

posture and engage in a reckless game of brinksmanship. The administration continues to cling to the myths promoted by the Amtrak Reform Commission that privatization of many of the lines is necessary. We all know that privatization of our rail system will not work, and if anyone has any doubt about that, they should call our friends in Great Britain where delays and safety problems are rampant due to privatization.

We also know that none of our transportation systems operate without Federal support. In fiscal year 2001, our highways received more than \$33 billion in Federal funding. The airline industry received \$13 billion in regular funding and a \$15 billion bailout. In the same fiscal year, Amtrak received \$521 million, which represents less than 1 percent of all Federal transportation spending and far less than the \$1.2 billion it needs to properly operate.

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Nevertheless, on the eve of a national crisis, the administration has said that it does not want to go above last year's funding level for Amtrak.

Mr. Speaker, instead of walking away from Amtrak, instead of turning our backs on the men and women who work for Amtrak, this administration should be running to invest in a national passenger inner city rail system to complement our aviation and highway systems. Rail is regarded as the cheapest, most energy-efficient, environmentally sound, comfortable and reliable mode of travel. It is the preferred mode of travel by thousands and thousands of Americans. Ridership in this country is rapidly increasing, and the potential is unlimited. America deserves a first-rate passenger rail system; and accordingly, Amtrak deserves to be fairly funded, both now and in the future.

Therefore, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 4545 to keep Amtrak and America moving forward; and I urge the Bush administration to stop the politics, to stop the posturing and do the right thing: give Amtrak the resources it needs to run.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KERNS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MALONEY of New York addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SUPPORT FOR AMTRAK LOAN GUARANTEE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of a \$200 million loan guarantee for the Amtrak national passenger rail system and to urge the ad-

ministration to expeditiously and favorably respond to Amtrak's request.

Amtrak services well over 500 cities and towns throughout the Nation and is a safe, efficient, and affordable mode of transporting millions of Americans to work and leisure activities each year.

The events of September 11 clearly underscore the need for an alternative mode of transportation to air travel. In the 8 months since the 9-11 attacks, Amtrak ridership has remained strong, despite a weakened economy, significant reductions in travel and tourism, and steep declines in domestic air travel.

In my own congressional district, the city of Richmond, Virginia, has invested over \$48 million in the restoration of the historic Main Street Station. Amtrak will be a major provider of service; and after 10 years of planning, the first phase of renovations is now finally under way and trains are expected to begin stopping at the Main Street Station within the next 6 to 8 months.

Mr. Speaker, passenger rail service is an essential component to our plans to create a multimodal transportation center at the Main Street Station, and an Amtrak shutdown will leave a significant gap in our region's transportation network.

A shutdown of Amtrak will also lead to the possible halt in other linked services, including the Virginia Railway Express, which transports 12,000 riders each day, many coming into Washington, D.C. on rail rather than adding to the congestion on Interstate 395.

Mr. Speaker, each year, this Congress appropriates significant dollars in the way of subsidies to our highways and national aviation system; yet we fail to provide the same level of support and commitment to passenger rail. A responsible Federal investment in our Nation's passenger rail system is long overdue. I believe this Congress is ready to work toward that end; but in the short term, I urge the administration to make available the resources that Amtrak needs to sustain its national operations.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CUMMINGS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SUPPORT EMERGENCY AMTRAK FUNDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on a matter of utmost importance for the transportation, economic, and environmental needs of our Nation,

and the Northeast in particular, and that is the survival of Amtrak.

For 31 years the Amtrak rail system has provided an essential service to millions of Americans, providing safe, reliable travel at an affordable price. It has sought to balance competing public service and commercial objectives, but has never been given adequate resources to deliver either objective fully. And now, without an immediate infusion of \$200 million in emergency funds, an Amtrak shutdown could occur within days. This will cause serious disruptions for commuters and travelers everywhere.

The fact is, funding for Amtrak is not simply an issue of transportation. It is an issue of economics, commerce, and livability.

In my State of Connecticut, Amtrak's service is a vital component of daily life, as it is to thousands of cities and towns along the east coast. Over 1 million Connecticut citizens rely on Amtrak annually, 370,000 in my hometown of New Haven alone. So many people there rely on Amtrak to commute to work from New York City. Others rely on it to bring commerce and tourism into cities without commuter airline service. In the Northeast, people travel Amtrak because it is, quite simply, the most convenient and time-efficient method of traveling from city to city, alleviating the heavy rush-hour traffic faced by so many commuters today. In doing so, it is a major contributor to reducing emissions that contribute to respiratory illnesses like asthma. That helps us keep our air clean and our children healthy.

Amtrak means jobs as well. They own and operate a rail yard in New Haven, Connecticut, where maintenance and equipment repair take place. One can only imagine how busy they are, given the continual underfunding of Amtrak. All in all, Amtrak employs nearly 700 employees in Connecticut alone.

Since September 11, I might add, Americans are looking for alternatives to commercial airlines; and despite our best efforts to make our airline security the best in the world, many Americans still fear for their safety. Amtrak has proven that it is a viable transportation alternative.

With so many concerns regarding air traffic congestion, from safety to overcrowded skies, it simply makes sense that we have in place an alternative mode of transportation that will alleviate the stress currently on our air traffic controllers and our airline security forces. The fact is, more choices means less risk to our people, less stress, healthier communities and, thus, a more livable region.

For over 3 decades, funding for America's passenger railroad has nearly been enough to keep the system operating on a year-to-year basis, which prevents it from meeting its long-term public service mission, not to mention its capital obligations.

The administration's budget for Amtrak requests \$521 million for 2003, less

than half of what Amtrak says it needs to meet its long-term and short-term financial needs. Sadly, this amount would only maintain the current level of funding and represents less than half of what Amtrak needs.

The fact is that the Federal Government dedicates resources for highways, airlines, airports, runways for capital improvements. Despite the popular myth, Amtrak has no such luxury. Amtrak is expected to pay for capital and track improvements, new cars, repairs and maintenance. With only a fraction of the Federal subsidies for airlines and highways, Amtrak is expected to do a lot more with a lot less.

Recently, I sent a letter, along with 161 of my colleagues, asking Congress to fully fund Amtrak at \$1.9 billion. This funding includes \$1.2 billion in Federal funding for capital and operating expenses, as well as \$375 million for much-needed rail security projects across the system, and \$400 million for life-safety improvements in Amtrak tunnels along the northeast corridor.

We are asking for \$200 million to be made available immediately. If we can move heaven and Earth in order to provide the airlines with \$15 billion with very few strings attached, as we did last fall, surely we can find \$200 million to keep Amtrak running when so many people rely on it.

Failure to provide the necessary funds will not only mean the suspension of Amtrak service in the busy northeast corridor and the likely permanent loss of long-distance trains; it will mean that thousands of commuters around the Nation will be stranded; loss of production, loss of \$1 million for communities and companies in areas where these areas need the services. It is unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, Amtrak is too important to our communities to let die. It needs reforms. Let us do it in a realistic timetable that does not ignore the needs of millions of Americans. Congress and the administration must send a clear signal that they will not allow Amtrak to go bankrupt. Let us give them the \$200 million that it needs.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Missouri (Ms. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MCCARTHY of Missouri addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SUPPORT FULL FUNDING FOR AMTRAK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Indiana (Ms. CARSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to join my colleagues in urging quick support for Amtrak to avert its collapse. The United States is not unlike any industrialized Nation in

the world that has a need for quality rail passenger service, and America is not unlike any other industrialized Nation that is required to undergird financially its passenger rail service.

The President and lawmakers, the United States Congress, must come together quickly to prevent the economic and human hardship that would result from an Amtrak shutdown. That hardship would be suffered by Amtrak workers and their families. It would be most harsh, and the damage to our economy would be a calamity.

We have heard over and over and over, Mr. Speaker, in these Chambers during this Congress how imperative it is to provide an economic stimulus for corporate America to ensure the continuation of jobs and to provide employment for unemployed workers across this country. Yet we are here tonight begging and pleading with the powers that be to support Amtrak, which indeed needs economic stimulus for the benefit of the continuation of employment of America's citizens, the citizens who have worked long and hard over the years to do a good job and have done a good job, and they have taken care of their families and they have been taxpayers across this country.

Recently, Amtrak CEO David Gunn said if Amtrak did not receive a \$200 million loan immediately that it would have to begin shutting down operations.

Mr. Speaker, it is imperative that we build a world-class passenger rail system in the United States. We cannot wait for highways and airports to become so overwhelmed that they too can no longer operate, and we cannot continue to hold the millions of Americans who rely on passenger service in limbo while we refuse to provide Amtrak with adequate funding. We must also engage in long-term planning to address future passenger transportation growth and show some forethought in crafting transportation solutions, not wait for this impending crisis to turn into an outright disaster.

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and the aftermath which followed, we found that we were vulnerable in our society and in our economy when our transportation choices were limited and our mobility severely diminished. After the Federal Aviation Administration grounded all flights following the terrorist attacks, travelers turned to Amtrak. The ridership of Amtrak has skyrocketed. Revenues have risen up to 20 percent, and the ridership has increased over 8.2 percent. This shows that Amtrak does work and that it will continue to work if the United States Congress and the President is about the business of quickly responding to the needs of Amtrak, not unlike the way that it did for our airline industry when we provided a \$5 billion grant to that industry and \$10 billion additional resources in the event that our airline services decided that additional resources were needed to be guaranteed by this country.

Mr. Speaker, I would encourage Members of Congress and the administration as well to act quickly, not politically, but quickly, for the benefit of the families who rely on us as Members of Congress and who rely on the support that we have already shown that we provide for other entities in our Nation so that we can go forward. We cannot afford the luxury of being a superpower in our mind and not allowing America to, in reality, be one by having a first-class passenger rail system. It is up to us, Mr. Speaker, to sustain Amtrak.

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HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KERNs). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, not surprisingly, in this election year the Republicans are attempting to portray themselves as the protectors of Social Security; and many of our women colleagues tonight, led by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) and the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. THURMAN) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) will be discussing this more.

During my 5 minutes, what I would like to do is put some history on the record.

First, the Republicans have advocated mailing out fancy but meaningless guarantee certificates to Social Security beneficiaries this year at a cost of \$16 million to the taxpayers, and each million that would be needed to produce and mail these certificates would pay for the processing of maybe 1,400 disability claims.

When it started to come out how they wanted to waste the money on those kinds of phony certificates, and that proposal literally flopped, Republicans have sought other forms of political cover but to no avail. So now they have moved into the avoidance mode and are simply dodging Social Security, blocking key legislation from coming to this floor.

The American people deserve to hear the details of the Republicans' privatization plans for Social Security before the election. That is why I signed the Democratic discharge petition to bring this vital debate to the floor. It requires 218 Members of the House to sign that discharge petition to bring up the bill.

Now, realistically, will the Republicans allow these bills to come forward? Well, let us see. Probably not, because the Republican leadership of this House knows that Democrats will stand against privatization and expose their risky and flawed plans for what they are.

Truly, Republicans have always had trouble believing in Social Security