

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Chairman, I rise today to offer an amendment to H.R. 6063, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2008. My amendment modifies section 1108, and it states:

(1) in subsection (a), strike “small businesses” and insert “small, minority-owned, and women-owned businesses”; and

(2) in subsection (b)(2), insert “, giving preference to socially and economically disadvantaged small business concerns, small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans, and HUBZone small business concerns” after “to small businesses.”

My amendment clarifies that the NASA Outreach and Technology Assistance Program will include small, minority-owned, and women-owned businesses. It would also give preference, in selection of businesses to participate in the program, to socially and economically disadvantaged small business concerns, small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans, and HUBZone small business concerns.

Madam Chairman, I would like to thank my colleague and fellow Texan, Congressman LAMPSON, for his leadership in authoring the important section describing the NASA Outreach and Technology Assistance Program. As set forth in this legislation, this program is intended to support the mission of NASA's Innovative Partnerships Program to provide technical assistance through joint partnerships with industry, academia, government agencies, and national laboratories. It will facilitate technology transfer to the private sector, create a network of academic institutions, aerospace contractors, and NASA centers that will commit to donating technical assistance to small businesses, and create a network of economic development organizations to increase the awareness and enhance the effectiveness of the program nationwide.

My amendment would clarify that the NASA Outreach and Technology Assistance Program will include small, minority-owned, and women-owned businesses. It would also give preference, in the selection of businesses to participate in this program, to socially and economically disadvantaged small business concerns, small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans, and HUBZone small business concerns.

Small businesses represent more than the American dream—they represent the American economy. Small businesses account for 95 percent of all employers, create half of our gross domestic product, and provide three out of four new jobs in this country. Minority businesses are also crucial to our communities and our country. Black entrepreneurs owned 9.7 percent of all such businesses in the United States. Statistics gathered between 1997 and 2002 show substantial increases in the number of black-owned firms with receipts of \$1 million or more, as well as the number of black-owned firms with 100 employees or more. Black-owned firms accounted for 5 percent of all non-farm business in the United States in 2002.

In my home city of Houston, small businesses are vital to our economy. In 2002, Harris County ranked 6th in the nation for counties with the largest number of black-owned firms, with 27,770 firms with receipts totaling \$1,817 million. I have worked to introduce minority, women, and small business owners to

contracting officials at NASA to help promote and develop Houston small businesses.

Madam Chairman, the NASA Office of Small Business Programs sets forth, as its mission, “to promote and integrate all small businesses into the competitive base of contractors that pioneer the future of space exploration, scientific discovery, and aeronautics research.” Today's legislation makes important strides toward working to realize this important goal, and I believe that my amendment would strengthen this objective. The legislation we are considering today reinforces the fundamental fact that the benefits of NASA's programming and innovation are felt far beyond scientific and academic spheres. Space technologies provide practical, tangible benefits to society, and NASA provides valuable opportunities to businesses in our community.

My amendment would help to ensure that the important program authorized by this legislation to develop technical partnerships with private industry will be readily accessible to these vital, but disadvantaged, enterprises. I would like to thank Congressman LAMPSON for his support of my amendment. I ask that my amendment be ruled in order, and that my colleagues join me in working to bring the benefits of this important legislation to all members of our community.

Madam Chairman, I would also like to thank my colleague Congressman UDALL for introducing this important legislation. After the *Columbia* disaster, NASA stands at a pivotal moment in its history. It is the responsibility of this Congress to ensure that the future of NASA is one of continued progress. Space exploration remains a part of our national destiny. It inspires our children to look to the stars and dream of what they too, one day, may achieve. Space exploration allows us to push the bounds of our scientific knowledge, as we carry out research projects not possible within the constraints of the planet Earth.

SUPPORT STEM DIVERSITY RELATED
AMENDMENTS TO H.R. 6063

DIVERSITY AND INNOVATION CAUCUS,

June 11, 2008.

DEAR COLLEAGUE: We write to bring your attention to several amendments that may be offered during consideration of H.R. 6063, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2008. Amendments presented by Representatives HODES and JACKSON-LEE are aimed at creating greater diversity in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) workforce through opportunity and access. As Co-chairs of the Diversity and Innovation Caucus, we have worked to expand the participation of under-represented groups in the STEM fields to help bolster U.S. competitiveness. The amendments that will help us accomplish this goal in H.R. 6063 include:

Hodes (NH)—VOTE YES: Establishes a scholarship program in honor of Christa McAuliffe, a teacher from Concord, New Hampshire who died in the 1986 Challenger Space Shuttle disaster. The scholarship would go to women pursuing degrees in mathematics, science, and engineering.

Jackson-Lee (TX)—VOTE YES: Clarifies that the NASA Outreach and Technology Assistance Program includes small, minority-owned, and women-owned businesses. It would also give preference, in selection for the program, to socially and economically disadvantaged small business concerns, small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans, and HUBZone small business concerns.

If America is to achieve its strategic objectives in STEM, then the enormous potential

of groups that are currently under-represented in the STEM fields must be utilized. STEM policies which encourage diversity help strengthen American innovation and competitiveness by expanding the STEM pipeline. We strongly urge you to support the amendments to HR 6063 listed above.

Thank you for our careful consideration of these important amendments.

I yield back my time.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr. GORDON. Madam Chairman, I want to thank everyone for this constructive and civil debate that we've had today.

I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas) having assumed the chair, Ms. BORDALLO, Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 6063) to authorize the programs of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

□ 1745

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WATSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WATSON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

GET YOUR FACTS STRAIGHT

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

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, Special Orders, such as I am now entered into, are a time when Members can fairly freely say things without fear of contradiction because generally no one is here. And as you listen to many of the Special Orders, there is a very good reason why no one is here: No one ought to want to pay any attention to them. And we have a certain amount of tolerance when it comes to Special Orders, but sometimes the stupidity level, it seems to me, is exceeded.

In a Special Order yesterday, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) said the following. He was denouncing the notion of financing public transportation from the gasoline tax. It does