

Mr. KING of New York. Madam Speaker, today I rise in support of H. J. Res. 93, a resolution approving the renewal of import restrictions contained in the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act (P.L. 108–61). I am proud to have once again introduced this legislation; this year with the gentleman from New York, Mr. CROWLEY.

In 2003 Congress passed the Burmese Freedom & Democracy Act, legislation that I co-authored with my friend, the late Tom Lantos. President Bush signed this bill into law and we have reauthorized these import restrictions every year since. The legislation bans imports from Burma and the issuance of visas to those officials affiliated with the State Peace and Development Council, SPDC, the military junta that rules Burma and brutally represses its people. This law also bans U.S. financial transactions that involve individuals or entities connected with the SPDC.

These sanctions are critically important to keeping the pressure on the Burmese junta. The government continues to have one of the worst human rights records in the world and routinely violates the rights of Burmese citizens, including the systematic use of rape as a weapon of war, extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests and detention, torture, as well as slave and child labor. The Burmese regime has destroyed more than 3,000 ethnic villages, displaced approximately 2,000,000 Burmese people, more than 500,000 of which are internally displaced, and arrested approximately 1,300 individuals for expressing critical opinions of the government. And it continues to hold Aung San Suu Kyi, the head of the National League for Democracy and the democratically elected leader of Burma, under house arrest.

And just when you thought it couldn't get any worse, it does. In August 2007, after the SPDC cancelled fuel subsidies resulting in skyrocketing fuel prices, student leaders, democracy leaders, and Buddhist monks marched peacefully through the streets to demand human rights, freedom, and democracy. But the military responded by attacking these protestors. Hundreds of innocent people were killed, arrested, imprisoned, or tortured as part of this violent crackdown.

Then in May 2008 came Cyclone Nargis. Hundreds of thousands of Burmese citizens lost their lives because the government did not inform them a storm was approaching and, even worse, delayed and prevented humanitarian aid from reaching its people.

We must continue to stand with the Burmese people and expose the despicable and reprehensible actions of the SPDC. Sanctions are critical to putting pressure on the junta. Just last week the House passed the Burmese Democracy Promotion Act (H.R. 3890) which would ban the importation of Burmese gems into the United States and freeze the assets of Burmese political and military leaders. But we need to urge others to do the same. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ASEAN, the European Union, EU, and the United Nations Security Council, UNSC, must all impose multilateral sanctions against Burma's military regime including a complete arms embargo.

I urge adoption of the resolution.

Mr. HERGER. Madam Speaker, I urge an "aye" vote on this and yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time with the hope that we will pass this. And I think

Mr. CROWLEY noted the efforts of our late colleague and close friend, Tom Lantos. He paved the way on this, and I think we need to follow in that path.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution, H.J. Res. 93, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the joint resolution, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AMENDING THE INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1986 TO RESTORE THE HIGHWAY TRUST FUND BALANCE

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6532) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to restore the Highway Trust Fund balance.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6532

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. RESTORATION OF HIGHWAY TRUST FUND BALANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (f) of section 9503 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to determination of trust fund balances after September 30, 1998) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (1) and (2) as subparagraphs (A) and (B), respectively, and by moving such subparagraphs 2 ems to the right,

(2) by striking "For purposes" and inserting the following:

"(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes",

(3) by moving the flush sentence at the end of paragraph (1), as so amended, 2 ems to the right, and

(4) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(2) RESTORATION OF FUND BALANCE.—Out of money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, there is hereby appropriated to the Highway Trust Fund \$8,017,000,000."

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The last sentence of section 9503(f)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended by subsection (a), is amended by striking "subsection" and inserting "paragraph".

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on September 30, 2008.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) and the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. MCCRERY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, may I ask unanimous consent to give Members 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on the bill, H.R. 6532.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, first let me thank my colleagues, Chairmen RANGEL, OBERSTAR and DEFAZIO, for acting on this important issue.

Madam Speaker, our roads need repair. Our State and local governments are struggling to make ends meet. Our drivers suffer when highway projects are delayed.

This bill is a temporary fix for the estimated \$4 billion shortfall in the highway trust fund.

This bill should fully fund the highway trust fund through 2009, but we still need a long-term bipartisan solution. I want to be clear, no money, but no money is spent under this bill. That process is left up to the appropriators. This legislation simply amends the Internal Revenue Code provision only.

Madam Speaker, transportation is the number one issue for many citizens in my district. Commuters sit in traffic for about 60 hours every year. Early this year, Forbes magazine declared the Atlanta metro area as the worst city for commuters in the country; the worst, Madam Speaker. If we fail to act today, our citizens, our States and our economy will suffer. We must act, and we must act today. We must act now.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote in support of H.R. 6532.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCRERY. Madam Speaker, I yield myself so much time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 6532.

I would say to my good friend, the chairman of the Transportation Committee, that I agree with him that the current financing structure for our transportation needs is inadequate. The bill before us today, though, I think just puts off the day that we will finally come to grips with the inadequacy of that financing structure and deal with it. And we should be dealing with the fundamental problem here and not just putting a patch, a temporary band-aid on it, such as this \$8 billion transfer will do.

So while I'm in agreement with the underlying, I suppose, motive for this bill, I think it is ill-advised because of the precedent that it sets. And it puts off to another day—which is easy for us to do—grappling with the real serious problem of fundamental inadequate funding of our transportation system through the trust fund.

So with that, Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota, chairman of the Transportation Committee, Mr. OBERSTAR.

Mr. OBERSTAR. I thank the distinguished gentleman from the Committee on Ways and Means, whom we all admire and revere for his civil rights leadership. And we're delighted that he is bringing this legislation to the floor.

I certainly appreciate the fiscal concern expressed by the distinguished

gentleman from Louisiana, Madam Speaker. He's right in this sense, that we have a long-term problem in the highway trust fund. And we're going to address that issue next year in the authorization of the Surface Transportation bill that the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will bring through committee and to the House floor in good order, well before the expiration date of the current law. But meanwhile, there is a short-term problem.

In 1998, when I think everybody I see on the floor who was serving in the House at that time, voted for what we affectionately know as TEA-21, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, to put firewalls around the highway trust fund to ensure that those revenues would be invested in transportation and not held back in reserve to make deficits look smaller, as had been done from the time of President Lyndon Johnson in 1968 to 1998.

As part of the agreement worked out by then chairman of our committee, Bud Shuster, with House Republican leadership, the Speaker, the Appropriations Committee, the Budget Committee, and on our side with the Clinton administration, we agreed to give up \$29 billion of surplus in the highway trust fund for long-term debt reduction and short-term deficit reduction, and also to give up interest paid on revenues deposited in the highway trust fund from the collections every 3 months—as is the practice—it would give that interest up as well. Eight billion dollars was transferred to make the deficit look smaller, and the rest went to long-term debt reduction.

At the time, we had not only a balanced budget, but a budget in surplus. The prospects for the economy were shining. It was a rising economy. There were revenues galloping into the highway trust fund. But the economy has taken a bad turn. It has taken a bad turn on the backs of the cornerstone of the highway trust fund, which is the highway user fee. And for the first time since 1956, the establishment of the highway trust fund and the Interstate Highway Program, we have seen a decline in—

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional minute.

Mr. OBERSTAR. We have seen a decline in vehicle miles traveled. And that has meant a leveling off of revenues into the highway trust fund.

We need this temporary adjustment to prevent a longer term shortfall in the highway trust in which the Association of Highway and State Transportation Officials said could be a \$14 billion cut in Federal highway funding in the next year.

Now, we already have 8.2 percent unemployment in the building trades, 785,000 construction workers are out of work today. If you think the housing situation is bad, this will be worse if

we have a huge hole in the highway trust fund.

I assure my very sincere and genuine colleague from Louisiana, who has been a very fiscally responsible person, that this is a long-term, fiscally responsible action that we're taking here to close the hole in the highway trust fund, give us a little breathing space until next year, and come back with a longer term solution.

Mr. MCCRERY. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished ranking member of the Transportation Committee, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA).

Mr. MICA. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker and my colleagues, let me tell you the situation we're in. The highway trust fund is basically busted; it's busted for several reasons.

First of all, we depend on 18.4 cents of tax to come in on every gallon of gasoline to that fund. People are driving less, so there is less money coming into the fund. The fleet out there of cars and trucks are more efficient; people are buying more efficient hybrids. There are nine million hybrids, which are going further on one gallon and paying literally less; so we have less money coming in. We're also using more alternative fuels.

What's going to happen, folks—and I have many of my conservative colleagues on this side of the aisle coming to me—\$8 billion for the highway trust fund, why should I support this? I'm telling you, folks, we have no alternative but to support this right now.

I think Mr. MCCRERY is correct, that we do have a problem; we need to solve the funding problem. We can't do that today. But what we've got to do today is make certain that this trust fund is sound; otherwise, in States across the country, hundreds of projects in Members' districts, the Department of Transportation Secretaries are going to be telling you we're closing down projects. Madam Speaker, 380,000 jobs could be lost. We could have a shortfall of as much as \$14 billion in funding transportation. We've got to do this now.

Now, the estimate came out last spring that we would be \$3 billion short. We're going to get an estimate this week that will show us \$5 to \$6 billion short. That means the Federal Government is going to tell your States and your Secretaries to start closing down these projects if we don't have the Federal money to back the obligation that we made as a Federal Government to them.

Unfortunately, the bill has come due, and we've got to pay it today. And this is a national crisis. This is a transportation situation. We've all got to work with each other and come up with a solution.

Mr. MCCRERY is right, in the long term we've got to resolve the funding problem, the basic funding problem. Next September 30, the current legislation and policy we work on expires. I

know Mr. OBERSTAR and I and others will work to come up with a formula that guarantees the solvency of this system.

This is absolutely essential. I wish, as one of the strongest conservatives in the House, to have some other alternative to bring you today, but I do not have that.

I thank the Ways and Means Committee for their cooperation, Mr. OBERSTAR for his cooperation. We must go forward, meet this obligation, and fund these projects.

□ 1100

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO), chairman of the Highways and Transit Subcommittee.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank my good friend and colleague for yielding the time.

Madam Speaker, this is an extraordinarily serious problem. Americans today are already familiar with the problems of our transportation infrastructure. On a daily basis, trucks are detoured because of weight-limited bridges. Individuals are sitting idling in traffic in congestion because of inadequate and obsolete infrastructure. People are flooding on to transit at a record rate. Transit ridership is reaching levels that haven't been seen since we had a decent system of transit in this country 50, 60 years ago.

But the stress on the system is extraordinary. People are trying to escape the high cost of gas. But our transit systems are struggling to pay the bills themselves. So this is not the time to begin to reduce our already pathetic and inadequate investment in our transportation infrastructure in the United States. The gas tax was 18.4 cents a gallon in 1993 and gas was a buck a gallon. Today, the gas tax is 18.3 cents a gallon, and gas was \$4.29 in my district last weekend. And that is not the cause of the run-up in price. And the buying and purchasing power of that small amount of tax is about half of what it was 15 years ago. So this is not the time to begin to think about even less investment. And that is what looms before us if this bill doesn't pass today and isn't signed into law by the President.

Less investment. My colleague, EARL BLUMENAUER from Oregon, corrected me after his speech. I said, you know, America is falling to a third-world status in terms of its investments in transportation infrastructure. He said, no, actually that was pretty insulting to a lot of third-world countries who are investing more than we are. So I have begun to call us "fourth world." That is a formerly first-world infrastructure falling even behind many countries in the third world in terms of investment.

150,000 bridges in America are either functionally obsolete or structurally deficient. I think we should post every one of those bridges with a sign so people know every time they drive over it.

This is not the time to begin to talk about doing less work to maintain our bridges and deal with the structural deficiencies and the functional obsolescence. This is not the time to begin to pull back on meeting our commitments to surface transportation infrastructure.

I'm so pleased that the Ways and Means Committee has chosen to act and replace funds that were raised out of the gas tax, intended to be only spent on transportation infrastructure, but transferred to the general fund and spent on who knows what. This will put us back in compliance with the law and the principles of the United States of America.

As we raise money dedicated to transportation, to be spent on transportation, there is a lot of investment that can be done. This is a needed bill. Pass this bill today.

Mr. MCCRERY. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE).

Mr. FLAKE. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

This Congress, more than anything else, I think is being defined as the "bailout Congress." We're going to be bailing out the housing industry to the tune of billions and billions and billions of dollars later today. And before we get to that, we're going to be bailing out the highway trust fund to the tune of \$8 billion.

Let me just remind Members that the TEA-LU, the last highway authorization bill, the bill with the infamous Bridge to Nowhere in it, contains 6,300 earmarks. Many of these earmarks were for museums, bypasses, trollies, parking facilities, landscaping, recreational facilities, highway beautification, street scaping, hiking trails and visitor centers. Billions and billions of dollars went to these items. And yet we are going to be taking \$8 billion from the highway trust fund. If you start doing that, Katy bar the door on projects like these that have run rampant already and will continue to.

Now we have billions of dollars that have been unobligated, that have not yet been obligated. We should take that funding from those earmarks, from many of those 6,300 earmarks that have not been obligated, and apply it to this funding shortfall instead of robbing the general fund. Once we start robbing the general fund for these projects, Katy bar the door. We simply won't stop. This is a bad thing to do. We shouldn't reauthorize this.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon, a member of the Ways and Means Committee, Mr. BLUMENAUER.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I appreciate the gentleman's courtesy in permitting me to speak on this critical legislation.

I rise in strong opposition to my friend from Arizona's assessment and in strong support for this legislation adjustment. The United States does have more and better infrastructure than any country in the world. The problem is that much of that infra-

structure is fraying. It is being worn out. And it's not equal to the challenges that we have today for our own communities, much less to the international competition that we're facing around the world. We are facing a situation today with a highway trust fund that is going into deficit and it's going to be more serious over time.

It would be the height of irresponsibility for this Congress to fail to keep pace with the needs of those programs. As my friend, Mr. OBERSTAR, who knows more about this than anybody in Congress, provided the context for the trust fund, and he could go on at great length about how the general fund, for years, was robbing the highway trust fund, using that to prop up and to disguise the nature of our true deficit.

The fact is that uncertainty today with significant projects around the country in virtually every one of our States is going to have significant consequences in those communities if they're not cleared and move ahead. Many of these have complex funding projects. I was in southern Ohio and Kentucky this weekend where they're looking at a multi-State, multiyear project. If we have a cloud over our ability to keep these commitments, it slows and it confuses. It is going to cost jobs. It is going to cost economic activity. I think you can make an argument that it actually will end up costing the general fund money over time because of the hundreds of thousands of jobs that will be in limbo.

I hope to continue to work with the Ways and Means Committee and the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to have a sustainable path to meet our transportation objectives in the future. Indeed, I hope to introduce legislation this summer for a water trust fund to be able to help some of those other responsibilities.

It is important for us not to back away from our commitment to State and local partners. Time does not permit to talk about the potential byplay where ultimately it's not going to make any difference in terms of the deficit. It's just going to unravel projects and create problems down the line.

Last but not least, the notion that somehow those Member-requested projects, God forbid, for street cars, for hiking paths, for bike trails that are among the most requested, the most popular, the most important, and I would daresay in a time of \$4.50 a gallon gasoline and morbidly obese fourth graders, having bike and pedestrian activities not only saves energy, it's good for health. It's good for the economy of this country.

I would strongly urge that each and every Member support this important legislation. And, more important, that they commit themselves to work with the Ways and Means Committee and the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to deal with the long-term financial and the long-term vision of how we're going to renew and rebuild America at a time of energy shortage,

at a time of water stress and at a time of economic uncertainty. This is a way to make this system work better. I strongly urge its support.

Mr. MCCRERY. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS).

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you, Mr. Ranking Member, for yielding to me.

I have deep respect for people on both sides of this issue but no one knows this issue better than Mr. BLUMENAUER in my judgment. We need to rebuild and renew America. We have a huge problem with our water infrastructure, our energy infrastructure and our transportation infrastructure.

I was part of balancing the federal budget in 1997. I was on the Budget Committee for 10 years. And it is a fact. We took \$29 billion to help balance the budget. It came from the Highway Trust Fund. We need to be putting that money back. Certainly, \$8 billion should go back.

These are American jobs creating a long-term investment. We don't have a capital budget in this country. And so we don't start to think in the ways we need to about investing. Roads and bridges are investments. The Mianus bridge in Connecticut collapsed down and three people died. It was a huge disaster on I-95. We need to not only continue to maintain our highways, roads and bridges, but we need to upgrade them as well. And, in fact, just to maintain what we have, we need to rebuild. We need this money. It must go back into the trust fund.

And I would just say for those who talk about a stimulus package, there is no better stimulus package than putting American construction workers back to work, rebuilding our infrastructure.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Kansas (Mrs. BOYDA).

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Speaker, the American people are so frustrated right now with Congress. And this is one of the things. People ask me does anything surprise me. And I say no, it's about as crazy as I thought it would be on a given day. But a couple of weeks ago, I have to tell you that I was just shocked. This very bill that we're talking about today was brought in the FAA bill. The Parliamentarian said, it's germane. And we said we have a shortfall between now and 2009. Sure we have long-term problems, but we have this shortfall right now that has to be addressed. We got left with this train wreck, and we're trying to clean it up.

And when the good people in Kansas, and this certainly made the news, learned that because that got taken out of the FAA bill, quite honestly along partisan lines, it not only affected what people thought about our

ability to govern, but they wonder what on earth Congress was doing to not take care of this. And they understood ultimately that this was all about politics.

Today, we have brought this back together. Mr. MORAN, my colleague from Kansas, and I have worked together and said, we're going to try to bring America together to do this very, very commonsense fix. Everybody knows we're using less and less gas. Hallelujah. And there's less money going into the trust fund. Everybody knows that the price of construction is skyrocketing and we have to do this. Let's get on with it. It's going to affect \$120 million of funds right there in Kansas.

But I will tell you what else it does. It affects people's ability to think, can Congress come together and work? I believe that we can.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. I yield the gentlelady 1 additional minute.

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. We have to do two things. We have to fix this. But today we have an opportunity to show the American people that we will put partisan politics aside and we are going to do the right thing for the American people.

I think we have got a twofer today. I strongly suggest and urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this bill and do the people's work.

Mr. MCCRERY. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished ranking member of the Budget Committee, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RYAN).

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Madam Speaker, if this were about politics, then the easy thing to do would be just to vote for it. That's the political thing to do.

I rise in opposition to this bill because it would increase the deficit, because it's coming to the floor with less than a day's notice and no opportunity for amendment.

Madam Speaker, I support the highway program. But that is not what this debate is about. I understand how critical highway funding is for our Nation's roads and our bridges. We had a really rough winter in Wisconsin. We need to get back to work to fix those roads. It's also not a debate about whether the highway trust fund shortfall should be fixed. It should be fixed. It's about how we should pay for it, or if we pay for it.

I support fixing it in a responsible way, which I don't believe this bill does. Because of my concerns, I introduced legislation earlier this year that would have fixed this program, this deficit, in a fiscally responsible way.

In 1998, Congress passed a law called TEA-21 that gave the highway trust fund special protections in the budget process. This is what Bud Shuster, the chairman of the committee at the time, said about the bill: "This is an historic piece of legislation, Mr. Speak-

er, because now the American people will know that the trust is being put back in the highway trust fund. When the average American drives up to the gas pump and pays his 18.3 cents Federal tax, that money is free to be spent. It is a guarantee. It is an ironclad guarantee. Should there be more revenue going into the trust fund, that money will be available to be spent. Should there be less revenue going into the trust fund, then we will have to reduce the expenditures. It is fair, it is equitable and it is keeping faith with the American people."

Madam Speaker, this bill moves from funding highways with gas taxes to relying on borrowed money. If the highway trust fund is going to get access to the general fund, as it is in this bill, then it should compete for these resources with all other discretionary programs.

□ 1115

It should be budgeted for, but that is not what is happening here. My fear is that this transfer will be just the start, that we will be back here for a fix in 2010 with a bigger shortfall because as CBO says, the highway trust fund has not just hit a temporary rough patch, it is permanent red ink going into the future. The current shortfall is between \$1.4 billion and \$3.3 billion, and then it gets bigger year after year, well over a \$300 billion shortfall over the next 10 years. Undoubtedly, when we get updated numbers from CBO and OMB, the shortfall will get even bigger.

If highways are to continue to enjoy special budgetary status as trust-funded programs, then this general fund transfer should be offset or repaid.

I want to work with supporters of this bill to find a way that avoids an increase in the deficit that this bill would cause. If Congress decides not to offset this transfer, then Congress should revisit the budgetary treatment for highways and reform it such that highways compete for funding in the annual budget process just as all other government programs do.

I urge my colleagues to think about this. Let's come up with a funding mechanism that guarantees we fix this shortfall, and let's do it in a fiscally responsible way where we actually honor the integrity of the budget process.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCRERY. Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to yield 1½ minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN).

Mr. DUNCAN. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6532, a bill that will restore funding to the highway trust fund and ensure that the flow of Federal highway funds is not interrupted at the height of the construction season.

According to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation officials, if this problem is not fixed, States could lose up to \$14 billion

in highway funding resulting in approximately 380,000 jobs lost.

At a time when our economy continues to struggle, we simply cannot afford to cut Federal funding for highway projects. Earlier this year when we were debating the economic stimulus package, some said we were simply borrowing money from the Chinese to purchase Chinese products. This bill ensures that we are investing in our own transportation infrastructure, giving income to American workers and improving America in the process.

It is also important to note that we are restoring funds to the highway trust fund that were transferred out of the fund 10 years ago. In other words, this is money that was supposed to be in the highway trust fund in the first place. We are not robbing the general fund, we are simply restoring money that was never supposed to be in the general fund.

In 1998, Congress determined that the balances of the highway trust fund were too high and transferred \$8 billion out of the trust fund and into the general fund. This bill returns those gas tax revenues to the highway trust fund to ensure that it does not become insolvent.

Madam Speaker, I always rank in the top 10 or 15 most fiscally conservative Members of Congress, but there are some things that we need to do, and a first class national system of transportation is vital to our national economy. I urge support for this bill.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCRERY. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK).

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of this bill, especially because it helps my constituents fight high gas prices.

It also resolves a political problem in my State. Under Governor Rod Blagojevich, our State is about to lose \$4.5 billion in Federal highway funds. After 3 years under this highway fund, Illinois has failed to match any major Federal money. Supporters of total gridlock in Springfield told the reporters "Don't worry, the Federal fund is broke." But it is not broke. This bill fixes that problem, and it does so in a bipartisan way.

Now our attention should focus on our totally incompetent State government that is locked in a Shakespearean war between the Democratic Governor and our Democratic State legislature.

The highway fund is not broke, and this bill fixes the problem. What should now be fixed is our State government. At a 15 percent approval rating for the Governor, the only path is up, and the best way to do that is not to let \$4.5 billion in Federal highway money for Illinois lapse.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCRERY. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN).

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6532. I come from a State located in the middle of the country. Transportation to and from one's home to their work, transportation from the State of Kansas in moving manufactured and agricultural commodities to the rest of the world, we depend upon infrastructure. Our highways are important to us if we are going to continue to compete in a global economy.

In the absence of this legislation, the State of Kansas would receive \$120 million less, a shortfall which would mean that there is 90 less State and local projects at an estimated loss of 8,250 jobs.

Kansas receives about \$370 million from the Federal highway trust fund. That would be reduced to \$247 million. This is an important piece of legislation that continues to drive the Kansas economy and makes us competitive in a global economy. It is time for us to fix the system now in this short-term manner, but it is also important for Congress to reach a conclusion on how we fund highway and other transportation needs into the future.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I continue to I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCRERY. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER).

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I rise in very strong support of this legislation which will ensure that the Federal Government is simply able to meet the commitments that we have already made to both the States and the American people. Specifically, this bill will simply return the \$8 billion to the highway trust fund that was taken from it several years ago.

And with rising construction costs and fuel receipts due to Americans driving less, the trust fund is projected to be unable to meet the funding that has been guaranteed to the Departments of Transportation all across our country. These agencies draw up their plans years in advance, and failure by the Federal Government to provide that funding at the very last minute I think is simply irresponsible.

As important as it is to point out why we should pass this legislation, I think we must also be very cognizant of the consequences for failing to act.

In my State of Michigan alone, failure to shore up the trust fund will mean a 34 percent cut in funding, money that the State of Michigan is already counting on. Michigan's Federal highway dollars will be cut actually by \$245 million, and would result in a loss of 8,500 jobs, and that is in a State that has the highest unemployment in the Nation already at 8.5 percent.

The impact of this nationally would rival, I think, the impact of the economic downturn that we are already experiencing. Failure to pass this bill

would effectively negate any positive impact that came out of the economic stimulus package that this Congress has already passed.

This vote, as well, Madam Speaker, comes at a unique time in history when you have other nations like China and India who understand how important it is for them to invest in their infrastructure. We in the United States cannot afford to be economically disadvantaged as well.

So we have a choice before us. We can vote "yes" and make sure that we simply try to keep pace; or we can vote "no" and put people out of work, stop construction projects all across the country and put America at a further disadvantage in the global economy.

I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation and vote "yes."

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I would like to inquire of my friend and colleague, Mr. MCCRERY, does he have any more speakers.

Mr. MCCRERY. I am prepared to close, I would say to my good friend.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCRERY. Madam Speaker, I have already talked here this morning about what I believe would be a bad precedent for budget policy that this bill represents. But even more regrettable, Madam Speaker, is I think this bill today represents another missed opportunity, and that missed opportunity has helped bring us to this point today.

The majority's absolute refusal to address record-high gasoline prices by increasing domestic energy production is something that has contributed to the reason we are here today.

I have argued on this floor many times in the past, not just in the context of the gasoline tax and the highway trust fund, but many times, that the way to bring sanity to our energy policy, and yes, the way to bring gasoline prices down, is to adopt a balanced energy policy for our country.

Think of a balanced energy price as a three-legged stool. The first leg, conservation; the second leg, alternative fuel development and production; and the third leg, just as important as the other two for the stool to stand, would be to increase the supply of traditional fossil fuels by allowing more drilling here in our own country and stop depending on drilling in other countries.

Let's develop our own resources. That would be a balanced policy that I think would contribute to bringing the price of oil down which would bring the price of gasoline down which would get more people on the highways driving more and add revenues to the highway trust fund.

But we have so far not been able to get that passed in this Democratically led Congress. The sooner we do that, the sooner we will have some relief of the strain on the highway trust fund. And we still have to address the long-term inadequacies of the financing

structure for the highway system in this country. As I have said, I believe we ought to be doing that today. And I support that.

But, Madam Speaker, today I believe we are merely putting a Band-Aid on the problem. We are contributing to deteriorating, bad budget policy. The precedent of this bill shifting moneys from the general fund to the highway trust fund is a very dangerous one. It is a slippery slope, and we ought not do it.

I urge my colleagues to reject this bill today, give us another chance to go back to the drawing board and come up with a much better solution to this problem and give us a chance to adopt a meaningful, structured energy policy for this country that will bring gasoline prices down and get more people on our highways.

I yield back the balance of my time. Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

This is a good bill. This is a necessary bill. In the face of record budgetary shortfalls and high construction costs, State and local governments are struggling to pay for critical highway projects. I fully support H.R. 6532. I urge all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote "yes" for this bill.

Mr. COSTELLO. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 6532, a bill to transfer money to the Highway Trust Fund (HTF). As a co-sponsor of this legislation, I know how extremely important it is to our State and local communities to make much-needed road and bridge improvements.

In Illinois, if we do not fix the HTF before 2009, the State stands to lose over \$370 million, delaying many construction projects and impacting over 13,000 construction and construction related jobs.

H.R. 6532 allows \$8 billion to be transferred from the General Fund to the HTF to shore up the HTF. This is the same amount that was transferred to the General Fund in 1998 when the HTF was running a surplus. Now that the HTF is facing a shortfall in 2009 and beyond, we must restore this \$8 billion in highway user fee revenues. By doing so, we provide sufficient balances to allow for the full guaranteed funding for the highway program in the U.S. which is critically needed.

Madam Speaker, we must ensure our State and local Governments get the money they are due in order to make infrastructure improvements. If it is a priority to build highway infrastructure in Iraq, it should be a priority here at home. Again, I strongly support H.R. 6532 and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 6532, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to restore the Highway Trust Fund balance.

Our Nation's highway trust fund serves as the lifeblood for funding our Nation's transportation infrastructure. Regrettably, the fund is facing an imminent shortfall due to decreased revenue into the fund. This shortfall comes at a most inopportune time as many states across the country are struggling to provide funding just for adequate highway maintenance—let alone new construction.

The bill before us is important to my home State, as Texas has one of the most extensive surface transportation networks in the world. Texas has more than 10,000 miles of rail track; more than 300,000 miles of roadway and more than 50,000 bridges—more than any other state in the Nation. Our transportation network is bursting at the seams, and failure to enact this bill render a significant blow to transportation construction and maintenance jobs across my State. We simply cannot allow this to happen. In the absence of passage of H.R. 6532, the State of Texas stands to lose \$859 million in funding and a projected loss of 30,000 good-paying jobs.

The state has identified a funding gap of \$86 billion between available resources and what is needed to achieve an acceptable level of mobility by 2030. By the year 2030, TXDOT predicts the state's population is expected to increase by 64 percent. My State cannot afford a lapse in receiving its share of Federal highway funding made available by SAFETEA-LU.

In the absence of bold and decisive action by this body in the next highway bill authorization, stagnant transportation policy and inadequate funding will cripple our country. It is past time for government at all levels to make investment in transportation infrastructure an urgent priority.

Madam Speaker I urge my colleagues to support this important piece of legislation.

Mr. POMEROY. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6532, Highway Trust Fund Restoration as it provides the funding necessary to replenish the Highway Trust Fund and avoid significant cuts in federal highway funding to the States.

Forecasts indicate a shortfall of several billion dollars to the Highway Trust Fund in fiscal year 2009 due to lower-than-expected gas tax revenue. According to the Federal Highway Administration, the estimated miles traveled on U.S. public roads has dropped 30 billion miles from November through April 2007–08 compared to the same period in 2006–07. This is the first year-to-year reduction since 1979. As Americans drive less and purchase less fuel, the Highway Trust Fund's shortfall will continue to worsen.

As a result of this shortfall, States are facing funding cuts of approximately 34 percent or nearly \$14 billion in highway funds. This would include cuts of \$70,473,422 in my State of North Dakota, threatening approximately 2,452 jobs. If this shortfall is not addressed, countless bridge and tunnel projects, reconstruction of streets, traffic signals, lighting and safety initiatives will be postponed.

I am an original cosponsor of H.R. 6532 which would address these impending cuts by crediting the Highway Trust Fund's Highway Account with the \$8 billion taken away from the Highway Account's balance in 1998, and therefore helping the Highway Trust Fund avoid insolvency.

The Highway Trust Fund Restoration is a good bill that will provide States with the resources they need to continue to provide improvements to America's highways. It deserves all members' votes on the House floor.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr.

LEWIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6532.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. MCCRERY. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

HONORING AND COMMEMORATING ACTS OF HEROISM OF THE LATE DETECTIVE JOHN MICHAEL GIBSON AND PRIVATE FIRST CLASS JACOB JOSEPH CHESTNUT OF THE CAPITOL POLICE ON JULY 24, 1998

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1360) honoring and commemorating the selfless acts of heroism displayed by the late Detective John Michael Gibson and Private First Class Jacob Joseph Chestnut of the United States Capitol Police on July 24, 1998.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1360

Whereas Detective Gibson, born March 29, 1956, was killed in the line of duty while protecting the office complex of the House Majority Whip;

Whereas Private First Class Chestnut, born April 28, 1940, was killed in the line of duty while guarding the Document Room Door entrance of the Capitol;

Whereas Detective Gibson and Private First Class Chestnut were the first police officers to lie in honor in the rotunda of the Capitol;

Whereas Private First Class Chestnut was the first African-American to lie in honor in the rotunda of the Capitol;

Whereas Detective Gibson was married to Evelyn and was the father of three children;

Whereas Private First Class Chestnut was married to Wen Ling and was the father of five children; and

Whereas 10 years have passed since Detective Gibson and Private First Class Chestnut sacrificed their lives to protect the lives of hundreds of tourists, staff, and Members of Congress on July 24, 1998: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) honors and commemorates the selfless acts of heroism displayed by the late Private First Class Jacob Joseph Chestnut and Detective John Michael Gibson of the United States Capitol Police on July 24, 1998; and

(2) expresses its condolences to the wives, children, and other family members of Private First Class Chestnut and Detective Gibson on the 10 year anniversary of their passing.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BRADY) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

□ 1130

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, 10 years ago on July 24, 1998, a gunman entered the Capitol and shot to death two Capitol Police officers, Detective John Gibson and Private First Class Jacob Chestnut. As they lay in honor in the rotunda, Congress and the whole community mourned the loss of the men who gave their lives defending the Capitol.

Madam Speaker, we continue to mourn the loss of these fine, dedicated members of our Capitol community. At the 10th anniversary of that tragic day, we commemorate the passing of Private Chestnut and Detective Gibson. We honor their memories and once again offer the House's condolences to their widows and to their families.

I thank our colleague from Maryland (Ms. EDWARDS) for introducing this resolution.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. EHLERS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in support of H. Res. 1360, which would honor and commemorate the selfless acts of heroism displayed by the late Detective John Michael Gibson and Private First Class Jacob Joseph Chestnut of the United States Capitol Police.

It is hard to believe that it has already been 10 years since the tragic chain of events that took the lives of two heroes, Jacob Joseph Chestnut and John Gibson, who were killed in the line of duty when a deranged gunman stormed this very building on July 24, 1998. And how well I remember that day. I had just left the Capitol, gone to the airport to fly back to Michigan, and as I entered the airport building, I saw on TV the ambulances, the gentlemen being carried out, and what a sad event that was.

Jacob Joseph Chestnut, who was affectionately known as "J.J.," was an 18-year veteran of the Capitol Police force, just months away from retirement. A husband and father of five and a Vietnam vet, Chestnut was remembered at the time of his passing to have been extremely proud to be able to continue to serve his country by working in the United States Capitol. After a 20-year career in the Air Force, he carried his discipline and military training with him to Congress when he joined the Capitol Police in 1980, but