

HOUSE PASSES BOEHLERT/LARSON

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HOUSE PASSES BOEHLERT/LARSON TECH-TALENT BILL

WASHINGTON, D.C.- U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) today hailed the passage of H.R. 3130, the "Tech-Talent" education bill by the House of Representatives. Along with Science Committee Chairman Sherwood Boehlert (NY-23), Larson introduced the bill in the House and U.S. Senator Joseph I. Lieberman introduced the bill in the Senate.

Larson stated: "I am proud that the House today passed this important legislation concerning higher education designed to increase the number and quality of technologically and scientifically trained students in the United States. The problem is that fewer and fewer Americans are getting degrees in the scientific and technical fields, even as demand grows and more jobs are going unfilled.

"Our strength and leadership in the world is based on the might of our defense, strength of our economy, and the quality of our education system. We must create a pipeline of highly trained technologically skilled individuals and teachers to serve as the backbone for our workforce. This legislation is an extremely timely and useful component in this effort. This is accomplished by providing colleges and universities with incentives to provide increased opportunities for students interested in the critical areas of math, science and engineering as well as through incentives aimed at increasing their recruiting efforts and creating dynamic opportunities for interested students. I am also especially proud that our bill puts a strong emphasis on increasing the recruitment of minority students, who are historically underrepresented in these fields."

"To remain a strong nation, we must ensure that the most important elements that keep us dynamic, innovative, prosperous and secure are there for us: our students, teachers, researchers, engineers, and scientists," said Larson.

In addition to requiring all schools that apply for the program to increase efforts in recruiting minorities, the bill creates a new program specifically targeted towards Historically Black and Hispanic institutions.

The legislation will establish a competitive grant program through the National Science Foundation (NSF) to reward universities and community colleges that will commit to increasing the number of students that receive degrees in science, math, engineering and technology fields.

Provisions of the bill include:

- Authorization of \$25 million to NSF for Fiscal Year 2003 for competitive grants to 2-year and 4-year colleges and to universities to increase the numbers and quality of students receiving undergraduate degrees in the physical and information sciences, mathematics, engineering and technology.
- Authorization of \$15 million per year for five years to NSF for competitive grants to institutions of higher education to expand previously implemented reforms of undergraduate science, math, engineering, or technology education that have been successful in increasing the number and quality of graduates.
- Authorization of \$8 million per year for five years to NSF for competitive grants to institutions of higher education or nonprofit organizations engaged in science education to provide for professional development of undergraduate faculty to improve undergraduate science, math, engineering, or technology education.
- Authorization of \$10 million per year for five years to NSF for competitive grants to institutions of higher education for

the acquisition of research-grade instrumentation, and associated training related to use of the instrumentation, for use primarily in undergraduate research or undergraduate instruction in science, math, engineering, or technology.

- Authorization of \$10 million per year for five years to NSF for competitive grants to institutions of higher education to establish sites that provide research experiences for undergraduate science, math, engineering, or technology students.
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