

dollars and sixty-six cents) during the past 25 years.

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, in his capacity as Senator from Wyoming, asks that the quorum call be rescinded.

Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will stand in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, at 12:29 p.m., the Senate recessed until 2:15 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. COATS).

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1998

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume consideration of S. 1048, the Department of Transportation appropriations bill, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1048) making appropriations for the Department of Transportation and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, and for other purposes.

The Senate resumed consideration of the bill.

Pending:

Shelby (for D'Amato-Moynihan) amendment No. 1022, to direct a transit fare study in the New York City metropolitan area.

AMENDMENT NO. 1022

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pending is amendment No. 1022 to the bill offered by Senator SHELBY on behalf of Senator D'AMATO.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, what is the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending business is amendment No. 1022, offered by the Senator from Alabama on behalf of the Senator from New York, Senator D'AMATO, to bill number S. 1048.

Mr. SHELBY. I ask unanimous consent that we temporarily set that amendment aside.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, we are now resuming consideration of the fiscal year 1998 Transportation appropria-

tions bill under a unanimous-consent agreement reached last evening. I believe this is important legislation that will have very significant effects on every State in this Union. It sets a record-high obligation ceiling on Federal highway spending. It provides the resources for the Federal Aviation Administration and the U.S. Coast Guard to operate our Nation's airways and waterways safely and efficiently.

Mr. President, it increases, again, our commitment to improving highway safety in this Nation. We want to finish our deliberations on this bill and pass it, if we can, and I ask now for the cooperation of all my colleagues in the Senate who have the option to offer amendments under the consent agreement and have not yet brought them to our attention. I would like for them to come to the floor with their amendments.

Later, I intend to seek a unanimous-consent agreement that all amendments must be offered this evening, that we debate any amendments on which there is disagreement this evening, and that we have a final vote tomorrow. Accordingly, I encourage all Members desiring to speak on the bill on any of the amendments that they propose to come to the floor as soon as possible.

Further, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following amendments—we have a list of amendments and some of them we have worked out and will be stricken. If I could, I would like to go through the list of the ones that we worked on and we will not have to consider. First is the Hollings amendment on the list; the Graham transit amendment; the Durbin amendment; two amendments by Senator ENZI; the Mack amendment; one of the Abraham amendments; the Bond amendment—two of the Bond amendments. I believe that would take care of a number of them. Some of the other amendments still will be before us, we hope, in some form soon or will be disposed of in some way.

Mr. BYRD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, this has been cleared on this side. Therefore, we have no objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. No objection is heard to the agreement.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I rise in strong support of S. 1048, the Transportation appropriations bill for fiscal year 1998.

The Transportation appropriations bill may be the most important of all the appropriations bills. It establishes the Federal investment level in our Nation's highways, airports, passenger, rail, and mass transit systems. I have spoken many times on the Senate floor regarding the importance of maintaining and improving the Nation's physical infrastructure. Our economy is highly dependent on the efficient movement of goods and people. Conges-

tion and capacity constraints on our Nation's highways and delays at our airports cost the U.S. economy billions of dollars each year in lost productivity. But while the estimated costs associated with congestion grow each year, our Federal investment in infrastructure has continued to decline significantly.

Indeed, since 1980, our national investment in infrastructure has declined, both as a percentage of our gross domestic product and as a percentage of our Federal budget. The bill before the Senate today seeks to reverse the destructive trend of Federal disinvestment. Most importantly, as far as this Senator is concerned, the Federal aid highway obligation ceiling will rise to a historic high of \$21.8 billion, an increase of more than \$3 billion, or 17 percent. Our Nation's airports will enjoy a 16-percent increase in Federal funding for critical capital and safety improvement projects, an increase of \$260 million.

Now, Mr. President, these additional highway funds are sorely needed in all States of the Nation. Indeed, the historic \$3 billion increase is still only one-fifth the size of the increase that the Federal Highway Administration estimates would be necessary to cease deterioration in the condition of our National Highway System. Put another way, if we wanted to see a net improvement in the condition of our roads and bridges, we would be required to provide an increase in excess of \$15 billion in the bill, or a total of almost \$37 billion. Unfortunately, the restrictions that have been placed on domestic discretionary spending through the Federal budget process preclude us from providing such an increase through this bill. But I still want to commend the managers for making our Federal investment in highways a priority in the development of this bill.

These highway funds are not the only critical investments in this bill. The Transportation appropriations bill includes our entire annual investment in critical safety programs in all modes of transportation. These include investments to maintain and modernize our air traffic control system, programs for the prevention of drunk driving, funding for rail safety inspectors and motor carrier inspectors, as well as programs of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board.

Mr. President, when one considers the costs to society in terms of the thousands of lives lost each year through accidents involving our transportation system, the devastation is great. Whether it be highway deaths, or airline disasters, or train accidents, it matters little to those who lose their lives, or to those who are permanently disabled, or to their families, as to which mode of transportation was involved. We simply must do all that we can to reduce the death and the destruction that occurs annually in our various transportation systems.

In doing so, we not only save lives, we also save the billions of dollars that these accidents cost the economy each year in terms of property damage and lost productivity, as well as the health care costs—and they are often long-term—associated with these tragedies.

I believe it is necessary to point out, Mr. President, that it will require a two-step process for us to get increased highway construction funding, as well as highway safety funding to our States. This appropriations bill is the first step, but it will be equally essential for us to pass the surface transportation authorization bill in the very near future. Our major Federal highway construction, highway safety, and mass transit programs are set to expire in less than 10 weeks' time. As has been the usual convention, the annual appropriations bill sets an obligation limitation on these highway construction, highway safety, and mass transit programs.

But it is the responsibility of the authorizing committees—the Committees on Environment and Public Works and Commerce and Banking—to provide the necessary contract authority so that these programs will continue beyond September 30. I know it has been the stated desire of the majority leader to bring such an authorization bill before the Senate as soon as possible. And I am one of many Senators who anxiously await an opportunity to debate a new surface transportation authorization bill on the Senate floor.

Mr. President, I commend Senator SHELBY for his excellent work in his first year as chairman of the Transportation Subcommittee. He held a thorough and informative set of hearings at the beginning of the year. I was pleased to have had the opportunity to participate in some of them. And I also commend Senator LAUTENBERG, the ranking member of the Transportation Subcommittee, who, as ranking member of the Budget Committee, toiled diligently to ensure that the budget resolution treated transportation as an important budget priority for the coming year.

Senator SHELBY and Senator LAUTENBERG have continued to act in the cooperative bipartisan fashion that has always characterized the workings of the Transportation Subcommittee.

Mr. President, these Senators, who act as managers of a bill as important as this is, put an immense amount of time into their work. They conduct thorough hearings. They work with able staff. They conduct markups on the bill at the subcommittee level, and the bill is generally approved by the Appropriations Committee. The bill has usually emanated from the subcommittee, and seldom does the full committee make changes in those subcommittee actions that go into the formulation of the bill.

I know that Senator SHELBY has worked hard, and he has done a good job, as did Senator LAUTENBERG when he was chairman of the Transportation

Subcommittee. They are both highly dedicated to their work, and they are both very well respected. And I want to commend both of these Senators. They are working in the best interests of the Nation. They are working in the best interests of the States that make up the Nation. And they are working in the best interests of the future and the people who will depend upon adequate modes of transportation today and in the future.

I also want to thank the Presiding Officer. I note that he listens to what Senators are saying. And that is important. He is alert to what is going on, on the floor. He is alert to what is being said. He is not working crossword puzzles. He is not signing his mail. He is not reading a book. He is busily engaged in the business of presiding. So I compliment all of these whose names I have mentioned.

As I think of the work that is done by Senator SHELBY and Senator LAUTENBERG, I used to be the chairman of the Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee a good many years ago. I was instrumental years ago in helping to get the first appropriations for the metropolitan transit system here. That was before most Senators were Members of this body. But I saw the need for a transportation system in the District of Columbia to serve the metropolitan area, and I supported mass transit throughout the years. When I was chairman of the full committee, I did not come to bury mass transit. I came to praise mass transit and to save mass transit and to help mass transit. I am sorry to say that I have not been accorded the same reciprocity toward highways, especially from some of the Members of the other body. I don't mention names because that is against the Senate rules.

But we are all working for the Nation. And when we work to improve the transportation of the Nation, we work to build the Nation's prosperity. We work for the increased safety of those who travel, and we work for the young men and women who will be the leaders of the Nation in years to come.

It reminds me of a bit of verse by Will Dromgoole. One might think that that author was a man. The name is Will, but it was a woman.

An old man traveling a long highway
Came at evening, cold and gray
To a chasm vast and wide and steep,
With waters rolling cold and deep.
The old man crossed in the twilight dim;
The sullen stream held no fears for him.
But he turned, when he reached the other side.

And he built a bridge to span the tide.

"Old man," said a fellow pilgrim standing near.

"You are wasting your strength in building here.

Your journey will end with the passing day,
And you never again will travel this way.
You have crossed the chasm deep and wide;
Why build you a bridge at eventide?"

The builder lifted his old gray head.

"Good friend, in the path I have come," he said,

"There followeth after me today

A youth whose feet must pass this way.
This chasm, which was but naught to me,
To that fair youth might a pitfall be.
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim.
Good friend, I am building this bridge for him."

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KEMPTHORNE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent I be allowed to speak as if in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

U.S. STATE OF READINESS

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I saw a very interesting article in Friday's Washington Times that has brought to surface the truth that is so often avoided around here concerning our state of readiness in our Nation's defense system.

As the chairman of the readiness subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I have had occasion to visit many, many of the installations around the country. I have been in the European theater, most of the installations in England, Italy, Hungary, and, of course, several times to Bosnia, Camp Lejeune Marine Corps Base; Fort Hood, TX; Fort Bragg, NC; Corpus Christi Navy Air Base, and several others. What I am finding is that there are very serious problems they are facing.

Mr. President, I know you are aware, as chairman of the personnel subcommittee, of some of these problems and how they are affecting our state of readiness. One of the contributing factors, of course, is our contingency operations. We have two serious problems with contingency operations. First of all, they are very expensive. We had occasion to narrowly lose our resolution of disapproval in order to keep our troops from being sent over to Bosnia here back in December 1995—only by four votes. And one of the determining factors was they said it would be a 12-month operation, which we all knew better, but they also said that the cost of the operation would not exceed \$2 billion, it would be somewhere between \$1.5 and \$2 billion. At that time we felt, with mission creep and the fact it was easy to go in and very difficult to come out, that it would cost more.

Well, sure enough. We are up there now, close to \$7 billion it is going to cost us.

Where does that money come from, Mr. President? It comes from our readiness accounts. This has become a very serious problem.

The other problem is that it is using up our troops, keeping them from being