REPRESENTATIVE SHERWOOD BOEHLERT (R-NY), CHAIRMAN

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sherwood Boehlert was first elected to represent Central New York in the House of Representatives in 1982 and has earned a reputation for independence, moderation and thoughtful leadership.

Universally recognized as the leading Republican environmentalist in the House, Boehlert has also made a name for himself as a champion of the Federal investment in science and technology. The Science Coalition has hailed Boehlert a "Champion of Science" for his leadership in advancing the importance of university-based science and engineering research. The National Council on Science and the Environment said, "He has a well-earned reputation as one of Congress's scientific leaders."

Boehlert has served on the Science Committee since first taking office in 1983, and was elected Chairman in January 2001. The Committee has jurisdiction over all Federal non-military scientific and technology research and development programs. Federal spending on these programs totals more than $30 billion a year. This includes NASA, the National Science Foundation, and research and development activities within the Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Aviation Administration, and the Departments of Commerce, Energy, Homeland Security, and Transportation.

In his first speech as chairman, Boehlert pledged to "build the Science Committee into a significant force within the Congress," and "to ensure that we have a healthy, sustainable, and productive R&D establishment – one that educates students, increases human knowledge, strengthens U.S. competitiveness and contributes to the well-being of the nation and the world."

With those goals in mind, Boehlert laid out three priorities for the Committee – "The Three E's" – science and math education, energy policy, and the environment – three areas in which Boehlert believed the resources and expertise of the scientific enterprise could be brought to bear on issues of national significance. Under Boehlert's leadership in the 107th Congress, the Committee succeeded in getting important legislation on these and other priority areas signed into law.

On education, the Committee's major initiatives in both K-12 and undergraduate education were signed into law as part of H.R. 4664, the Investing in America's Future Act, which put the National Science Foundation on the track toward doubling its budget over the next five years. Addressing the Nation's energy needs, the Committee unanimously approved research and development portions of the House-passed energy bill, H.R. 4, which were designed to reduce U.S. dependence on foreign oil by investing in energy efficiency and new technologies in renewable energy, nuclear energy, and fossil fuels, including clean coal. In the environmental realm, the Committee passed legislation strengthening science at the Environmental Protection Agency and brought attention to the science behind several controversial issues including arsenic in drinking water, particulate air pollution, and global climate change.

Following the tragic events of September 11, 2001, terrorism moved to the forefront of the Committee's agenda. Heeding Chairman Boehlert's admonition that "the war on terrorism, like the Cold War, will be won in the laboratory as much as on the battlefield," the Science Committee worked to ensure that the Federal Government was investing in the science and technology necessary to combat terrorism over the long-term.

Boehlert introduced and the House quickly passed H.R. 3178, a bill to enhance security at water supply and wastewater treatment systems. In addition, the Committee held hearings on anthrax detection and decontamination, and urged Federal agencies to better coordinate their response to bioterrorism. Addressing the vulnerability of the Nation's critical infrastructure, the House approved, and the President signed into law, Boehlert's landmark "Cyber Security Research and Development

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Act" (H.R. 3394), authorizing $903 million in new funding for R&D in this critical area. In addition, the Committee played a key role in the development of H.R. 5005, legislation establishing the new Department of Homeland Security, leading the push to make science and technology a priority in the new department and ensuring the establishment of an undersecretary solely responsible for such issues.

In the 108th Congress, Boehlert focused the Committee's attention on charting space and ocean policy, strengthening the U.S. economy by promoting research and innovation, and enabling the U.S. to better respond to terrorism and other emergencies by helping first responders.

Following the loss of the Space Shuttle Columbia less than two months into the 108th Congress, Boehlert held several high profile hearings into the cause of the accident and exercised close oversight of the proceedings of the Columbia Accident Investigation Board. He continues to closely monitor the costs associated with returning the Space Shuttles to flight and is currently drafting legislation to formally authorize the President's Vision for Space Exploration.

Boehlert has also been leading efforts to revamp ocean policy. In the 108th Congress, he convened the first hearing in the House on the Preliminary Report of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and has been a strong advocate for passing legislation that will clarify the structure and mission of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Following the Indian Ocean tsunami in December 2004, Boehlert also vowed to take necessary steps to upgrade and expand the U.S. tsunami warning system.

Recognizing that innovation is the key to U.S. economic success, Chairman Boehlert has also focused his efforts on strengthening the U.S. research enterprise and American industry. In December 2003, President Bush signed into law Boehlert's 21st Century Nanotechnology Research and Development Act, which authorized a better funded and coordinated interagency program in nanotechnology – an emerging field of science that the National Science Foundation estimates will be a $1 trillion industry within the next decade. Boehlert also moved legislation through the Science Committee in the 108th Congress that would strengthen U.S. supercomputing capabilities and help domestic manufacturers remain globally competitive.

Concerned that unnecessary visa delays would discourage the world's top students and researchers from becoming part of the U.S. research enterprise, Boehlert also led a successful effort to reduce the waiting time for visas through a series of hearings and a Government Accountability Office study.

Boehlert also introduced two pieces of legislation – both of which were signed into law – that increased Federal support for U.S. fire and emergency medical services.

In addition to being a leader on science issues, Boehlert's legislative experience and seniority make him one of the most influential members of Congress. Among the many acknowledging Boehlert's influence was National Journal, which dubbed him "the Green Hornet" and featured him as one of a dozen "key players" in the House. Congressional Quarterly referred to him as "an important envoy between the House GOP leadership and the chamber's increasingly independent Republican swing voters" and Time Magazine highlighted him as a power center on Capitol Hill.

Born on September 28, 1936 in Utica, New York, Boehlert is a graduate of Whitesboro Central High School and Utica College (Bachelor of Science, 1961). Before serving as Oneida County Executive (1979-83), he was manager of public relations at Wyandotte Chemical (1961-64) and served two years in the U.S. Army (1956-58).

Boehlert served as chief of staff for two area Congressmen, Alexander Pirnie (1964-72) and Donald Mitchell (1973-79), where he became intimately familiar with the needs of his constituents in Central New York.

An avid New York Yankees fan and movie buff, Boehlert and his wife, Marianne (Willey) Boehlert, make their home in New Hartford, New York. They have four grown children and five grandchildren.