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## House passes two bills promoting integration of women in the sciences

**January 10, 2017**

On January 10, the House passed two bipartisan bills to increase the number of women in the science workforce. Women compose less than 25 percent of America's science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) workforce. The bills, which encourage more women to pursue careers in science, are entitled the Inspiring the Next Space Pioneers, Innovators, Researchers, and Explorers (INSPIRE) Women Act (H.R. 321), introduced by Rep. Barbara Comstock (R-VA-10), and the Promoting Women in Entrepreneurship Act (H.R. 255), introduced by Rep. Elizabeth Esty (D-CT-5).

The INSPIRE Women Act directs NASA to encourage women and girls to study STEM fields. The act calls on NASA to encourage women in space science and exploration by supporting the NASA GIRLS and NASA BOYS, Aspire to Inspire, and the Summer Institute in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Research programs. These programs encourage female middle and high school students to work in science through education, mentoring, and exposure to exceptional women scientists.

The Promoting Women in Entrepreneurship Act directs the National Science Foundation (NSF) to use existing entrepreneurial programs to increase its focus on supporting and encouraging women scientists to market and commercialize their work.

Both bills passed the Senate Committee on Commerce Science and Technology without alteration. The Senate voted to pass these bills on February 14.

President Trump signed the bills into law on February 28.

Sources: U.S. Congress, House.gov, NASA, U.S. Government Publishing Office

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