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HOUSE SCIENCE SUBCOMMITTEE APPROVES LARSON BILL TO INCREASE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

WASHINGTON, D.C.- The House Science Committee's Subcommittee on Research today passed the Technology Talent Act of 2001, H.R. 3130, a bill to increase the number of technologically and scientifically trained workers in the United States, following a "mark-up" of the legislation. Senator Joseph I. Lieberman is the sponsor of the bill in the Senate and in the House, Science Committee Chairman Rep. Sherwood Boehlert (NY-23) and Larson are the lead sponsors.

Larson stated: "I am delighted that the Subcommittee on Research passed the Technology Talent Act today and I look forward to it moving through the full Science Committee. 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. This legislation is an extremely timely and useful component in what must amount to a technological Marshall Plan for the United States. With so many of our scientific and high tech jobs going unfilled, and high schools and universities producing fewer and fewer students specializing in engineering, math, science or the field of technology, action must be taken. We must create a pipeline of highly trained technologically skilled workers and teachers to serve as the backbone for our workforce."

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.