

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

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

The Federal and commercial space industry recognize the risk the shortage of technically skilled workers present to the nation's long-term prosperity and viability. As the ranking member of the Subcommittee on International Security, Proliferation and Federal Services, I am interested in how we can avert what most certainly poses a threat to our national security and economic well-being. The Federal Government is attempting to address those factors in its work environment that make it less attractive to technically skilled workers, while emphasizing the rewarding and fulfilling public service careers available. A way for the Federal Government to increase the number of qualified workers could be a partnership with universities to encourage the skills and training needed to enter the field. The Federal Government should aggressively promote its student loan repayment program to attract young college graduates who may turn away from Federal service because they are burdened with school debts. This program, which has been authorized since 1991, was never imple-

mented due to budget cuts, hiring freezes, and downsizing over the past decade. Since last March, Senators DURBIN, VOINOVICH, and I have urged the Office of Personnel Management to implement the loan repayment program because we viewed it as an opportunity to encourage young people to join the Federal Government. We were successful in expanding the benefit beyond the scope of the initial authorization through an amendment to the FY01 DoD Authorization Act, which was signed by the President on October 30, 2000.

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

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

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

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

I am proud to speak out on behalf of the real intent of H.R. 2614 which would

help small businesses succeed. There is an old proverb used in my state of South Dakota which advises; "Don't put off until tomorrow what can be done today." Today, we should strip out the politically charged amendments that have been tacked onto this bill and pass legislation both parties agree is important to our economy, our local communities, and many businesses and families across the country.

It is careless not to reauthorize these important programs because of election year politics which bogged down the legislation with unrelated issues. Congress should vote on the genuine issues with regard to small business programs. We must not let certain partisan differences cause us to turn away from our opportunity to promote the entrepreneurial spirit of our country.

There are many issues before this body which evoke strong differences of opinion, however, authorizing these important small business programs are not among them. I urge my colleagues to join me in securing the passage of this important legislation and not allow these widely supported initiatives to fall victim to nonrelated amendments thrown together in the closing days of Congress.

DIRECT-TO-CONSUMER ADVERTISING AND RISING PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICES

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, anyone who has lived or visited in the United States during the last few years has been exposed to a phenomenon which is uniquely American. I speak of the direct-to-consumer advertising of prescription medicines.

U.S. pharmaceutical manufacturers will spend an amount this year very close to \$2 billion on advertising to the general public. This can be compared to about just \$150 million in 1993—which explains why no one can avoid these advertisements even if they wanted to. They are ubiquitous—TV, radio, newspapers, and magazines are all replete with prescription drug ads.

Typically, the drugs that are most heavily advertised are among those that ultimately are the most heavily prescribed. According to a recently released National Institute for Health Care Management study, for example, the seven drugs in 1999 which had more than \$1 billion in sales were advertised an average of \$58.5 million each. Together, they contributed an estimated 24.3 percent toward the increases in total expenditures of prescription drugs during 1999.

Clearly, advertising works, just as it always has.

Advocates of this relatively new technique to increase name brand prescription sales will say that consumers become more aware of treatment possibilities and may have a better starting point for discussion with their physicians. Other observers believe this practice artificially increases demand from consumers who are still not fully