Russ Meyer recognized that business jets are a tremendous productivity tool. It is productivity that has helped our economy grow. We are the number one economy of the world, and it's not because we have fewer regulations. We have more. It's not because we have the lowest wages. We're among the highest. It's because of visionaries like Russ Meyer who gave the American people the ability to do the same work in less time, making us the most productive and strongest workforce and economy in the world.

In the 1980s, the general aviation industry was faced with a tremendous hurdle that threatened to eliminate a big portion of the general aviation aircraft market. Aircraft manufacturers were forced to cease production of their piston-powered aircraft due to liability issues that extended over the life of the aircraft. In response to this threat, Russ put his leadership to work on Capitol Hill. He became one of the principal advocates for the General Aviation Revitalization Act of 1994. This bill provided limited liability on general aviation aircraft and revitalized the general aviation industry.

But this is just one of many contributions Russ has given to the industry as a whole. Far beyond his leadership in the business sector, Russ is also a philanthropist. One person described Russ as one who has a big heart and wants to serve the underserved. This isn't just talk. Russ was the chairman of a campaign to construct a 42,000-square-foot complex for the Boys and Girls Club of South Central Kansas. He led the fundraising effort and raised over $9 million for the project.

Russ was also the originator of the Citation Special Olympics Airlift, where hundreds of Citation airplane owners from around the country transport athletes to the national Special Olympic Games. Russ is also a member of the Kansas Aviation Hall of Fame, a Wright Brothers Memorial Trophy holder, has served on three Presidential commissions, and the list goes on.

Like many others, I've known Russ to be a man of vision and action. Whenever Russ takes on a project, he has the ability to rally and inspire everyone around him behind a common goal. Every community wants a Russ Meyer. Every community needs a Russ Meyer. The children of South Central Kansas needed him, and Russ delivered. The aircraft industry needed him, and Russ delivered. He's a big reason why Wichita is known as the air capital of the world.

Once again, I am pleased today that the United States House of Representatives will congratulate and commend Russ W. Meyer, Jr., on his induction into the National Aviation Hall of Fame.

Mr. DICKS. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. TIAHRT. I will be glad to yield to the gentleman from Washington State (Mr. DICKS).

Mr. DICKS. I want to commend my colleague from Kansas for the extraordinary statement about Russ Meyer, who I have known over the years as you've stated, one of the true leaders in general aviation. And I'd also like to mention my good friend, who was very sick out there in Boise, Idaho, Ed Stimson.

Ed was the head of general aviation manufacturing and worked with Russ, and they were a great team. Your colleague, your predecessor, Dan Glickman worked very hard on the general aviation liability legislation, which was an extraordinary piece of work that completely changed the dynamics and helped general aviation recover. And I was a cosponsor of that legislation. But Russ Meyer is just one of the great leaders in general aviation history.

I commend the gentleman for his remarks and urge the passing of this resolution.

Mr. TIAHRT. I thank the gentleman from Washington State, and I appreciate his contributions to the aircraft industry as well. He's been a stalwart in helping us get American jobs made by American companies, American aircraft.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation, H. Res. 719, introduced by the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. TIAHRT), which commends Russell W. Meyer, Jr. for his induction into the National Aviation Hall of Fame, and for his many contributions to general aviation.

Russ Meyer is an accomplished individual. He earned a Bachelor of Arts from Yale University and a law degree from Harvard University. From 1955–1961, Meyer served as a fighter pilot in both the Air Force and the Marine Corps Reserves. Later, Meyer was Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Cessna Aircraft Company from 1975 to 2003. In this role, Meyer won two Collier Trophies for expanding the Cessna's Citation line of business jets.

Meyer was an advocate for the General Aviation Revitalization Act of 1994, which placed fair and reasonable limitations on the time period during which a manufacturer would be legally liable for aircraft defects. He also contributed to thousands of new pilots taking flight in the United States with the "Be a Pilot Program." This program helped to reduce the cost of flight schools for new pilots.

To assist athletes traveling to the Special Olympics National Games, Meyer founded the Citation Special Olympics Airlift, which coordinates transportation to the games on Cessna owners' aircraft. In 1995, he won the Wright Brothers Memorial Trophy for this important work.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H. Res. 719.

Mr. PETERSON. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, we have no further requests for time. I urge passage of this legislation.

I yield back the balance of our time

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. COSTELLO) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 719, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MARITIME WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACT

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2651) to amend title 46, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Transportation to establish a maritime career training loan program, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2651

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 ''Maritime Workforce Development Act''.

SEC. 2. MARITIME EDUCATION LOAN PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 517 of title 46, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''§ 51705. Maritime career training loan program

''(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Transportation shall establish a maritime career training loan program (in this section referred to as the 'program') in accordance with the requirements of this section.

''(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the program shall be to make maritime career training loans available to eligible students to provide for the training of United States mariners.

''(c) ADMINISTRATION.—The program shall be carried out by the Secretary, acting through the Administrator of the Maritime Administration.

''(d) DUTIES.—The Secretary shall—

''(1) allocate, on an annual basis, the award of loans under the program based on the needs of students;

''(2) develop an application process and eligibility criteria for the award of loans under the program;

''(3) approve applications for loans under the program based on the eligibility criteria and allocations made under paragraph (1); and

''(4) designate maritime training institutions at which loans made under the program may be used.

''(e) DESIGNATION OF MARITIME TRAINING INSTITUTIONS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In designating maritime training institutions under subsection (d)(4), the Secretary—

''(A) may include Federal, State, and commercial training institutions and nonprofit training organizations, except that undergraduate students at the United States Merchant Marine Academy shall not be eligible for loans under the program;

''(B) shall designate institutions based on geographic diversity and scope of classes offered;

''(C) shall ensure that designated institutions have the ability to administer the program; and

''(D) shall ensure that designated institutions meet requirements to provide training instruction for appropriate Coast Guard-approved training instruction.

''(2) EXCLUSIONS.—The Secretary—

''(A) may exclude from participation in the program a maritime training institution that has had severe performance deficiencies, including deficiencies demonstrated by audits or program reviews conducted during the 5 calendar years immediately preceding the present year;

''(B) shall exclude from participation in the program a maritime training institution that has delinquent or outstanding debts to the United States, unless such debts are being repaid under or in accordance with a repayment arrangement satisfactory to the United States, or the Secretary in the Secretary's discretion determines that the existence or amount of any such debts has not been finally determined by the appropriate Federal agency;

''(C) may exclude from participation in the program a maritime training institution that has failed to comply with quality standards established by the Department of Labor, the Coast Guard, or a State; and

''(D) may establish such other criteria as the Secretary determines will protect the financial interest of the United States and promote the purposes of this section.

''(f) STATE MARITIME ACADEMIES.—

''(1) USE OF FUNDS FOR LOANS TO STUDENTS ATTENDING STATE MARITIME ACADEMIES.—The Secretary may obligate not more than 50 percent of the amounts appropriated to carry out this section for a fiscal year for loans to undergraduate students attending State maritime academies receiving assistance under chapter 515 of this title.

''(2) ACADEMIC STANDARDS FOR STUDENTS.—Students at State maritime academies receiving loans under the program shall maintain satisfactory progress toward the completion of their course of study as evidenced by the maintenance of a cumulative C average, or its equivalent, or academic standing consistent with the requirements for graduation, as determined by the institution.

''(g) LOAN AMOUNTS AND USE.—

''(1) MAXIMUM AMOUNTS.—The Secretary may not make loans to a student under the program in an amount that exceeds $15,000 in a calendar year or $60,000 in the aggregate.

''(2) USE OF LOAN PROCEEDS.—A student who receives a loan under the program may use the proceeds of the loan only for postsecondary expenses incurred at an institution designated by the Secretary under subsection (d)(4) for books, tuition, required fees, travel to and from training facilities, and room and board.

''(h) STUDENT ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to receive a loan under the program, a student shall—

''(1) be eligible to hold a license or merchant mariner document issued by the Coast Guard;

''(2) provide to the Secretary such information as the Secretary may require, including all current Coast Guard documents, certifications, proof of United States citizenship or permanent legal status, and a statement of intent to enter a maritime career;

''(3) meet the enrollment requirements of a maritime training institution designated by the Secretary under subsection (d)(4); and

''(4) sign an agreement to—

''(A) complete a course of instruction at such a maritime training institution; and

''(B) maintain a license or document and work under the authority of the license or document and any associated endorsements for at least 18 months following the date of graduation from the maritime program for which the loan proceeds will be used.

''(i) ADMINISTRATION OF LOANS.—

''(1) CONTENTS OF LOAN AGREEMENTS.—Any agreement between the Secretary and a student borrower for a loan under the program shall—

''(A) be evidenced by a note or other written instrument that provides for the repayment of the principal amount of the loan and any origination fee, together with interest thereon, in equal installments (or, if the student borrower so requests, in graduated periodic installments determined in accordance with such schedules as may be approved by the Secretary) payable quarterly, bimonthly, or monthly, at the option of the student borrower, over a period beginning 9 months from the date on which the student borrower completes study or discontinues attendance at the maritime program for which the loans are used at the institution approved by the Secretary and not exceeding 10 years;

''(B) include provision for acceleration of repayment of the whole, or any part, of such loan, at the option of the student borrower;

''(C) provide the loan without security and without endorsement;

''(D) provide that the liability to repay the loan shall be canceled upon the death of the student borrower, or if the student borrower becomes permanently and totally disabled, as determined in accordance with regulations to be issued by the Secretary;

''(E) contain a notice of the system of disclosure of information concerning default on such loan to credit bureau organizations; and

''(F) include provisions for deferral of repayment, as determined by the Secretary.

''(2) RATE OF INTEREST.—A student borrower who receives a loan under the program on or after January 1, 2010, and before October 1, 2015, shall be obligated to repay the loan amount to the Secretary, together with interest beginning in the period referred to in paragraph (1)(A), at a rate to be determined as follows:

''(A) For a loan for which the first disbursement is made on or after January 1, 2010, and before October 1, 2011, 5.6 percent on the unpaid principal balance of the loan.

''(B) For a loan for which the first disbursement is made on or after October 1, 2011, and before October 1, 2012, 4.5 percent on the unpaid principal balance of the loan.

''(C) For a loan for which the first disbursement is made on or after October 1, 2012, 3.4 percent on the unpaid principal balance of the loan.

''(3) DISCLOSURE REQUIRED PRIOR TO DISBURSEMENT.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall at or prior to the time the Secretary makes a loan to a student borrower under the program, provide thorough and adequate loan information on such loan to the student borrower. The disclosures required by this paragraph may be made as part of the written application material provided to the student borrower, as part of the promissory note evidencing the loan, or on a separate written form provided to the student borrower.

''(B) CONTENTS.—The disclosures shall include—

''(i) the address to which communications and payments should be sent;

''(ii) the principal amount of the loan;

''(iii) the amount of any charges collected at or prior to the disbursal of the loan and whether such charges are to be deducted from the proceeds of the loan or paid separately by the student borrower;

''(iv) the stated interest rate on the loan;

''(v) the yearly and cumulative maximum amounts that may be borrowed;

''(vi) an explanation of when repayment of the loan will be required and when the student borrower will be obligated to pay interest that accrues on the loan;

''(vii) a statement as to the minimum and maximum repayment term that the Secretary may impose, and the minimum monthly payment required by law and a description of any penalty imposed as a consequence of default, such as liability for expenses reasonably incurred in attempts by the Secretary to collect on a loan;

''(viii) a statement of the total cumulative balance, including the loan applied for, owed by the student borrower to the Secretary, and an estimate of the projected monthly payment, given such cumulative balance;

''(ix) an explanation of any special options the student borrower may have for loan consolidation or other refinancing of the loan;

''(x) a statement that the student borrower has the right to prepay all or part of the loan, at any time, without penalty;

''(xi) a statement summarizing circumstances in which repayment of the loan or interest that accrues on the loan may be deferred, and a brief notice of the program for repayment of loans, on the basis of military service, pursuant to the Department of Defense educational loan repayment program (10 U.S.C. 16302);

''(xii) a definition of default and the consequences to the student borrower if the student borrower defaults, together with a statement that the disbursement of, and the default on, a loan under this part shall be reported to a credit bureau or credit reporting agency;

''(xiii) to the extent practicable, the effect of accepting the loan on the eligibility of the student borrower for other forms of student assistance; and

''(xiv) an explanation of any cost the student borrower may incur in the making or collection of the loan.

''(C) INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED WITHOUT COST.—The information provided under this paragraph shall be available to the Secretary without cost to the student borrower.

''(4) REPAYMENT AFTER DEFAULT.—The Secretary may require any student borrower who has defaulted on a loan made under the program to—

''(A) pay all reasonable collection costs associated with such loan; and

''(B) repay the loan pursuant to an income contingent repayment plan.

''(5) AUTHORIZATION TO REDUCE RATES AND FEES.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the Secretary may prescribe by regulation any reductions in the interest rate or origination fee paid by a student borrower of a loan made under the program as the Secretary determines appropriate to encourage ontime repayment of the loan. Such reductions may be offered only if the Secretary determines the reductions are cost neutral and in the best financial interest of the United States.

''(6) COLLECTION OF REPAYMENTS.—The Secretary shall collect repayments made under the program and exercise due diligence in such collection, including maintenance of all necessary records to ensure that maximum repayments are made. Collection and servicing of repayments under the program shall be pursued to the full extent of the law, including wage garnishment if necessary. The Secretary of the Department in which the Coast Guard is operating shall provide the Secretary of Transportation with any information regarding a mariner that may aid in the collection of repayments under this section.

''(7) REPAYMENT SCHEDULE.—A student borrower who receives a loan under the program shall repay the loan quarterly, bimonthly, or monthly, at the option of the student borrower, over a period beginning 9 months from the date the student borrower completes study or discontinues attendance at the maritime program for which the loan proceeds are used and ending not more than 10 years after the date repayment begins. Provisions for deferral of repayment shall be determined by the Secretary.

''(8) CONTRACTS FOR SERVICING AND COLLECTION OF LOANS.—The Secretary may—

''(A) enter into a contract or other arrangement with State or nonprofit agencies and, on a competitive basis, with collection agencies for servicing and collection of loans under this section; and

''(B) conduct litigation necessary to carry out this section.

''(j) REVOLVING LOAN FUND.—

''(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall establish a revolving loan fund consisting of amounts deposited in the fund under paragraph (2).

''(2) DEPOSITS.—The Secretary shall deposit in the fund—

''(A) receipts from the payment of principal and interest on loans made under the program; and

''(B) any other monies paid to the Secretary by or on behalf of individuals under the program.

''(3) AVAILABILITY OF AMOUNTS.—Amounts in the fund shall be available to the Secretary, without further appropriation—

''(A) to cover the administrative costs of the program, including the maintenance of records and making collections under this section; and

''(B) to the extent that amounts remain available after paying such administrative costs, to make loans under the program.

''(4) MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS.—The Secretary shall maintain accurate records of the administrative costs referred to in paragraph (3)(A).

''(k) ANNUAL REPORT.—The Secretary, on an annual basis, shall submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report on the program, including—

''(1) the total amount of loans made under the program in the preceding year;

''(2) the number of students receiving loans under the program in the preceding year; and

''(3) the total amount of loans made under program that are in default as of the date of the report.

''(l) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated for each of fiscal years 2010 through 2015—

''(1) $10,000,000 for making loans under the program; and

''(2) $1,000,000 for administrative expenses of the Secretary in carrying out the program.

''§ 51706. Maritime recruitment, training, and retention grant program

''(a) STRATEGIC PLAN.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of enactment of this section, and at least once every 3 years thereafter, the Secretary of Transportation, acting through the Administrator of the Maritime Administration, shall publish in the Federal Register a plan that describes the demonstration, research, and multistate project priorities of the Department of Transportation concerning merchant mariner recruitment, training, and retention for the 3-year period following the date of publication of the plan.

''(2) CONTENTS.—A plan published under paragraph (1) shall contain strategies and identify potential projects to address merchant mariner recruitment, training, and retention issues in the United States.

''(3) FACTORS.—In developing a plan under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall take into account, at a minimum—

''(A) the availability of existing research (as of the date of publication of the plan);

''(B) the need to ensure results that have broad applicability;

''(C) the benefits of economies of scale and the efficiency of potential projects; and

''(D) the likelihood that the results of potential projects will be useful to policymakers and stakeholders in addressing merchant mariner recruitment, training, and retention issues.

''(4) CONSULTATION.—In developing a plan under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consult with representatives of the maritime industry, labor organizations, and other governmental entities and parties with an interest in the maritime industry.

''(5) TRANSMITTAL TO CONGRESS.—The Secretary shall transmit copies of a plan published under paragraph (1) to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

''(b) DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may award grants to a maritime training institution to carry out demonstration projects that implement the priorities identified in the plan prepared under subsection (a)(1), for the purpose of developing and implementing methods to address merchant mariner recruitment, training, and retention issues.

''(2) GRANT AWARDS.—Grants shall be awarded under this subsection on a competitive basis under guidelines and requirements to be established by the Secretary.

''(3) APPLICATIONS.—To be eligible to receive a grant for a project under this subsection, a maritime training institution shall submit to the Secretary a grant proposal that includes, at a minimum—

''(A) information demonstrating the estimated effectiveness of the project; and

''(B) a method for evaluating the effectiveness of the project.

''(4) ELIGIBLE PROJECTS.—Projects eligible for grants under this subsection may include—

''(A) the establishment of maritime technology skill centers developed through local partnerships of industry, labor, education, community-based organizations, economic development organizations, or Federal, State, and local government agencies to meet unmet skills needs of the maritime industry;

''(B) projects that provide training to upgrade the skills of workers who are employed in the maritime industry;

''(C) projects that promote the use of distance learning, enabling students to take courses through the use of media technology, such as videos, teleconferencing, and the Internet;

''(D) projects that assist in providing services to address maritime recruitment and training of youth residing in targeted high poverty areas within empowerment zones and enterprise communities;

''(E) the establishment of partnerships with national and regional organizations with special expertise in developing, organizing, and administering merchant mariner recruitment and training services; and

''(F) the establishment of maritime training programs that foster technical skills and operational productivity in communities in which economies are related to or dependent upon the maritime industry.

''(c) PROJECTS AUTHORIZED.—

''(1) PROJECTS.—The Secretary may award grants to carry out projects identified in a plan published under subsection (a)(1) under which the project sponsor will—

''(A) design, develop, and test an array of approaches to providing recruitment, training, or retention services to one or more targeted populations;

''(B) in conjunction with employers, organized labor, other groups (such as community coalitions), and Federal, State, or local agencies, design, develop, and test various training approaches in order to determine effective practices; or

''(C) assist in the development and replication of effective service delivery strategies for the national maritime industry as a whole.

''(2) RESEARCH PROJECTS.—The Secretary may award grants to carry out research projects identified in a plan published under subsection (a)(1) that will contribute to the solution of maritime industry recruitment, training, and retention issues in the United States.

''(3) MULTISTATE OR REGIONAL PROJECTS.—The Secretary may award grants to carry out multistate or regional projects identified in a plan published under subsection (a)(1) to effectively disseminate best practices and models for implementing maritime recruitment, training, and retention services designed to address industry-wide skill shortages.

''(4) GRANT AWARDS.—Grants shall be awarded under this subsection on a competitive basis under guidelines and requirements to be established by the Secretary.

''(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated for each of fiscal years 2010 through 2015—

''(1) $10,000,000 for making grants under this section; and

''(2) $1,000,000 for administrative expenses of the Secretary in carrying out this section.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The analysis for such chapter is amended by adding at the end the following:

''51705. Maritime career training loan program.

''51706. Maritime recruitment, training, and retention grant program.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 2651.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Subcommittee on the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, I rise today in strong support of the Maritime Work Force Development Act, H.R. 2651, legislation which I authored to address the education and training needs of our Nation's merchant mariners. I thank Congressman OBERSTAR, the chairman of the full committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Congressman MICA, the ranking member on the full committee, and Congressman LOBIONDO, the ranking member of the Coast Guard Subcommittee, for working with me to support our maritime work force.

H.R. 2651 would amend title 46 of the United States Codes to direct the Secretary of Transportation to establish a student loan program to attract the next generation of workers to the good paying jobs available in the maritime industry.

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The loan program will also help those already in the industry obtain the certifications and the training they need to move ahead in their careers.

In October of 2007, I convened a hearing in the Coast Guard Subcommittee to examine trends in the maritime workforce. According to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, in 2006, there were more than 38,000 on-the-water jobs in sea, coastal, and Great Lakes transportation, and nearly 23,000 jobs in the inland water transportation industry. Many of those who currently work in the industry are nearing retirement age. Thus, the Maritime Administration has indicated that at the time of our hearing, the average age of a mariner with a master's license was 51, while the average age of a chief engineer was 50.

Additionally, significant new standards for training and continuing education have been applied to mariners through the 1995 amendments to the Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping. These standards have rightly been set to improve safety in the maritime industry by reducing human factors as the causes of maritime accidents, but they have also imposed expensive and very time-consuming training requirements on mariners, particularly on those who are looking to upgrade a document or license to move up the career ladder.

While there are many facilities in the United States that provide outstanding training programs for those seeking to enter or advance in the maritime field, tuition can be extremely expensive. Further, the types of training programs in which mariners enroll are unique and are not easily served by existing loan programs. Mariners who have already begun their careers rarely enroll in 2- or 4-year educational programs. Instead, typically, they enroll in multiweek courses to obtain a specific new certification, and they enroll in such courses several times a year.

I drafted H.R. 2651 in an effort to provide to individuals in the maritime industry a loan program that is tailored to their specific needs and to the types of training programs that serve them. Using the model of existing student loan programs, H.R. 2651 creates a maritime-focused student loan program through which individuals can receive up to $60,000 in loans over the course of a lifetime. H.R. 2651 also authorizes the appropriation of $10 million in each of fiscal years 2010 through 2015 to support these loans.

Additionally, H.R. 2651 authorizes the appropriation of $10 million in each of fiscal years 2010 through 2015 to enable the Department of Transportation to award grants to maritime training institutions to support their efforts to develop and implement programs to address mariner recruitment, training, and retention issues.

In my district in Baltimore, I have been working closely with the Maritime Industries Academy, a public high school with a maritime theme. I have assembled a board of maritime and education professionals who have worked in an advisory capacity with the school for 2 years and who are now creating a formal foundation to support the school, which opened this current 2009–2010 school year in a new location and with an enrollment level that has tripled in the last 2 years.

The grant program that is authorized by H.R. 2651 would support the growing number of maritime-themed educational institutions, including high schools, throughout the country as they work to expand maritime education opportunities and attract new individuals to a field critical to the success of our national economy.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I again want to thank Chairman OBERSTAR, Ranking Member MICA, Ranking Member LOBIONDO, and all of our subcommittee for their hard work on H.R. 2651 and urge the adoption of this legislation by the House today.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 2651, the Maritime Workforce Development Act. The bill will provide needed training and educational opportunities for merchant mariners and those interested in working in the maritime trades. The U.S. Merchant Marine is an important component to our national and economic security, and I support this effort to strengthen this important sector of our workforce.

The bill directs the Maritime Administration to establish a program to support continuing education at approved maritime training institutes and undergraduate training at the five State maritime academies. Loan recipients would be required to commit at least 18 months of service at sea as a condition of participation in the program. This program will improve the opportunities available to those currently serving as merchant mariners and attract new entrants to the maritime workforce.

The bill also directs the Maritime Administration to develop a strategic plan to enhance merchant mariner recruitment, training, and retention, and to fund demonstration projects to further the goals outlined in the plan.

This measure is an important component of the House's ongoing work to support the U.S. Merchant Marine. I strongly support the bill and ask all Members to do the same.

At this point, I would yield 5 minutes to our colleague from North Carolina, VIRGINIA FOXX.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, Mr. PETRI, for yielding me some time.

When I was going over the bills for this week, this bill sort of flew out at me. It seems like a very innocuous bill, like motherhood and apple pie, the kind of thing that we should be doing here. We know that there are a lot of people needed in the maritime industry.

I visited the Merchant Marine Academy last year. I had a wonderful visit there and was told by the administrators there that there is a huge demand for their graduates, that they have about 10 job offers for every graduate and that we need more people who have excellent education and training in the maritime skills.

However, this bill I think is not doing what we would like for it to do, and it raises more questions, I think, than it answers. I have asked some of the questions of the staff, and I don't get the kind of answers that I think we need to be getting.

I'm very keen on our having accountability for any way that we authorize or spend money, and there is really no accountability in this bill at all. There is no statement of the demand. It says that there were 162,000 jobs in the U.S. water transportation sector in 2006, up from nearly 148,000 jobs reported in 2002, and it says, in the summary, there's a perceived future shortage of workers, not an actual one. So we are going to authorize a program for a perceived need.

The headlines out this week are that our military has gone way beyond its goals in recruiting people, and I suspect that with unemployment as high as it is right now, many, many people are going into skilled trades programs trying to get the kind of licensure they need to get jobs. But again, this bill doesn't present that information. It doesn't say that there are people being turned away from these State programs that are helping these people get the skills they need. It doesn't tell how many people are being turned away from the Merchant Marine Academy.

I am very much concerned that this program is going to be a lot like the program that was funded in 2004 with an earmark requested by DAVID PRICE which gave $10 million in the Federal budget to a program at UNC Chapel Hill for a new effort to help deployed soldiers of the National Guard and Army Reserves.

An article has said, 5 years later, the citizen-soldiers support program has spent $7.3 million, but the money has accomplished little for the people it was supposed to help. And, Mr. Speaker, I would like to enter into the RECORD the complete article that I'm referencing. Mr. Speaker, it goes on to say that an internal review found that the program produced reams of paperwork but few concrete results.

Because there's no accountability in this bill, we are giving huge discretion to the Secretary to handle this money. We are not outlining the kinds of things that we, as a Congress, should be outlining. We are not demanding any kind of results from the money that is being spent. And it's a lot of money. It's $110 million over 2010 to 2014, $22 million in 2014.

There's a program to give $10 million for grants to maritime training institutions to establish demonstration projects and other programs to increase mariner recruitment, training,

and retention. There is no evidence that such programs need to be out there. Again, we don't know how many people are already applying for such programs.

This money also is going to be available to unions and to community action groups such as ACORN. It's going to very nebulous groups of people.

I have a great concern, again, about how we are going to have any accountability from this program. We, in Congress, have an obligation to make sure that any money that we are spending is being spent as well as it could be spent. We have an almost 10 percent unemployment rate in the country. We are taxing people who are working for a living, and we are taxing them to give the money to programs like this for which, again, there is no accountability and no idea that we are going to get our money's worth out of it. I just think it's very unfair to the American public.

We may need to do this kind of program. I know that the Merchant Marine people told me that we need better educated, better trained people, but I don't think this is the right program.

[From the Raleigh News and Observer, Sept. 25, 2009]

PROGRAM PROVIDES LITTLE HELP FOR SOLDIERS

CORRECTION

A Sept. 25 front-page article on the Citizen Soldier Support Program stated four of the program's eight employees earned more than $100,000. Only three employees do: One employee reduced her work schedule to three-quarter time and earns $77,250. October 6, 2009.

In 2004, U.S. Rep. David Price inserted a $10 million program into the federal budget, sending the money to UNC—Chapel Hill for a new effort to help deployed soldiers of the National Guard and Army Reserves.

Five years later, the Citizen Soldier Support Program has spent $7.3 million, but the money has accomplished little for the people it was supposed to help. One-quarter of the money has gone to the university for overhead, and a large part of the rest has been spent on well-paid consultants, six-figure salaries and travel.

Half of the eight full-time employees are paid more than $100,000 a year, including a deputy director who has been reimbursed $76,000 for food, travel and lodging when she commutes from her home in northern Virginia to North Carolina.

An internal review found that the program produced reams of paperwork but few concrete results.

''The program has produced volumes of documentation, but the vast majority of this documentation is devoted to conceptual verbiage about how the program will function,'' the review said. ''The CSSP is vulnerable to the accusation that it spends too much money on administrative overhead and low-priority, 'nice-to-do' activities and not enough time on activities directly relevant to its mission.''

The head of the N.C. National Guard, Major Gen. William Ingram, has worked with the program since its inception. He said he has experienced many meetings, lots of discussion and stacks of paperwork.

''We're feeding you ideas, we're working with you, but we're not seeing any results,'' Ingram said in an interview. ''We're not seeing a whole lot of action; there's a lot of discussion, but . . . no results.''

Ingram said that after four years, the National Guard recently received the first tangible service from the program: a database of North Carolina mental health providers experienced with the military and problems such as post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury.

On Thursday, UNC—Chapel Hill Chancellor Holden Thorp told the UNC Board of Trustees that he has ordered the program to shape up.

''The program has serious flaws,'' Thorp said. ''We need the program to show drastic improvement in a short period of time.''

16,000 WARRIORS

In 2004, as the U.S. military ramped up operations in Iraq and continued the war in Afghanistan, more and more members of the National Guard and Army Reserves were being mobilized. In all, 16,000 members of the N.C. Guard have been deployed, some of them two or three times.

Price, a Chapel Hill Democrat, saw a need, and he used a controversial method to address it. He inserted an ''earmark,'' an appropriation for a specific project that a member of Congress can include in the budget.

The program was to help soldiers in the North Carolina National Guard and Army Reserves, with the idea that it could serve as a model and eventually be expanded to other states.

Citizen soldiers are scattered around the state in civilian communities. They arid their families lack the institutional support and military community available to soldiers stationed at bases such as Camp Lejeune or Fort Bragg.

''The new program aims to better address challenges Guard and Reserve members and their families face both when they are deployed into duty and when they return home,'' according to an UNC news release from August 2004.

Price said that the program is worthy of federal funding and that he still supports its goals.

''The check isn't just sent out and forgotten about,'' Price said. ''If these funds haven't been utilized in the most effective way, we need to correct it.''

ANONYMOUS COMPLAINT

The program started in March 2005; the current end date is December 2009, though UNC has asked for a one-year extension but no more money.

In June 2008, Rep. Sue Myrick received an anonymous fax complaining that the program spent millions with nothing to show for it. Myrick forwarded it to Erskine Bowles, president of the UNC system.

One month later, Peter Leousis, who oversees the program, assured Myrick in a letter that the program had accomplished much.

''We have been and will continue to be good stewards of the taxpayers' dollars in accomplishing CSSP's mission,'' Leousis wrote.

Reached by telephone recently, Leousis said he would like to discuss the program, but he and his staff have been told by his superiors not to talk to reporters.

SCATHING REVIEW

On Feb. 17, seven months after Leousis assured Myrick all was well, Tony Waldrop, vice chancellor for research and economic development, ordered a committee to review the organization.

The university redacted substantial parts of that review and a related internal audit before release, citing personnel laws. Thorp said the removed sections discuss the actions and job performance of specific employees.

The report listed a host of problems with the program: overpaid employees; employees performing below expectations; an excessive reliance on outside consultants; an unclear chain of command that creates confusion inside and outside the program; few practical results; little or no evaluation; and disproportionate administrative costs.

The review committee said it could neither confirm nor refute the suspicion that ''the CSSP may have squandered a substantial portion of its funding on overpaid, under-supervised staffers who spent too much of the time attending to the organization and its shifting priorities and too little time providing real value to groups serving soldiers and their families.''

The deputy director for military relations, Susann Kerner-Hoeg, earns a salary of $129,600. Kerner-Hoeg works from her home in northern Virginia, and the program pays for her travel, lodging and meals when she comes to Chapel Hill. The program has spent $76,558 over the past three years for Kerner-Hoeg's flights, rental cars, hotel rooms and meals.

During the same period, the program paid $313,600 to Kent Peterson & Associates of Kansas City, KA. Peterson, a consultant, served as the director of community relations.

It is routine for the university to get a cut of grant money. Academic institutions, which provide administrative support and office space, routinely receive portions of grants for administrative overhead. The figure often runs as high as 46 percent.

TURNING IT AROUND?

Waldrop, the vice chancellor in charge of the program, said the review and audit have put it on the right footing.

Waldrop said the program can list some accomplishments: the database of mental health providers; one-day training for 2,000 mental health providers on military culture and the after-effects of war-related injuries; and consulting with the Army Reserve's Yellow Ribbon program.

Neil Caudle, an associate vice chancellor who headed the review committee, said the program is still committed to helping soldiers.

''In six months to a year, we'll be in the right place,'' Caudle said.

[From the Carolina Journal, Oct. 9, 2009]

DELEGATION DENOUNCES EXCESSES IN CITIZEN-SOLDIER PROGRAM

(By David N. Bass)

RALEIGH.—An embattled university program meant to assist soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan must shape up or lose its taxpayer funding, say many of the same North Carolina congressional lawmakers who supported the program's initial federal commitment five years ago.

The Citizen-Soldier Support Program, housed at the Odum Institute for Research in Social Sciences at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, is meant to connect veterans and their families with support systems in local communities. But the program has drawn criticism in recent weeks after an internal UNC–CH review flagged a series of management, personnel, and financial problems.

As Carolina Journal and the News & Observer of Raleigh reported, CSSP has burned through most of its $10 million in federal funding with little to show for it. Over half of Kits employees earn six-figure salaries, and some have racked up extensive traveling expenses, laying the groundwork for rumors that CSSP ''may have squandered a substantial portion of its funding on overpaid, under-supervised staffers,'' according to the internal review.

The program has also faced criticism for agreeing to pay a Kansas-based consultant

up to $340,000 and for reimbursing its deputy director, who lives in northern Virginia, for travel between her home and CSSP's offices in Carrboro.

Those expenses, mixed with other problems identified by the university review, have raised objections among North Carolina's congressional delegation.

''This program appears to have produced almost no results—other than nice salaries for consultants and bureaucrats,'' said Rep. Virginia Foxx, R–5th District.

''Many of our guardsmen have been deployed two or three times to Iraq and Afghanistan, and that takes a heavy toll on their families back home,'' said Rep. Brad Miller, a Democrat from the 13th District. ''But worthy goals do not excuse poor performance. I won't support the program again unless the program fixes the problems that the university's internal review found.''

Miller's colleague in the House, 4th District Democrat David Price, was responsible for securing the largest chunk of federal funding—$5 million in 2005. In a statement e-mailed to CJ in late August, Price acknowledged problems in the program but said that UNC—Chapel Hill ''has taken concrete steps to address these issues.''

The $5-million earmark had unanimous support from the state's congressional delegation, according to a UNC–CH press release from June 2005. A number of lawmakers are now having second thoughts, however.

''I will not continue to support federally funded programs that do not reach the goals originally intended for the recipients. The American taxpayers deserve better,'' said Rep. Walter Jones, R–3rd.

''The program has failed to put the needs of our Reserve Component members and their families first, and I do not think that the program should be allowed to continue as it currently is administered,'' said 9th District GOP Rep. Sue Myrick.

Myrick said she received an anonymous complaint in 2008 about abuses in. the CSSP and subsequently contacted UNC system President Erskine Bowles.

''In his response he gave me assurance that each of the allegations would be reviewed,'' Myrick said. ''Now, I'm again receiving anonymous faxes about the program, and with the results of the latest audit now public—it's not good.''

Foxx said excesses in the program are an example of why she took a no-earmark pledge in 2007. ''Too much taxpayer money gets frittered away like this with little to no oversight,'' she said.

Calls and e-mails to spokesmen for Reps. G.K. Butterfield, D–1st; Mike McIntyre, D–7th; Larry Kissell, D–8th; and Patrick McHenry, R–10th, were not returned by press time.

Reached by phone, Doug Abrahms, spokesman for 11th District Democratic Congressman Heath Shuler, noted that Shuler was not in Congress when funding for CSSP was first authorized. Asked if Shuler would support continued funding, Abrahms said, ''It's not something that's on his agenda right now.''

DEADLINE SET

Since reports on the internal review first surfaced in late August, university officials have said that improvements need to be made or else CSSP should be terminated.

''We need this program to show dramatic improvement in a short period of time to remain viable'' said UNC–CH Chancellor Holden Thorp at a Board of Trustees meeting Sept. 24.

Kimrey Rhinehardt, vice president for federal relations at UNC General Administration, sent an e-mail dated Aug. 17 to Bowles recommending that CSSP's behavioral health initiative be terminated.

As for the entire program, Rhinehardt wrote, ''I think that the CSSP leadership should be permitted a supervised opportunity to dramatically improve the Program subject to review by their National Advisory Committee and Review Committee. If momentum does not tend toward progress by October 23, 2009, then remaining federal funds should be returned and the program should be terminated.''

The review committee that authored the internal report is continuing to monitor the program, said UNC–CH spokesman Mike McFarland.

Mr. CUMMINGS. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I'm sitting here and I'm amazed what I just heard. We spend phenomenal amounts of money on so many things, and we are talking about many young people simply trying to have an opportunity to be all that God meant for them to be.

We've got a situation where we have an industry that is growing, and the question that has arisen many times is whether we are, as a country, being innovative. Are we preparing our people for the opportunities that come forth or are we sitting back and allowing them to get to a certain point, and then when they try to enter the doors that will allow them to rise up to go into the fields that they want to go into, then we say, ''Sorry. Too bad. All the money is gone''?

There's something absolutely incredibly wrong with that picture. It's very easy to come down and say, oh, the mariners don't need this money, when, in fact, the costs of the mariner's education has gone up tremendously. It is very easy to say that we don't need this when the age of our folks who are in the industry is at 50 and we need to begin to bring in new people, and we are constantly talking about jobs in America and making sure that our people have the opportunities that they deserve. Something is wrong with the picture when their opportunity comes up and, the next thing you know, we take a hike on them.

One of the things I will say is that this industry is growing. We've had a little bit of a slowdown here recently because of the economic situation, but anybody who knows anything about the maritime industry knows that after this economic situation is over, we will be increasing at a very rapid pace and to a very large extent.

And so while I respect the gentlelady for her comments, what I will say is that this is money that is needed, and it is money that—as I have often said, our children are the living messages that we send to a future we will never see. The question is what kind of message do we send to the future if our children are unprepared, if they are unprepared to take on the responsibilities that lie in front of them? Must we always go overseas to get people to come to do these jobs? We are trying to educate our own, and that is what this is all about.

Mr. Speaker, I have no other speakers, and I would assume that the gentleman would have a closing statement.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PETRI. I have no further requests for time and yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Madam Speaker, as a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee I rise to lend my strong support to H.R. 2651, The Maritime Workforce Development Act which will help strengthen our maritime industry by providing loans to students who are pursuing a maritime education. I want to thank my colleague Representative CUMMINGS for bringing this bill to the floor and bringing attention to this important issue.

Having the port of Long Beach in my district, I know the importance of a well educated maritime industry. I also know how few Americans now pursue careers in the maritime industry and we should do what we can to make maritime education possible and affordable to all.

This bill goes a long way towards rectifying problems in our maritime training and I want to thank Mr. CUMMINGS for his work rectifying this important issue. I ask that my colleagues today support this bill, and continue to support our maritime industry.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2651, the ''Maritime Workforce Development Act''. H.R. 2651 directs the Secretary of Transportation to establish a maritime career training and loan program. I thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) for working on this important piece of legislation.

The maritime industry anticipates a continuing shortage of qualified merchant mariners. Due to projected increases in commercial maritime traffic and a maritime workforce that is approaching retirement age, a maritime training program is needed to help ensure that our nation will continue to have skilled and experienced U.S. citizen merchant mariners. Such a program can begin in high schools by creating maritime training curriculum for students to obtain the basic knowledge of the maritime industry and skills to gain an entry-level job.

H.R. 2651 also creates a maritime loan program that meets the needs and training requirements of mariners, which they may not get through a traditional two- or four-year educational institution.

Mariners have certification courses that can last from two weeks to several months and their courses are typically taken between voyages. When mariners seek to enhance their credentials, they need a loan program that helps them with expenses while they are taking the time off to pursue certifications or licenses. H.R. 2651 creates a loan program to help mariners pay for their books, tuition, fees, room and board, and travel to and from their training facilities.

In these tough economic times with high unemployment rates, it is critical for there to be a mechanism to aid people interested in a maritime career, whether they are recent high school graduates or if they graduated from high school 10 or 20 years ago. There is a shortage of maritime workers and a high percentage of mariners are approaching retirement age. Something must be done now to fill the gap and help sustain an adequate number of qualified mariners. To that end, H.R. 2651

authorizes $10 million for each of fiscal years 2010 to 2015 to fund the education of mariners, and sustain our vital maritime industry.

H.R. 2651 also requires the Secretary of Transportation to establish a maritime recruitment, training, and retention grant program. The Secretary is directed to consult with representatives of the maritime industry, labor organizations, other governmental entities and maritime industry interests. This program will be imperative to the maritime industry in recruiting new mariners, keeping current mariners, and assisting them with training and upgrading their licenses. H.R. 2651 authorizes $10 million for each of fiscal years 2010 to 2015 to fund grants to support this program.

The nation's maritime cargo volumes are expected to double by 2020. As waterborne commerce expands in the United States, there is a great need to meet the labor demands that the continued growth in the maritime industry is expected to create. H.R. 2651 creates mechanisms to ensure that our nation will be well equipped to handle the welcomed maritime growth.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 2651.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2651, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GEORGE P. KAZEN FEDERAL BUILDING AND UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2423) to designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located at 1300 Victoria Street in Laredo, Texas, as the ''George P. Kazen Federal Building and United States Courthouse'', and to designate the jury room in that Federal building and United States courthouse as the ''Marcel C. Notzon II Jury Room'', as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2423

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

SECTION 1. BUILDING DESIGNATION.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The Federal building and United States courthouse located at 1300 Victoria Street in Laredo, Texas, shall be known and designated as the ''George P. Kazen Federal Building and United States Courthouse''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the Federal building and United States courthouse referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the ''George P. Kazen Federal Building and United States Courthouse''.

SEC. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act shall take effect on the first day on which George P. Kazen is no longer serving as a Federal judge.

□ 1430

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Hawaii.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 2423.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Hawaii?

There was no objection.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2423, as amended, is a bill to designate the federal building and United States courthouse located at 1300 Victoria St. in Laredo, Texas as the George P. Kazen Federal Building and United States Courthouse.

Congressman CUELLAR introduced this bill, which has bipartisan support. Judge Kazen has served the people of the southern judicial district of Texas with great distinction and dedication since 1979. He is a graduate of the University of Texas, and the University of Texas Law School. After serving in private practice in Laredo, Texas he was nominated to the federal bench by President Jimmy Carter in 1979. He served in the southern district of Texas and served as Chief Judge in that district from 1996 until 2003.

Judge Kazen was also very active in his community, serving as a member in the U.S. Air Force, founding the Laredo Legal Aid Society, and serving in numerous capacities in civic organizations in South Texas. Judge Kazen served as President of the Laredo Civic Music Association, the Boys' and Girls' Clubs of Laredo, the St. Augustine-Ursuline School Board, and as a member of the Laredo Community College Board of Trustees.

It is both fitting and proper to honor Judge Kazen's distinguished public career with this designation. I support H.R. 2423 as amended and urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the author of the bill, Mr. CUELLAR of Texas.

Mr. CUELLAR. Thank you very much for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding contributions of a fine public servant in Laredo, Texas, Judge George P. Kazen. This is an individual that has dedicated the majority of his life to upholding the justice system in south Texas.

In 1979, President Jimmy Carter appointed Judge George P. Kazen to be a United States district judge. For four decades, he served south Texas as a tireless advocate for fairness under the law. From 1996 to 2003, he was the chief judge of the United States Southern District, which includes the areas of Houston, Galveston, Victoria, Laredo, Corpus Christi, McAllen and Brownsville in Texas. Judge Kazen is also a JAG officer for the United States Air Force, and in 1965 he received the United States Air Force Commendation Medal.

Judge Kazen is married to Barbara Ann and they have four children. He is, without a doubt, a selfless public servant who has been a tremendous credit to the city of Laredo and the State of Texas and our great Nation.

I also want to recognize Judge Kazen's Federal magistrate, the Honorable Marcel Notzen. Since 1967, Marcel Notzen, the magistrate, served for four decades in front and behind the bench, as an attorney, as a law partner, and most recently as a U.S. magistrate for the Southern District. Judge Notzen is married to Nora Lee, and they have six children.

It is with great pride that I authored this legislation, H.R. 2423, to name the United States Courthouse located at 1300 Victoria Street in Laredo, Texas, as the George B. Kazen Federal Building and United States Courthouse in honor of George Kazen. It is also my legislative intent, Mr. Speaker, to name the jury room in the United States courthouse as the Marcel C. Notzen, II Jury Room. I think this is a way to thank these two individuals who have worked so hard for their Nation as judges.

I want to thank all of my Texas colleagues for helping me recognize these exceptional individuals. By recognizing these individuals, their contributions will be remembered and they will continue to inspire those individuals who follow their lead in preserving the American justice system.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, after hearing the eloquent explanation from the sponsor of the legislation, I thank him for his leadership on this bill and many others.

This bill would designate a Federal building and courthouse in Laredo, Texas as the ''George P. Kazen Federal Building and United States Courthouse.''

Judge Kazen has served on the District Court for the Southern District of Texas since 1979.

From 1996 to 2003, Judge Kazen served as chief judge and, earlier this year he assumed senior status.

Prior to his appointment to the federal bench, Judge Kazen was in the private practice of law.

Earlier in his career he served in the JAG Corp as a U.S. Air Force Captain and worked as a briefing attorney for the Texas Supreme Court.

He received both his bachelor's degree and law degree from the University of Texas.

His career demonstrates his dedication to public service and the law.

I have no objections to the passage of this legislation.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2423, as amended, a bill to designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located at 1300 Victoria Street in Laredo, Texas as the ''George P. Kazen Federal Building and United States Courthouse''.