time for us to change that vision back to what our country shared in the 1960s and the 1970s through the Apollo program, when our commitment budgetarily was 4 percent of the budget to go into space. And my colleagues in the House today, we are doing much more in space than we were doing then, but we are doing it with six-tenths of 1 percent of our budget.

The commitment that we made to change the world is not as strong today as it was 40 years ago. Something is wrong there. We have to change that lack of commitment back into the vision that can make the difference for the little girls that are going to follow, like Keely Woodruff, who might need the advance to save their life. Instead of it being a vagus nerve stimulator, what else might it be able to be to change that life?

If we fail to enact that vision that we planned at the International Space Station, to have seven scientists up there, to have a vehicle that can return them safely if there needs to be, like a crew return vehicle which we have begun to work on, if we fail to make the commitment, even to find the extra $300 million that we have asked for in this Congress, then something is wrong.

Then that is our challenge, colleagues, and ladies and gentlemen of this country. It is time to reaffirm our commitment and to go forward and see our dream accomplished in space.

SCIENCE IS WHAT SPACE EXPLORATION IS ALL ABOUT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, to be able to join my colleagues to remind us of the important challenge that this Nation accepted some 40 years ago when, under the vision of President John F. Kennedy, we said to the world that we would not be the stepchild of the Soviet Union.

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted that we were courageous enough to stand up and be counted, to value science, space exploration, to challenge the minds of Americans to begin to develop a great love and affection for the disciplines of engineering, math and science. Over the years we have created a new world, a world that has been filled with the excitement of space exploration and new heroes. We can tell by the lines that stood for the movies which captured the essence of what space was all about. We can tell by the stars in the eyes of young children who are delighted after they have visited the various space centers, and I might say particularly the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. LAMPSON) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WELDON) and myself, and many others, have the privilege of serving on the Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics; but the greatest privilege I have is going back to my district and going to elementary schools and telling a child, ''Yes, you can.'' That is, you can be an astronaut, an engineer. You can emphasize the skills that come about through studying science, and you can be someone.

Mr. Speaker, there are choices that we have to make in this Congress. When I came to Congress from an inner city district, people were watching and wondering: Would she choose housing over space; would she choose education over space? She has to do that.

I was able to turn around the concept of what space exploration and science is all about. It is about all of America. It is about all of our investment. It is about saying to each and every one that there is a return on the investment in science and exploration. There is a return on the investment of knowing how to do the sciences in space, to determine whether we can save lives of those afflicted with diabetes and HIV/AIDS and heart disease and cancer. Out of that came a sense of appreciation.

Mr. Speaker, having the privilege of learning myself and being able to bring to the Space Center people from around the world, I remember hosting the European Union because it was an asset in our community, and being part of the EU and the parliamentarian exchange. I insisted that they visit the Space Center, and that was the one of the very special parts of their trip. We took about 40 members of the European Union to Johnson Space Center. How privileged they thought they were. I went with President Rollins of Ghana, who is a pilot. He flew in the simulated spaceship, and began to think about what kind of space exploration could occur in Africa, on the continent of Africa.

I have a more personal note. First of all, I am delighted to be able to salute those constituents that have stayed steady on the forefront, insisting that space exploration and human space shuttle is for everyone. But let me pay tribute to a neighbor and friend, Ron McNair, and I guess it was that time when that tragedy occurred that we began to understand that you do not take space exploration for granted, and that is why I am such a strong advocate for safety and for the dollars.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to joining my colleagues and insisting on an added amount of dollars to ensure that we can do science in space; that the module gets completed, even though we are looking to the Italians; that seven people can be in space; and that, God forbid, we do not even think about an unsafe journey for the men and women who have offered themselves on behalf of this Nation.

This is a tribute to the many men and women and all those who have gone before us, and I am proud to stand here as a member of the Committee on Science and join the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LAMPSON) to pay this tribute, but also to say to America, we have choices to make. We are fighting about education dollars, health dollars, but I believe we can invest in America's future by continuing our space exploration and making sure that the dollars are well spent. Less for tax cut, and more for investment. If we do that, we will get the kind of return that we need to have.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with Senate in getting more dollars to ensure that we have the kind of human space flight program, the unmanned program, the science program, the Earth program, and we begin to develop successful stories and successful ventures for this country and this world.

COMPREHENSIVE ELECTION REFORM LEGISLATION NEEDED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to open a discussion on election reform.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, as chair of the Democratic Caucus Special Committee on Election Reform, I stand before Congress today to urge this body to respond to the unrelenting public outcry for comprehensive election reform legislation.

Election reform is an issue that transcends all partisan politics. The right to vote is the very cornerstone of our democracy. Earlier this year I was honored to be appointed by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT) House minority leader, to chair the U.S. House of Representatives Democratic Caucus Special Committee on Election Reform. I am very pleased to be joined on that committee by a prestigious group of representatives, including the ranking members of the Committee on House Administration and the Committee on the Judiciary. As a matter of fact, many of those on that committee may serve as speakers here today.

The goal of our committee is to ensure the integrity of the election process while increasing voter confidence