

taxes will see the same old IRS—business as usual. Instead of permitting taxpayers to recover up to \$100,000 for negligent collection actions, the taxpayers will continue to fight an uphill and seemingly impossible battle when challenging an IRS ruling.

We all were appalled by some of the IRS practices recently highlighted in Congressional hearings and we all agree there is no place in government for these abuses, yet when given the chance to begin to remedy them, the Senate Leadership refuses to act.

As a cosponsor and supporter of the Taxpayer Bill of Rights and the Taxpayer Bill of Rights II that provided for increased taxpayer protection, I urge the Senate to take the next much needed step and pass the Internal Revenue Service Improvement Act.

In my mind it is outrageous that at the same time we have the Senate refusing to act on the IRS Improvement Act, the majority is attempting to spend \$100 million of taxpayer's money to conduct a poll to find if U.S. taxpayers like the IRS. I can't imagine what new information this will provide. We all know that most Americans don't like the IRS. We all know it is government's most disliked agency. Spending \$100 million to determine whether people like it seems a huge waste of money. This is nothing more than the Republican Majority using hard earned taxpayer dollars for their self-serving political theatrics. Why not make taxpayers give the Majority \$100 million dollars worth of stamps and copying machines to run their 1998 election campaign. Does the Leadership really need to spend an extra \$100 million to find out that most Americans don't like paying taxes.

This is the most outrageous and hypocritical use of taxpayer funds that I have seen in my forty years in politics. Yes, there have been other abuses and scams defrauding the American taxpayer, but none more blatantly political and painfully obvious.

If we want to add \$100 million in federal spending why use it for partisan political purposes to prove what we all already know. Instead let us use this \$100 million for real government such as constructing 1,325 additional federal prison beds or incarcerating 4000 more federal prisoners. Or maybe we could add 725 new border patrol agents or enroll 20,000 more children in headstart. We could also add 55,300 new summer jobs or train 27,600 low income adults. I am sure most of my colleagues hear a constant cry back home for more spending to improve roads and highways, certainly South Carolina could use \$100 million for roads. As I understand, \$100 million would resurface 670 miles of highway. At a time of mounting transportation needs, spending federal funds for an IRS poll seems ridiculous.

Mr. President, let me conclude by stating the obvious. Spending \$100 million of taxpayer money on an IRS poll does not help a single taxpayer. In

short, it is a huge waste of money. If we want to assist taxpayers, if we want real reform, we should pass the IRS Reform bill now. I urge the Majority Leader to free the IRS Reform bill, let the Senate vote and begin providing relief to the American taxpayer.●

SHORT TERM EXTENSION OF ISTEA

● Mr. REID. Mr. President, I served on the Committee on Environment and Public Works when the original ISTEA bill was written. I believe ISTEA has been one of the most important, innovative pieces of legislation ever to pass the United States Congress. Our stated goal was to turn over more spending power and authority to the states and localities while maintaining a strong national transportation system.

In the last 6 years we have made great progress and, when we are finally able to pass a bill, I feel confident that ISTEA II will carry us further in the same direction. Until we get to that point, the Congress must pass a short-term measure that ensures that the state programs remain stable while we are finishing work on the reauthorization.

ISTEA made the states partners with the federal government in building and maintaining a strong transportation system. Leaving them in the lurch now would be no way to treat a partner. I believe the Congress needs to pass a short-term extension to ISTEA to ensure continuity in the state programs and to live up to our obligation to the American people to provide a world-class transportation system.

I am delighted that the Senate passed this short term extension by unanimous consent last night, putting aside regional differences over formula funding. I am hopeful that the House will respond quickly and that we will be able to go home knowing that we have done the right thing for the states and the American people.

Senator BOND, the primary author of this approach, takes care of our short term needs and he deserves our praise for developing it and selling it to all of his colleagues while under tremendous time pressures. State programs will continue, but we keep the pressure on ourselves to get the 6 year reauthorization done.

Several of my colleagues have come to the Floor last night to explain how the bill works and I will not repeat their effort. However, I do want to offer high praise to Senator CHAFEE, Senator BOND, Senator BAUCUS, and Senator WARNER for developing a measure that will work and has the support of the Senate.

Additionally, I would like to offer thanks to key members of their staff for their hard work and late hours, not only this week but throughout the year, Kathy Ruffalo of Senator BAUCUS' staff, Dan Corbett of Mr. CHAFEE's staff, and Ann Loomis of Senator WARNER's staff have put in tremendous

hours of hard work this year developing a 6 year reauthorization of ISTEA, a bill that passed the Committee on Environment and Public Works unanimously.

Additionally, Tracy Henke of Senator BOND's staff did top notch work in putting together the Senate's short term extension bill and I am grateful for her efforts.

In particular I want to thank the Chairman and Ranking Member for accommodating my request to include the Federal Lands Highway Programs in the bill. For states, such as mine, that have vast holdings of public lands, the Federal Lands Highways Programs are a vital part of our transportation network.

There are three programs that make up the Federal Lands Highway Program:

Public Lands Highway Program for roads and maintenance on federal lands. Eighty-seven percent of Nevada is federally-owned;

Indian Reservation Roads Program for roads and maintenance on Indian reservations; and

Parkways and Park Highways Program that funds roads and maintenance within National Parks.

These programs serve as a transportation lifeline for the vast rural, federally-owned areas that blanket the Western United States. The federal government has a duty and obligation to build and maintain roads on federal lands. It would be unreasonable for the federal government to ignore the needs of citizens living in these areas.

If the goal of today's action is to keep the state highway programs running until we complete work on the reauthorization of ISTEA, then it is critical that the Federal Lands Highway Program be included.

Nevada has become the most urbanized state in the Union; a higher percentage of our population lives in urban areas than in any other state. Coupled with the dramatic growth Nevada is experiencing, it is difficult for the rural areas to get the attention they need and deserve without these programs. They are an absolutely essential piece of Nevada's state program.

Again, I thank my colleagues for recognizing the unique needs of Nevada and other vast public lands states and for including funding for the Federal Lands Highway Programs in this bill.

We still have a long ways to go in reaching a short-term compromise with the House, but after the Senate's actions last night, I am confident that we will get there.●

THE SURFACE TRANSPORTATION EXTENSION ACT OF 1997

● Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I rise to comment on S. 1454, the Surface Transportation Extension Act of 1997, which the Senate adopted last night. This bill allows States to obligate funds for six months, to ensure that

transportation funding continues to flow for highways, mass transit and safety programs. In addition, this bill will enable continued operation of the United States Department of Transportation.

Each state will be assured access to transportation funds equaling at least 50 percent, and not more than 75 percent of the state's total transportation funding in FY1997. Moreover, states will have until May 1, 1998, to obligate those funds. No state will be able to obligate Federal funds after that date.

Every member should understand that this approach essentially creates another transportation funding crisis in only a few short months. This is far from a comfortable situation.

Next year, when we take up the ISTEA reauthorization bill, we will be in the middle of the FY99 budget discussions and a decision about whether to allocate new funds that may become available as a result of improved budget projections. So, the debate over ISTEA, and the reality of another funding cutoff, will likely coincide with discussions over the FY99 Budget Resolution. As the Ranking Democratic Member of the Budget Committee, I can assure you that I will be doing my best to make additional investment in our transportation infrastructure a high priority during these discussions.

Mr. President, when it became clear over one month ago that there was not enough time to fully debate a multi-year authorization bill, I starting calling for enactment of a short-term extension of ISTEA. This was the logical approach toward ensuring that States' transportation funding would not run dry.

The States need additional funds now to meet their immediate transportation needs. ISTEA expired over a month ago, and although States have funding left over from previous years, these available funds will begin to run dry very soon for many States. Highway safety programs have been particularly hard hit because they have no leftover funding. Mass transit programs have no funding reserves.

A straightforward reauthorization of ISTEA for six months is, to me, the easiest and fastest way to proceed. A House bill to do just that is currently pending on the Senate calendar. By simply continuing current law, this short-term extension also bypasses the controversy caused by enacting changes to the existing funding formulas or apportionments. In addition, passage of the House extension bill would allow us to immediately send this legislation to the President, rather than having to begin new discussions in a conference with the House. However, I understand that controversy is in the eye of the beholder, and there is a feeling among many in this body that allocation of new money will inevitably result in a discussion of formulas. So here we are.

Mr. President, in the absence of a six month extension of current law, I re-

luctantly support the Bond compromise, which identified those needs that had to be addressed in a stop-gap measure.

Mr. President, it is imperative that by the time Congress adjourns this year, both the House and Senate agree on an approach and send a bill to the President that can be signed into law. It is clear to most, that failure to enact some stopgap measure before we adjourn will have a severe impact on the transportation programs of the States. All State plans for new transportation construction, maintenance, and repair activities will be stopped. State transit agencies, metropolitan planning organizations, safety programs, and State planning and bidding activities will immediately suffer from funding shortages. Without a bill, important agencies within USDOT will shut down by mid- to late December. As a result, no projects involving Federal funding could go forward. This would have a huge impact on the States. Federal funds pay for over half the capital costs of State and local highway projects.

The situation is even more bleak for all the other programs authorized under ISTEA—the safety programs, Intelligent Transportation Systems program, research programs, and—something very important to my state—the federal transit program. There are no funds left over to continue these programs.

Perhaps the most distressing effect of our failure to act is the safety risk imposed on our constituents, as drunk driving prevention programs, truck and bus safety enforcement, bridge inspections, and highway/rail crossing projects are suspended. For safety reasons alone, we must ensure that some authority is extended. This bill does just that.

While this bill is important, I do have some concerns. Under this bill, States would have the flexibility to shift unobligated balances among programs to ensure that states can use their scarce funds where they are most needed. For instance, a State could use its left-over CMAQ or enhancement funds to pay for a highway construction project. Language is included to prevent States from abandoning the responsibility to pay back the accounts from which they transferred funds. I remain concerned that these pay-back provisions will not be honored. States must be strictly required to pay back all of these transfers, including transfers from their CMAQ accounts, otherwise valuable programs, critical to our Nation's health and welfare, may be depleted. We must watch this closely to ensure that the program is protected.

Mr. President, this bill authorizes the additional funding needed to keep crucial safety programs running, to allow States to continue their transportation projects and plans, to keep the U.S. Department of Transportation operating, and to continue the federal transit program for six months. Al-

though this bill will most likely lead to yet another funding crisis in the near future, I want to do all I can to make sure that the Senate does not adjourn without somehow addressing the lapse in transportation funding. I prefer a straight extension of current law, and urged Senator LOTT to bring it up. However, he rejected that path. Since that option is not before the Senate, I support this proposal as an acceptable compromise to carry us over until an ISTEA reauthorization bill is passed into law.●

SUPPORT U.S. ENCRYPTION EXPORTS

● Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I rise to discuss an issue of great importance to Washington state. I remain deeply concerned about the Administration's lack of progress in working with interested Senators and industry to craft a workable, effective solution for modernizing the United States export controls on products with encryption capabilities. I have been involved in this debate for a long time, too long. We need to take action.

I am an original cosponsor of several encryption legislative initiatives introduced by Senator BURNS and Senator LEAHY. Both of these Senators continue to do extraordinary work on this issue and I commend them for their thoughtful leadership. The Burns and Leahy bills basically say that if strong encryption is generally available or comparable encryption is available from foreign vendors, then our U.S. companies—the ones dominating the computer industry—should be able to sell their products as well. Previously, I also introduced similar legislation on encryption.

I simply do not understand the Administration's continued refusal to acknowledge technological and marketplace realities when it has embraced the use of technology in so many ways.

Computer users are demanding the ability to communicate securely over the Internet and to store data safely on their personal computers. We have all heard the stories about hackers monitoring our communications and even financial transactions, while at the same time gaining access to our hard drives while we are looking at a certain website. Until consumers have confidence that transactions and communications are secure, I do not believe that we will ever see the full potential of the communication technologies that are currently available and those to be developed in the future.

I was hopeful late last year that the Administration had taken a very small, positive step on encryption exports. Instead, the result was basically the status quo. Computer software publishers and hardware manufacturers are still limited to shipping the same old 40-bit encryption unless they agree to design key recovery systems according to a government mandated standard. Ultimately, due to economics and