



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 26, 2002

Contact:

Interim Progress Report
to Congress
Cannon Caucus Room, 3rd Floor
Cannon House Office Building
8:00 a.m. ~ 11:15 a.m.

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**Supply/Demand Imbalance for Skilled Workers
Puts Nation at Risk**

*Shortage of Scientists and Engineers in Educational
Pipelines Detailed in "The Quiet Crisis"*

(Washington, DC) – There is a “quiet crisis” building in the United States, which stems from the gap between the nation’s growing need for scientists, engineers and other technically talented workers, and its production of them.

As the generation educated in the 1950s and 1960s prepares to retire, American colleges and universities are not graduating enough scientific and technical talent to step into research laboratories, software and other design centers, refineries, defense installations, science policy offices, manufacturing shop floors and high-tech startups. This “gap” represents a shortfall in our national scientific and technical capabilities.

This imbalance is detailed in “The Quiet Crisis,” a report written by Dr. Shirley Ann Jackson, president of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and member of the executive committee of BEST (Building Engineering and Science Talent), a public-private partnership dedicated to

building a stronger, more diverse U.S. workforce in science, engineering and technology by increasing the participation of under-represented groups.

Dr. Jackson and other members of BEST's Blue Ribbon Panels will provide an interim progress report to Congress on Thursday, September 26, 2002 in the Cannon Caucus Room, 3rd Floor, Cannon House Office Building.

While BEST was chartered shortly before September 11, 2001, the attacks on New York and Washington, DC bring new urgency to whether the United States is developing the human capital to remain the world's most productive economy while at the same time meeting a formidable new national security threat.

BEST formed as a three-year initiative to find out what's working in pre-K-12, higher education and the workforce to encourage women, African-Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, and persons with disabilities to choose and stay with science and math educational paths. Currently, this demographic comprises 2/3 of the overall workforce but holds only about 1/4 of the technical jobs that drive innovation. Under-representation in the workforce is now an economic issue.

For a copy of "The Quiet Crisis" or for more information about BEST, please visit www.bestworkforce.org.

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