

Highway Program, an increase of \$840 million over the previous fiscal year.

The Senate, alternatively, has elected to reduce highway spending to \$17 billion, \$1 billion below the House level, and \$160 million below last year's level.

The Federal-Aid Highway Program consists of several programs designed to aid in the construction, rehabilitation, traffic management, and safety of our Nation's highways. These programs also assist in the improvement of other modes of transportation. Infrastructure spending on highways is critical to the efficient movement of goods and people in the United States and has direct effects on the national economy and interstate commerce. In fact, every billion dollars spent on the highway system results in improvements in pavements and bridge conditions and reduced congestion. For example, \$1 billion could fund 2,500 lane miles of pavement improvements, 375 lane miles of increased capacity, and 190 bridge improvements. Highway spending also means jobs: For a billion dollars, as many as 50,000 jobs can be supported.

It is my hope that the conference committee can agree to provide funding for the Federal-Aid Highway Program at a level which is as close as possible to the level in the House-passed bill, recognizing the competing demands of the Coast Guard, the Federal Aviation Administration, and other safety programs of the Department of Transportation.

I support the gentleman's motion and urge that the motion be agreed to.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WOLF. I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the fact that the gentleman is accepting this motion. I think it is the right thing to do.

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WOLF. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

(Mr. COLEMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, my motion to instruct conferees on H.R. 2002, the fiscal year 1996 Department of Transportation Appropriations Act is very straightforward. My motion would simply instruct the House conferees to agree to provide funding for the Federal-Aid Highway Program at a level that is as close as possible to the \$18 billion provided in the House-passed bill.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most significant areas of difference in the House and Senate transportation appropriations bill is the funding level recommended for the Federal Highways Program. The House bill provides an obligation limitation for this purpose that is \$1 billion more than the \$17 billion level recommended by the Senate. In addition to providing a funding level for the Federal Highway Program that is less than the 1995 level, the Senate has also included \$39.5 million in earmarked highway demonstration projects that benefit only a few, selected areas.

Mr. Speaker, in Texas and in most other States, there is a huge backlog of roads, highways and bridges that are in desperate need of repair and rehabilitation. In 1993, the Federal Highway Administration estimated that the annual cost to maintain and improve highway

conditions was \$59 billion. The House bill squarely recognizes these needs and addresses them by providing the highest ever funding level for the Federal Highway Program, and by providing these funds in a manner such that every State will benefit.

As with the other appropriations bills, the House made some very difficult choices in allocating fiscal year 1996 funding for transportation programs that in total is \$1 billion less than 1995 appropriations. However, in making those choices, the House determined that investing in our Nation's infrastructure should be of the utmost importance, even in austere budgetary times. Such an investment will enhance highway safety, ease congestion, create jobs, and increase our Nation's productivity. For these reasons, I believe that we should insist on making highway infrastructure spending a priority for the conferees on this bill. I urge the adoption of this motion.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks, and that I may include tabular and extraneous material, on this legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to instruct.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct conferees offered by the gentleman from Texas [Mr. COLEMAN].

The motion was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the Chair appoints the following conferees: Messrs. WOLF, DELAY, REGULA, ROGERS, LIGHTFOOT, PACKARD, CALLAHAN, DICKEY, LIVINGSTON, SABO, DURBIN, COLEMAN, FOGLIETTA, and OBEY.

There was no objection.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

(Mr. FAZIO of California, asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield to the gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARMEY], the majority leader, for the purpose of inquiring about the schedule.

Mr. ARMEY. I thank the gentleman for yielding, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, let me preface my remarks on the schedule for next week by informing all the Members that we have had our final vote for today and for this week. There will be no more votes today.

Mr. Speaker, the House will not be in session on Monday, September 11.

On Tuesday, the House will meet at 10:30 a.m. for morning hour and 12 noon for legislative business to take up H.R. 2150, the Small Business Credit Effi-

ciency Act, which will be considered under suspension of the rules. However, we will not have any recorded votes until 3 p.m.

For Tuesday afternoon and the balance of the week, we plan to consider the following bills, all of which will be subject to rules: H.R. 1594, the Pension Protection Act of 1995; H.R. 1655, the fiscal year 1996 Intelligence reauthorization bill; H.R. 1162, the Deficit Reduction Lockbox Act; and H.R. 1670, the Federal Acquisition Reform Act of 1995. Members should also be advised that conference reports may be brought to the floor at any time.

On Wednesday and Thursday, the House will meet at 10 a.m. for legislative business.

Tuesday it will be our hope to adjourn around 7 or 8 p.m. On Wednesday we may work a little later, and it is our hope to have Members on their way home to their families by 6 p.m. on Thursday.

The House will meet in pro forma session on Friday, September 15. There will be no recorded votes.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, if I could further inquire of the majority leader, let me open by saying that I appreciate the fact that we seem to have returned to a more normal schedule here, and I think this will be conducive to families having an opportunity to have at least a late supper, if not a regular dinner together. I am sure we are all relieved because of the difference that this makes with the last couple of weeks that we had prior to our August recess.

I would like to ask, however, when we would be bringing to the floor the legislation on gifts and lobbying reform. We were chastised roundly earlier in the week because we attempted to use the legislative branch appropriation bill to bring that before the body. I know there are hearings in the Committee on the Judiciary. I am wondering, because of the importance of having time to appreciate and understand the changes it will require of Members and their offices, whether or not we are going to be able to see that law enacted in time to implement the rules and the statute by January 1.

Does the majority have any ability at this time to give us an indication as to when we will bring that to the floor and when it might be effective?

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, I thank the gentleman for his inquiry. I do appreciate the inquiry. As the gentleman noted, hearings were held this week. We are looking at that. We are talking among ourselves and with the committee, looking for an opportunity to bring that up. I am sorry we have nothing definitive to report at this time.

Mr. FAZIO of California. I would ask the gentleman, is it possible it may be added to our list of "must pass" legislation so it would be considered by the end of this calendar year in order to be effective in January?

Mr. ARMEY. Of course, as the gentleman knows, all things are possible. I

just simply cannot attach any probability or likelihood to it at this time until I have further discussion with other relevant people.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, could the majority leader indicate to us when we will be able to begin the process of analysis and numbers crunching on the Medicare provisions that will be a central part of reconciliation? Perhaps the gentleman could update us on when reconciliation is expected to come to the floor, and when we will be able to begin the process of understanding the full impact of those cuts in the Medicare Program that are obviously going to be very contentious and need a great deal of attention before we should be in a position to vote on them.

Mr. ARMEY. If the gentleman will continue to yield, again I thank the gentleman for asking. It is a little difficult to tell right now. We hope to complete our work. We have had a lot of people working very diligently on Medicare, and of course all the other work that is being done on reconciliation. We should begin to start seeing some of the fruits of the labor maybe as early as the end of next week, but I would say it would probably be somewhere closer to the end of September before we could really have defining work out here for us to examine.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, could the gentleman tell us when we anticipate reconciliation being brought to the floor? Has that been agreed to finally?

Mr. ARMEY. If the gentleman will again yield, I think once we get into the period of time where we have some very important recesses necessary for the Jewish holidays, that as we try to work our way around that, we might anticipate it would be perhaps the week before or the week following those Jewish holidays recess.

Mr. FAZIO of California. There is no intent to change our current schedule that has been announced and disseminated to Members on either Jewish holidays or the Columbus Day break?

Mr. ARMEY. I really appreciate the gentleman asking. Everybody should have a printed schedule in the form of calendars, and those dates for when the week begins and where it ends, and what days are off because of the holidays, those are firm. There would be no changes in there except possibly, should things go well on floor action, we might every now and then be able to have a pleasant surprise and get out a little earlier or maybe have an extra day to spend in our districts, but there would be no days in addition to those that are already in the schedule for the Members.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's reassurance. I am sure the Members appreciate that. We would look forward to only pleasant surprises, and no unhappy eventualities that might set us back.

Mr. ARMEY. If the gentleman will yield further, I am sure the gentleman realizes, or maybe does not realize he misspoke earlier, but Mr. Speaker, just for the record, I want to encourage the gentleman to appreciate the fact that we do not intend to see any package in which there will be Medicare cuts.

Mr. FAZIO of California. I was wondering if the gentleman might not have caught that. Reductions in the rate of increase, is that the jargon?

Mr. ARMEY. I would like to think of it as a generous increase.

Mr. FAZIO of California. For those who note the aging of America and the increasing population of the aged and the often double digit increases in the cost of health care, perhaps this is a much more important debate than simply a semantic one. We can hold that for the eventual introduction of the Medicare increase reductions.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

ADJOURNMENT TO TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1995

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, September 12, for morning hour debate.

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

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

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

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members are recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. HORN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. HORN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Colorado [Mrs. SCHROEDER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mrs. SCHROEDER addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. MCINTOSH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. MCINTOSH addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. OWENS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday the House considered the fiscal year 1996 legislative appropriations bill and I do agree that the House has to take a serious look at its own fiscal affairs. However, I would like to comment on a matter that relates to the daily operation of the House and does not make financial sense.

Last week, the House folding room and all of its related operations were closed. This decision was made under the guise of streamlining and reform. However, it is nothing more than a mean-spirited, poorly conceived, and fiscally irresponsible action. It is truly reform for the sake of reform.

I applaud the House Oversight Committee in its efforts to change the way that the House does business. I was elected to Congress to help to restore the public's faith in this institution. However, by trying to save money in closing the folding room, the committee has created a bookkeeping nightmare and as Members search for new vendors to serve the printing and mailing needs of their constituents, the total franking and overall costs to the taxpayer will probably increase.

Our constituents need and deserve to be well informed about the issues that affect them. Bulk mailings and newsletters are an essential part of our jobs and voters expect to have a clear line of communications to their representatives in Washington. Certainly, a responsible use of these mailing privileges is expected; nevertheless, by closing the folding room another barrier has been created between Washington and the rest of the country.

Why were other remedies related to the House operation of a folding room not considered further? An outside company could have been brought in to run the day-to-day operations of the folding room. As it now stands, congressional staffs now have to scramble to find new vendors and much of their productivity is wasted as they endeavor to fold, stuff, and seal hundreds of pieces of normal correspondence that they churn out on a daily basis. And the job is not done well. I know of a recent bulk mailing that was improperly handled by an outside vendor and because of this precious time and money was lost.