(Mrs. MEEK of Florida addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HOYER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. WYNN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. WYNN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

TECHNOLOGY AND AMERICA'S FUTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LAMPSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I am here this afternoon to say a few words about why research and technology is important to America. For me, it is a simple story. Technology gives people the tools to live better lives, beginning with the discovery of fire on a winter night somewhere back in history. Technology creates jobs, raises standards of living, and allows people to live longer and fuller lives.

My home, in the Ninth District of Texas, has really three prime examples of the power of new technologies to spur growth and create opportunities: petroleum, space, and medicine.

In my hometown of Beaumont, in 1901, an era began when oil drillers hit the Lucas Gusher in Spindletop. By the end of that year, Spindletop's production exceeded all the rest of the world combined. The technologies that unfolded in the following decade in the use of automobiles, aircraft, petroleum refining totally changed the shape of our world, making mobility a commonplace rather than a luxury for the wealthy, allowing average Americans to enjoy the personal freedom to travel, to work, to shop, just to have fun, for pleasure.

Almost a hundred years later, technology continues to find new uses for our hydrocarbon resources and to make transportation more safe and more compatible with the environment. Beaumont and East Texas still have a major share of America's petroleum refining and petrochemical manufacturing capacity. And what keeps the industry a vigorous source of employment everyone recognizes is research and technological innovation.

Energy, oil, and chemicals are increasingly international industries. They have to compete successfully with industries worldwide in the field of efficiency and innovation, and they need to find new ways to minimize their impact on the environment. The road to those goals is paved by research.

A few miles southwest of Spindletop is the Johnson Space Center, one of the major centers of America's space program. As the Lucas Gusher celebrated the beginning of the 20th century, the International Space Station, managed by the Johnson Space Center, will mark the beginning of the 21st century. This is the largest space project in the history and a collaboration between the United States, Canada, the member states of the European Space Agency, Japan, Russia, and Brazil to build a laboratory in permanent orbit around the Earth.

Where will this step lead us? Space station research and medicine and biomedical technologies will help open the door to new advances in health care, research, and physical sciences and engineering; will enable development of a new generation of materials for optical computing, technologies for increased efficiencies engines, and a host of other advances that we cannot even predict.

The Space Station will be advancing knowledge in the basic sciences across the spectrum and providing opportunity for commercial research and development opportunity as well. And on the Space Station we will also be developing a whole spectrum of space technologies that will enable a tremendous expansion of our capabilities for commerce and exploration.

The course of human space exploration is not set today, but I believe that humans will over the course of the next century make the trip to Mars if not a routine, then at least a regular, event. America should lead that chapter in the history of humanity.

One of the things that we can predict about the 21st century is that our citizens will increasingly find themselves in competition with labor from around the world. This competition does not have to be a zero-sum game where they can get richer by making any neighbor poorer. The 21st century can be a win-win game if advances in research and technology give our workers the knowledge and the tools needed to continue to lead the growth of prosperity in the global economy.

It is obvious to me that research is not a luxury. It is a necessity. We have to make the investments necessary to make sure that the economic opportunity made possible by technology-led growth are available to our children's generation and to make sure that we can maintain our standard of living and to improve our stewardship of the environment, to make sure that our longer lives are healthier, richer, and less expensive medically, to manage the continued growth of the world's population, and to open the universe to the continuing epic of human discovery.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I ask that as we proceed through the next few weeks to negotiate our final appropriations decisions for fiscal 2000 that we remember the importance of research and the importance of agencies like NASA, the National Science Foundation, and the National Institutes of Health to our country's future.

CLEAN POWER PLANT ACT OF 1999

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Clean Power Plant Act of 1999, a bill to set uniform emissions standards for all electric generating units operating in the United States.

I am pleased to be joined by 18 original cosponsors of both parties and from throughout the country. As we approach the 30-year anniversary of the Clean Air Act, we should take stock of all that it has accomplished to clean our air, improve public health and create a better environment.

We must also, however, recognize that the clean air act and its amendments have not fully solved the problem of the air pollution in this country. In my home State of Maine we routinely see unhealthy levels of smog during the summer ozone season. We still suffer the effects of acid rain and mercury pollution in our rivers, lakes, and streams; and we are only beginning to understand the effect of greenhouse gases which have helped make the 1990's the hottest decade on record.

When we look at the sources of air pollution in America today, one sector stands out as a glaring problem, eclipsing virtually every other source of pollution in the Nation. It is the electric generating sector which for nearly 30 years has evaded the full regulations of the Clean Air Act.

More than three out of every four power plants in the U.S. are grandfathered from having to comply with the act's emission standards and legally pollute at four to 10 times the rates allowed for new plants. When Congress passed the clean air act, it assumed that these grandfathered plants would soon become obsolete, retiring to make way for new plants that would be covered by clean air regulations.

Unfortunately, dirty power is often cheap power, and the economic advantage enjoyed by grandfathered plants has allowed them to survive much longer than Congress ever expected. Most of the power plants in the U.S. began operation in the 1960s or before. The operating cost for grandfathered plants are often half that of new clean generators.

With the U.S. moving toward a deregulated electricity market, it is now time to remove the economic advantage of dirty power. If we do not close the grandfather loophole and level the playing field for new clean generation, clean energy will be disadvantaged.

The Clean Power Plant Act of 1999 sets uniform emissions standards for all plants regardless of when they

began operation. It addresses the four major pollutants that come from utilities and closes several loopholes that allow the electric generating industry to pollute at higher rates than other industries. This bill, however, also recognizes the importance of fuel diversity for electricity generation and the need to make a smooth transition to cleaner technology.

The bill sets an overall cap of 1.914 billion tons of carbon dioxide emissions from the utility sector. This cap is consistent with the Rio Treaty on global climate change which was signed by the Bush administration and ratified by the Senate. It requires EPA to distribute emissions allowances to power plants based on a generation performance standard.

Because the effects of carbon emissions are global rather than local in nature, the bill allows the trading of extra emissions allowances between utilities. For nitrogen oxides and sulfur dioxides, the bill sets both a maximum emissions rate and a per-unit cap on total annual emissions. The emissions rates of 1.5 pounds per megawatt hour for nitrogen oxides and 3 pounds per megawatt hour for sulfur dioxides will ensure that all plants must meet standards similar to those required for new generators.

The bill does not allow dirty plants to purchase emissions credits to meet these requirements. While capping total emissions and allowing plants to trade pollution credits will limit overall pollution, it may not protect upwind States from downwind emissions or protect communities around older plants from the local effects of ozone smog or acid rain.

The bill also sets a total per-unit cap on emissions based on the amount of electricity generate by each unit during the period from 1996 to 1998. This provision ensures that if energy demand increases, older plants will not simply run longer at lower emissions rate resulting in no net reduction in pollution. Instead, new energy demands will be met with new clean more efficient energy sources that are subject to all new source emissions standards.

My bill also sets strict standards for mercury emissions, which under current law are left unregulated. The bill calls for a 70 percent reduction in the more than 50 tons of mercury that are emitted from power plants each year. This 70 percent level is what EPA in a March 1999 report estimated is the level of reduction that plants could achieve with currently available technology.

This level is a floor, however, so that EPA can require greater reductions as technology improves.

The bill does not simply address emissions of mercury, however. It also closes a loophole in the Solid Waste Disposal Act that allows utilities to dispose of waste that contains mercury without consideration of mercury's severe environmental and health effects. My bill ensures that all mercury waste, including the solid waste created in the combustion process and the mercury that is captured by smoke stack scrubbers, must be disposed of in a way that ensures the mercury will not find its way back into the environment. This makes my bill the most stringent proposal to reducing the amount of mercury released by power plants.

Finally, my bill closes a loophole that allows utilities to escape regulations on hazardous air pollutants. Currently, utilities are not required to use technology that removes heavy metals and volatile organic compounds from their emissions. These pollutants, which include many carcinogens, can cause severe damage to human health and the environment. My bill ends the exemption for utilities and will require them to implement the maximum available technology to limit emissions of hazardous air pollutants.

This bill is not simply crafted to cut emissions, however, without regard for the economic effects of shifting away from fossil fuels. Instead, it recognizes that, to make clean energy economically as well as environmentally successful, we must ease the transition from old technology to new. The bill contains grants for communities and workers who are affected by changes in fuel consumption. It also authorizes grants for property tax relief for towns that derive a large amount of their tax base from older power plants that will be replaced by cleaner technology.

Mr. Speaker, quality of our air is not just an environmental problem. It is an economic and public health issue as well. Whatever the initial costs of switching to new, clean generating technology, it pales compared to the cost of cleaning up mercury pollution, the cost of treating smog related illnesses, or the costs of a rapid rise in global temperature. I hope my colleagues will join me in this effort to level the playing field for clean energy and fulfill the promise of the Clean Air Act.

H.R. 2982, A BILL CALLING FOR THE HIRING OF 100,000 RESOURCE STAFF FOR STUDENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Mrs. MINK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a very important piece of legislation, H.R. 2982.

This bill will provide $15 billion over a five year period specifically for states to hire resource staff in our public schools to help students cope with the stress and anxieties of adolescence.

Pearl, Mississippi; West Paducah, Kentucky; Jonesboro, Arkansas; Springfield, Oregon; Edinboro, Pennsylvania; Fayetteville, Tennessee; Littleton, Colorado—all of these towns should conjure up images of small-town American life—quiet neighborhoods, friendly faces, and good, safe schools. However, today these towns bring to mind radically different images—children with guns, students fleeing schools in terror, and kids killing their classmates.

It is hard to forget the images of Columbine High School. Not because this shooting spree was more tragic than any of the others—all of these incidents have been undeniably jarring—but because the attackers were so calculated and so ruthless in their killings. Why did this happen? What could make children from seemingly typical upbringings turn so violent? And what can we do to ensure that our children will be safe at school?

I don't know if we will ever find all of the answers, and I am not suggesting that Washington is necessarily the place to look for them—I think that, ultimately, we must look to our culture and within our own families to find the answers—but I do know that this Congress owes it to our children to work on policies that can bring about change.

First, we must look to substantive preventive measures. Security guards, metal detectors, and expelling violent students—all have their place in addressing this problem, but they do nothing to prevent tragedies from occurring. Ultimately, we must work with children to ensure they can handle their anger and emotions without resorting to violence. Many of our children enter school with emotional, physical, and interpersonal barriers to learning. We need more school counselors in our schools, not only to help identify these troubled youth, but to work on developmental skill building.

The fact is today we have no real infrastructure of support for our kids when it comes to mental health services in our schools. We currently have only 90,000 school counselors for approximately 41.4 million students in our public schools. That is, on average, roughly 1 counselor for every 513 students. For many schools the ratio is even worse. In Hawaii, for instance, we have only 1 counselor for every 525 students. In California, there is only 1 counselor for more than 1,000 students. That is simply not enough.

With current school counselors responsible for such large numbers of students, they are unable to address the students' personal needs. Instead, their role is more often administrative, scheduling, and job and college counseling. The child is forfeited for different goals.

My legislation will put 100,000 new resource staff in our schools to focus on the mental health needs of students. Like the President's 100,000 new teacher initiative, this will make it easier for children to get the attention they need.

This resource staff assigned to work for and with students will be hired to address the personal, family, peer level, emotional, and developmental needs of students. By focusing on these personal needs, these staff members will pick up early warning signs of troubled youth. They will improve student interaction and school safety. In short, they can save kids' lives.

These resource staff can also provide consultation with teachers and parents about student learning, behavior and emotional problems. They can develop and implement prevention programs. They can deal with substance abuse. They can set up peer mediation, and they can enhance problem solving in schools. Resource staff will provide important support services to students, and to parents and teachers on behalf of the students.

By no means is this the only thing that needs to be addressed to prevent youth violence. This should be the cornerstone of a much larger proposal. We must also look at the media's impact on violence and the easy accessibility of guns. We must strengthen our programs for families and early childhood development, and we must develop character education programs.

If we are really serious about addressing school violence, we must address prevention.