

Cal McCaghren, and INS inspectors Reynaldo DeLaGarza and Tammy Aamodt. The inspectors' names are engraved in the wall of the National Law Enforcement Memorial here in Washington, DC. Yes, I said the National Law Enforcement Memorial. Yet, as my colleague stated, while they lived and while they did their job, they were not considered law enforcement officers. Only when they died did they get that honor.

My bill, H.R. 1215, will finally grant the same status to U.S. INS and Customs inspectors as all other Federal law enforcement officers and firefighters.

These inspectors are the country's first line of defense against terrorism and the smuggling of drugs through our borders and our large international airports. My district is home to the busiest port of entry in the world: 200,000 people a day cross the border in San Ysidro, San Diego. The inspectors face daily dangerous felons and disarm people carrying every weapon imaginable. Shootouts with drug smugglers happen all too frequently.

Because of the current lopsided law, INS and Customs lose vigorous, trained professionals to other law enforcement agencies and also lose millions of dollars in training and revenues that experienced inspectors help generate.

It is time we value our INS inspectors and Customs inspectors, both living and dead. I urge the support of H.R. 1215 to correct the unequal treatment of these Federal law enforcement officers.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back to my colleague, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. REYES], who knows all too well the valor of these fine Federal employees.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honor and a privilege for me, knowing exactly what these men and women go through each and every day as they carry out their duties at the frontline of defense for this Nation.

I again would like to urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 1215. It is time we recognize the inspectors of the INS and Customs for the law enforcement officers that they truly are.

STEP 21—RESTRUCTURING OUR HIGHWAY FUNDING SYSTEM

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

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise on an issue that is of great concern to the Nation this year, the restructuring of our system of highway funding.

Earlier this year, with the help of my colleagues, the gentleman from California [Mr. CONDIT], the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. BUYER], the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. HOSTETTLER], and many others, I introduced the ISTEA Integrity Restoration Act, H.R. 674, also known as the STEP 21 proposal.

Our bill has 101 cosponsors and it is very bipartisan. It has strong support

in the Senate and has a bipartisan coalition of 20 State departments of transportation behind it. The Southern Governors Association has endorsed STEP 21, and many private sector industries and associations have mobilized behind our bill.

H.R. 674 accomplishes four primary objectives. First, it maintains a strong Federal role in transportation by funding the national highway system as the key responsibility. Under STEP 21, 40 percent of a State's funds must be spent on NHS roads or bridges.

Second, it simplifies and makes more flexible the Federal highway program by consolidating the myriad of existing highway programs into two, the national highway system program and the streamlined surface transportation program. Within these programs, Federal funds may still be spent on all ISTEA activities that are currently allowed. This means CMAQ enhancements, bridges, et cetera. However, removing the mandated Federal set-asides gives States and local transportation officials the flexibility and responsibility to decide on what, when, where, and how much to spend to meet the individual and diverse transportation needs.

Third, our bill updates the antiquated Federal funding distribution formulas. Currently, outdated factors such as 1980 census figures and postal route mileage are used to determine each State's share of highway funds. We believe formulas should be based on need.

The Federal Highway Administration issued a scientific study that defines need in a statistically accurate manner to show what factors are related to road maintenance needs. The top three factors are: vehicle miles traveled, annual highway trust fund contributions, and lane miles. H.R. 674 uses these three factors, which demonstrate where highways are actually being used, in allocating resources to the States.

Fourth, our bill creates an objective, simple method of distributing highway funds among the States that strikes a more equitable balance between taxes paid and funds returned. We ensure that all States receive at least 95 percent return on the payments made to the Federal highway trust funds. States like Texas have been short-changed for too long.

Over the life of ISTEA, Texas taxpayers received 77 cents back for every dollar they contributed to the highway trust fund. Clearly there is a need for greater equity where States like Massachusetts receive \$2.41 back for every dollar they put in. However, in order to guarantee that we maintain a strong national road system, our bill also has provisions to ensure an adequate level of resources for highways in low population density States that do not have the tax base to support their needs.

This point leads me to one other issue. Many have characterized supporters of STEP 21 as a southern State coalition or a donor State coalition.

Our provisions to protect the current highway funding levels of low population States were included specifically to reach out to nonsouthern and nondonor States such as Montana, Wyoming, and New Hampshire. Further, while the STEP 21 coalition includes many southern States, it also includes nonsouthern and nondonor States such as Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Nebraska.

In sum, we call our bill the ISTEA Integrity Restoration Act because we believe it restores the original intent of ISTEA to promote State flexibility and to direct dollars where the greatest need exists. It strikes the appropriate balance between the national interests in highways and the rights and responsibilities of each State.

I look forward to continue to work with the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the rest of my colleagues on this legislation as it develops.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my special order.

OFFICER BRIAN GIBSON TAX-FREE PENSION EQUITY ACT OF 1997

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia [Ms. NORTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, come tomorrow, we will be celebrating the 16th annual National Peace Officers Memorial Day, and the President of the United States is going to be here on the west front. I am sure, regardless of party, many of us are going to be out there to honor slain police officers. It is the culmination of National Police Week, and I come to the floor this afternoon to encourage my colleagues to do something more than mourn slain police officers.

I have sponsored the Officer Brian Gibson Tax-Free Pension Equity Act of 1997. This is a bill that has almost no fiscal consequences, but it would allow the families of officers killed in the line of duty to receive survivor benefits tax-free.

We already allow officers who retire on disability to receive their benefits tax-free. Surely we would want to this year erase the disparate treatment between officers who still live, but are disabled, and survivors of officers who have been killed in the line of duty. Is this small deed merely honorific, or is it necessary?

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I got the idea, Mr. Speaker, when Officer Brian Gibson was killed a few months ago. I learned that this officer was only 28 years old and had left infants behind. Then, right after that,

two more officers were killed. Each had young children, ages 5, 3 months, 3 years. Each of them had been on the police force only a few years; 3 years, 4 years.

Even though a slain police officer gets generous treatment because he gets a larger percentage of his pension than he would otherwise get, even getting half of the pension you have earned when you have only been on the force 4 or 5 years is not going to pay the mortgage, it is not going to put the kids through college.

There is going to be a lot of rhetoric tomorrow, as there has been all week, about our officers who have given up their lives to protect us, and well there might be, because in a real sense going out on these streets today is going to war. This is not cops and robbers. It used to be that. They had a gun, you had a gun. Indeed, our police were able to take care of what needed to be done.

Today, as we saw in the shootout in California a few weeks ago, they have outgunned our police officers, or, as in the District in recent weeks, they are so brazen as to engage in execution or assassination of police officers.

What do we say to a young widow? If you go to three funerals in a row, as I have, and you cry and talk about how sorry you are, then what are you going to do? One of the things I am going to do, I assure the Members, with another bill that I have written, is to get the Federal police officers outside of these Government buildings so they give some aid to the D.C. police, who then can go into the high crime areas and perhaps protect policemen like Officer Brian Gibson who was not protected, as he was in the District by himself and alone in a police car.

If Members want to do something besides talk about it, besides mourn about it, let us think of these families and take this bill, which has de minimis cost. I do not think it would even register. I have every reason to believe it would not. I have done some preliminary checking.

Let us move forward and say we are going to do something this 16th Annual National Police Officers Memorial Day. We are not going to come up with remedies that do not work. We will not divide over who is for gun control or who is not for gun control. We are going to lay down our weapons. Our weapons are our debating points.

We are going to come together on the proposition that when a police officer goes out here with his life on the line, and when he gives it for his community, at the very least we are going to stand up on this Congress and we are going to say, we are going to take care of your family. We assure you, we are going to take care of your family.

Since we do not pay for police officers but we do tax them, we promise that as we do not tax officers who retire on disability, we will not tax your wife and your children who are left here by themselves. We will pull back, with almost no cost to this extraor-

dinarly rich Government, and say, this is our contribution to the family that has been left behind.

It is a small, I concede, a small point and a small bill, but for that very reason I think we would want to mark National Police Week this week with this bill that of course is supported by Members. It is bipartisan, and I urge support from both sides of the aisle.

STEP 21 HAS SUPPORT FROM LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS

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

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the remarks of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia [Ms. NORTON], and her comments.

Mr. Speaker, the topic I would like to talk about today is on STEP 21. The main point is specifically that local governments and the metropolitan planning organizations do in fact support STEP 21.

I want to give a special recognition and thank the gentleman from Texas [Mr. DELAY] and the gentleman from California [Mr. CONDIT] for their work on STEP 21. The continuous and bitter battle over transportation funding has caused a great amount of misinformation to be spread all around.

Those who endorse the status quo, whether they are against the flexibility to the States or enjoy the funding inequities of the formula, they have tried to mislead Congress and others into believing that local government and the MPOs, the metropolitan planning organizations, are opposed to STEP 21.

I have letters of support here that I will place into the RECORD from those who support STEP 21, the first being in particular the mayor, Mayor Goldsmith of Indianapolis. His quote is, "... as the mayor of one of the Nation's largest cities, I enthusiastically support the STEP 21 proposal."

The Association of Indiana Counties say that STEP 21's features will give the ability for them to make "... funding choices that make sense for our counties, not the one-size-fits-all approach of current law."

The Evansville Urban Transportation Study, which represents the MPO for southern Indiana: "The STEP 21 legislation continues to support strong planning through the continuation of support for metropolitan planning organizations."

Mayor Heath of Lafayette, Indiana: "It is important for you to know that the State of Indiana, in partnership with its local governments, supports the STEP 21 effort."

The Indiana Metropolitan Council: "The Indiana MPO Council represents the 12 urbanized areas of the State of Indiana. This letter extends the MPO Council's support of STEP 21 legislation."

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, the statements that local governments and MPOs are opposed to STEP 21 is false. As a matter of fact, it is an outright lie for those who endorse such a statement. I urge all of my colleagues to look past the misinformation being spread around.

STEP 21 preserves all of the current law's local planning authority. Indiana is just one example of a State where the governments, the organizations, and residents are well-informed and understand that STEP 21 maintains the role of local governments and MPO's in making the transportation decisions that affect their communities.

One of my continuing priorities as a Member of Congress is to pull in the reins of a massive Federal Government to ensure that decision making be returned to the States and local governments. I abhor the Washington-knows-best mentality where the massive Federal Government has control over the decisions that should be made at the local and State levels.

I would not be here this afternoon endorsing the STEP 21 bill if it removed the decision making of our State and local governments. STEP 21 not only brings fairness and equity to the funding distribution formula, it allows the local governments and the MPO's to have control over the decision making process of their own local communities. STEP 21 should pass this House, and it is a worthy cause to bring flexibility to the States, fairness in the equity funding formula. I again salute the gentleman from Texas [TOM DELAY] and the gentleman from California [Mr. CONDIT].

CITY OF INDIANAPOLIS,
Indianapolis, IN, April 18, 1997.

Hon. DAN COATS,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

Hon. RICHARD G. LUGAR,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATORS COATS AND LUGAR: As the debate moves forward on the reauthorization of federal transportation programs this year, much is being said about the impact on local governments of the Streamlined Transportation Efficiency Program for the 21st Century, or STEP 21 proposal. It is important for you to know that as the mayor of one of our nation's largest cities, I enthusiastically support the STEP 21 proposal.

STEP 21 preserves all of the current law's local planning authority as well as all current funding guarantees for urban areas. In as much as STEP 21 would direct more funding to states like Indiana, urban areas like Indianapolis will be guaranteed more funding for our much needed transportation infrastructure projects. An added bonus of STEP 21's streamlining and flexibility features will be the ability for us to make funding choices that make sense for our community, not the one size fits all approach of current law.

I appreciate your efforts in working toward passage of the STEP 21 program, which finally directs a fair share of transportation funds to our state and its communities.

Sincerely,

STEPHEN GOLDSMITH,
Mayor.