

contribution to the cultural enrichment of our community and our Nation.

BENEFITS OF PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT PLAN

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, if you go into almost any group of 30 to 40 people and ask how many of you have someone in your family who has to take three or four pills a day, each and every day for the rest of their lives in order to stay active and stay comfortable and stay healthy, probably 70 percent of the hands in the room would go up, because that is the reality in 2004. If we wind back the clock to 1965 and ask that question, not many people would raise their hands, because we did not have the miracle pills then that we do now.

In 1965, when we started Medicare, we could not foresee this pharmaceutical revolution that we have now. That is why this Congress, under the leadership of George Bush, has put in a prescription drug benefit program in our Medicare reform package.

The plan works like this: This April, all seniors will get a 25 percent discount card that can be used in any pharmacy. Just walk in, a 25 percent savings. Then in the year 2006 you will get about a 50 percent cost reduction on your prescription drugs, on average.

Keep in mind, this is a voluntary program. It is not the greatest thing in the world, but it certainly is a huge step forward, and I think seniors will really enjoy this benefit. I am glad the President took this leadership.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF S. 610, NASA FLEXIBILITY ACT OF 2003

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 502 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 502

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (S. 610) to amend the provisions of title 5, United States Code, to provide for workforce flexibilities and certain Federal personnel provisions relating to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour, with 40 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Science and 20 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Government Reform. After

general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. The bill shall be considered as read. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 8 of rule XVIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommend with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TERRY). The gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 1 hour.

(Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 520 is an open rule that provides for the consideration of S. 610, the NASA Workforce Flexibility Act of 2003. The rule provides for 1 hour of debate, with 40 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on Science, and 20 minutes equally divided between the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on Government Reform. The rule also provides one motion to recommend, with or without instructions.

Mr. Speaker, following the extraordinarily tragic Shuttle *Columbia* disaster, it was imperative that the United States take a deep look at its space program. The Columbia Accident Investigation Board and NASA continue to address needed safety concerns, but I think we must take steps to further innovation and scientific research, find new frontiers and unveil endless possibilities.

I believe NASA has undergone a positive transformation in recent weeks. With the stunning successes of the Mars rovers and President Bush announcing new long-term goals for manned space exploration, our national desire to comprehend the nature of our solar system and our universe has been reinvigorated. The underlying legislation provides NASA additional tools to recruit, train and keep the most talented scientists and engineers.

The legislation authorizes NASA to offer needed incentives to valued current and prospective employees, the same as most major corporations and research institutions would offer to compete. When the United States goes to space, Mr. Speaker, we need the

brightest and the best in the industry to work to make our dreams of exploration a reality. As such, this legislation authorizes recruitment, relocation and retention bonuses as an incentive to NASA employees; term appointments to our most valued scientific minds; and the ability for Administrator O'Keefe to provide pay increases to those in critical positions and with superior qualifications. These are essential additions necessary for NASA to succeed in its newest missions.

Furthermore, the underlying legislation, Mr. Speaker, authorizes \$10 million to begin a Science and Technology Scholarship Program. This funding is an important step for promoting the sciences in our high schools and colleges, while allowing less advantaged students a potential for higher studies.

Our superiority in science and the technologies, without any doubt, has declined since President Kennedy began our Nation on a path to the moon in 1961. It is our responsibility to ensure that when those highly trained NASA scientists retire, some of whom have participated in the entire history of our space program, that they know their replacements will be the best and the brightest from any background that this country has to offer.

I would like to quote Christa McAuliffe, a teacher, astronaut and American hero tragically lost in the explosion of the *Challenger* Space Shuttle. She said, "Space is for everybody. It's not just for a few people in science or math, or for a select group of astronauts. That's our new frontier out there, and it is everybody's business to know about space."

I believe that the underlying legislation, Mr. Speaker, will help NASA to continue our passionate exploration of the unknown. And we bring this legislation forward, Mr. Speaker, under an open rule. Any Member can bring forth to this House for the consideration of all of its membership any idea that Members may have. It is an open and a fair rule.

I would like to thank the gentleman from New York (Chairman BOEHLERT) and Senator VOINOVICH for their support on this issue. I urge Members to support both the rule and the underlying legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I thank the gentleman from Florida, Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART, for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of the NASA Workforce Flexibility Act of 2003, as well as the rule providing for its consideration. As the majority member of the committee previously mentioned, the underlying legislation will provide NASA with greater personnel management flexibilities to provide bonuses, hiring and other management tools in order to enhance the agency's ability to recruit and retain qualified employees.