

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.

□ 1915

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

and have a long record of opposition to our Nation's premier social insurance program. Let me put this on the record.

Beginning with the original Social Security Act when the ranking minority Republican member of the Committee on Ways and Means was Representative Allen Treadway, a Republican from Massachusetts, he led the attack here in Congress, in the House, offering a motion to delete the old age and unemployment insurance programs and stating that he would vote, and I quote, "most strenuously in opposition to the bill at each and every opportunity."

At that time, 95 of 103 Republicans voted along with Representative Treadway to gut the original act. That was 92.2 percent of the Republicans. But they failed because there were more Democrats that believed that we should lift those in poverty who are seniors to a level at least of subsistence and to dignity in their retirement years.

Now, Republican opposition in the Senate was also pronounced, with a majority of Senate Republicans voting with Senator Hastings to delete the retirement program from the Social Security Act. As we all know, the Act went on to pass both Chambers and was signed into law by Democratic President Franklin Roosevelt on August 14, 1935.

But Republican opposition to Social Security was not limited to the old age and unemployment provisions. In 1956, 38 of 44 Senate Republicans voted against an amendment to restore the disability insurance program to the bill. That was 86½ percent of the Republicans in the Senate not wishing to include the disability insurance provisions, which are the lifeline for millions and millions of people who have been stricken in their families with illness or with injury.

In 1965, when Medicare Part A and B were created, when President Lyndon Johnson was President and led this fight for health care for our seniors, 128 of 165 House Republicans, or 77.6 percent, three-quarters of them, voted to recommit the bill and replace it with, guess what, a voluntary system. Have we heard this before?

Most recently, Republicans have broken their repeated promises, voting seven times on the issue to ensure that, as they say, every penny of Social Security will be locked away in a lockbox. Instead, they have drained the budget, even as we stand here tonight, with tax breaks for the super rich and are plundering the trust funds of Social Security over the next 10 years by nearly \$2 trillion.

So every week I am coming down here to the floor to take a look at the grade on the Social Security trust fund. I call it the debt clock. As of today, Republicans have raided now \$223,945,205,479 from the Social Security trust fund, which averages now about \$796 per American.

Every week since we have come on the floor, that is up over \$6 billion from last week. They keep going into the trust fund to give money away to CEOs like Kenneth Lay, who, believe me, owes us money. The Social Security recipients of this country and the taxpayers owe him nothing.

Democrats believe Social Security is a compact of trust between generations. We will continue to fight against the Republican raid to ensure that Social Security's existence will continue for generations to come. Democrats have always believed in Social Security, and we always will.

CONGRESS HAS AN OBLIGATION TO THE TRAVELING PUBLIC TO SUPPORT AMTRAK

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

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me just say that I am here to discuss Amtrak, but I not only support Amtrak, I have loved the trains ever since I was a little girl. I remember when I was a little girl, the Silver Meteor used to come right by my house. The question that we have in this country is whether or not we support passenger rail.

Let me just say before I get started that there is no form of transportation in this country or anywhere that supports itself. Whether we are talking about the airline industry, whether we are talking about trucks, roads, buses, none of them support themselves. So the question is whether or not we support passenger rail service, or whether we are going to let it fall apart and leave this country's travelers and business people with absolutely no alternative form of public transportation.

Without the \$270 million Amtrak needs to keep operating, we will soon see people that rely on Amtrak to get to their work each day waiting for a train that is not coming.

This Congress absolutely must provide funds to avert a shutdown of Amtrak. We continue to subsidize highways and aviation, but when it comes to our passenger rail service we refuse to provide the money Amtrak needs to survive. This issue is much bigger than just transportation; this is about safety and national security. Not only should we be giving Amtrak the money it needs to continue to provide services, we should be providing security dollars, money to upgrade their tracks and improve safety and security measures in the entire rail system.

Once again, we see the Bush administration's too-little, too-late policy. I am surprised they have not suggested a tax cut to solve this problem. Instead, they are trying to take money from the hard-working Amtrak employees who work day and night to provide top-quality service to their passengers. These folks are trying to make a living for their families, and they do not de-

serve this shabby treatment from this President.

It is time for the administration to step up to the plate and make a decision about Amtrak based on what is good for the traveling public and not what is best for the right wing of the Republican Party and the bean counters at OMB.

I represent Crescent City, Florida, where we recently experienced a tragedy when an Amtrak auto train derailed, killing four and injuring hundreds of others. Soon after that, we experienced another derailment in Gainesville that injured many more.

Florida depends on tourists for its economy, and we need people to be able to get to this State safe so they can enjoy it. Ever since September 11, more and more people are turning from the airlines to Amtrak, and they deserve safe and dependable service.

Some people think that the solution to the problem is to privatize the system. If we privatize, we will see the same thing we saw when we deregulated the airline industries. Only the lucrative routes will be maintained, and routes to rural locations, I say to Members who represent rural areas, will be too expensive and too few. In other words, they will cut these areas out if we privatize it.

Mr. Speaker, I was in New York shortly after September 11 when the plane leaving JFK crashed into the Bronx. I, along with many of my colleagues in both the House and Senate, took Amtrak back to Washington.

This isn't about fiscal policy, this is about providing a safe and reliable public transportation system that the citizens of this Nation need and deserve. Let's stop this crisis now, before it is too late.

Mr. Speaker, we have an obligation to the traveling public to support Amtrak.

Ms. MCCARTHY of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of providing Amtrak a loan guarantee or supplemental funding in order to keep our national rail system from shutting down. Since 9/11, many travelers have opted to use rail transportation as an alternative to flying. A shutdown would cause serious disruptions for commuters and travelers nationally, and to local economies across America.

Amtrak is critical to my constituents in Kansas City and to the people of Missouri. Missouri has four Amtrak trains: two Missouri Mules that travel between Kansas City and St. Louis and the two Ann Rutledge trains that travel between Kansas City, St. Louis, and Chicago. These trains are integral to tourism and commerce in our state.

This year, the Kansas City station has had approximately 60,000 passengers, the St. Louis station has had over 74,000, the Jefferson City station has had more than 41,000, Hermann's station has had over 11,000, and the Warrensburg station has had 11,000 plus passengers.

Amtrak has proven to be an extremely convenient method of transportation for the business traveler. Missouri state officials commute on the train to work at the State Capitol in Jefferson City. Many Missouri business travelers