

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid on the table.

VOTE ON NOMINATION OF MARTIN KARL REIDINGER

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Martin Karl Reidinger, of North Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of North Carolina?

The nomination was confirmed.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid on the table.

VOTE ON NOMINATION OF JANIS LYNN SAMMARTINO

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Janis Lynn Sammartino, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of California?

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there a sufficient second? There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN), the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN), the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN), and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA) are necessarily absent.

I further announce that, if present and voting, the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) would vote "yea."

Mr. LOTT. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAIG), the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. HAGEL), and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PRYOR). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 90, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 328 Ex.]

YEAS—90

Akaka	Casey	Feinstein
Alexander	Chambliss	Graham
Allard	Coburn	Grassley
Barrasso	Cochran	Gregg
Baucus	Coleman	Hatch
Bayh	Collins	Hutchison
Bennett	Conrad	Inhofe
Bingaman	Corker	Inouye
Bond	Cornyn	Isakson
Boxer	Crapo	Johnson
Brown	DeMint	Kennedy
Brownback	Dole	Kerry
Bunning	Domenici	Klobuchar
Burr	Dorgan	Kohl
Byrd	Durbin	Kyl
Cantwell	Ensign	Landrieu
Cardin	Enzi	Lautenberg
Carper	Feingold	Leahy

Lincoln	Pryor	Specter
Lott	Reed	Stabenow
Lugar	Reid	Stevens
Martinez	Roberts	Sununu
McCaskill	Rockefeller	Tester
McConnell	Salazar	Thune
Menendez	Sanders	Vitter
Mikulski	Schumer	Voinovich
Murkowski	Sessions	Warner
Murray	Shelby	Webb
Nelson (FL)	Smith	Whitehouse
Nelson (NE)	Snowe	Wyden

NOT VOTING—10

Biden	Hagel	McCain
Clinton	Harkin	Obama
Craig	Levin	
Dodd	Lieberman	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table.

Under the previous order, the President shall be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now return to legislative session.

The Senator from Pennsylvania.

CHANGE OF VOTE

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, on roll-call vote No. 320, I voted "yea." It was my intention to vote "nay." Therefore, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to change my vote since it will not affect the outcome of that vote.

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

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SERGEANT JAN ARGONISH

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I wish to take a couple of moments to highlight the life of one of our brave fighting men who lost his life in Afghanistan. His name is Jan Argonish. He was a sergeant in the Army National Guard.

On the last business day before our August recess was over, I was in a line in Peckville, PA, at his viewing where all of his family and his friends paid him last respects and prayed for him. Just to give a sense of the scene, the context of this scene, this was a viewing line that lasted hours and hours. I was in the line from about 6 o'clock to 8:30. So for all the reasons we celebrate the service and the sacrifice of our brave troops, I wish to highlight the life of SGT Jan Argonish, who passed away at the age of 26 when he was killed in action in an ambush in Kunar Province in Afghanistan.

Jan Argonish was a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, with nearly 10 years of service in the Pennsylvania National Guard. He volunteered to help train soldiers of the Afghan National Army. For SGT Jan Argonish, this was his third deployment since September 11, 2001.

He was born in Peckville, PA, and was a resident most recently in Scranton, my hometown. He was a 1999 grad-

uate of Valley View High School, where he played football and was on the swim team. He went on from high school to enlist in the Army. He was a graduate of the Army's infantry and mortar schools and tanker school at Fort Knox, KY.

He received numerous awards for his brave service—the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, the National Defense Service Medal, and on and on, award after award. He was a member of the Sacred Heart Church in Peckville, PA, and VFW Post 5544 in Jessup, PA. Since February 2006, he was employed as a corrections officer at the U.S. Penitentiary Canaan in Waymart, PA.

Sergeant Argonish leaves behind a family. One member of his family I will never forget, his 8-year-old son Jakub, who was in the viewing line to greet hundreds and hundreds of people. He was wearing a State trooper's hat which was, obviously, too large for an 8-year-old. But in so many ways, that image of that young boy, Jakub, is an image I will never forget, and in so many ways it is symbolic of and a metaphor of what so many families have lost when they have lost a loved one in Iraq, Afghanistan, or fighting around the world. Even someone who is old enough to understand it better than 8-year-old Jakub did—so many families are not ready for the horror and the trauma of that loss.

So I am thinking of SGT Jan Argonish today. I am thinking of his service. We are remembering and praying for his family and, of course, all those who are doing the brave work our troops are doing in Afghanistan and, of course, in Iraq during this very profound week we are about to enter into, the week where we think about the victims of 9/11 and we think about our troops.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from Wyoming, Mr. BARRASSO, is recognized to speak in morning business for up to 30 minutes.

The Senator from Wyoming.

WYOMING AND MY VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I rise today to address this body and our Nation in my first official speech as Wyoming's newest Senator. Today I share with you how I got here, who I am, what I believe, my vision for the future, and what I hope to accomplish.

All of us in this body and everyone in the State of Wyoming lost a great friend when we lost Senator Craig Thomas. I have heard it in this Chamber on both sides of the aisle and throughout this building, and I have heard it all around Wyoming: We have lost a great friend. Susan Thomas and the memory of Craig Thomas have been recognized all across Wyoming this summer at rodeos, county fairs, the State fair, parades, and at special events. The new visitors center at the Grand Teton National Park has appropriately been named in his honor.

Craig was a forceful and courageous voice for his constituents. He always did what he saw as right for Wyoming and right for America. He was a cowboy and a marine. The Marines say "Semper fidelis." Craig Thomas was always faithful. God, country, and Wyoming—that was Craig Thomas. He has left huge boots to fill. No one can truly do it. I am very honored to be the person to succeed Senator Thomas. I am humbled to be given the opportunity and the responsibility to represent the people of Wyoming in the U.S. Senate.

Wyoming is the Equality State. It is a State of high altitude and low multitude and a State of great natural beauty blessed with remarkable mineral resources.

The law in Wyoming says a Senate vacancy must be filled by the Governor from a list of three names. The three names are supplied by the central committee of the political party where the vacancy occurred.

Thirty-one Republicans in Wyoming applied for this Senate seat. The number was then reduced to 10, and then 5, and then 3 by a series of speeches and forums. The Governor then made his selection from the three finalists. I am very grateful to Gov. Dave Freudenthal for the confidence he and the people of Wyoming have placed in me.

During the selection process, I made a simple pledge to the people of Wyoming: I told them they could count on me to show up, to stand up, to speak up, and then to shut up. I would show up early for work and be here for votes. I would show up at home in Wyoming on weekends to listen to people and to host a town meeting in every county by Labor Day and to show up when people from Wyoming visit the Capitol. As Craig Thomas did, I will only work in Washington but continue to live in Wyoming.

I will stand up—stand up for Wyoming people and Wyoming values, stand up against big government and Washington's one-size-fits-all approach, stand up against those who try to take away the rights of Wyoming people. And I will speak up—speak up for limited government, lower taxes, and fewer regulations, speak up for a strong defense and secure borders, and speak up to make Wyoming values the values for all of America. And then I will shut up. That is because words are no substitute for action, and the most important thing a Senator can do is listen to Wyoming people, their hopes, their dreams, their concerns for themselves, their children, their families, their communities, and for all of Wyoming, and because the best things about Wyoming and America don't need long speeches but are expressed in single words: freedom, justice, honor, duty, compassion, hope, opportunity, life, and liberty.

I have kept my pledge to visit every county in Wyoming before Labor Day and listen to people. I have held 30 town meetings and heard from thousands of people. Many brought their

children. I have heard about their hopes for their families, their communities, Wyoming, and our Nation. And I have heard about their dreams for our future.

Parents in Wyoming want what all parents want for their children: the opportunity for a better life. It is what all of our parents wanted for us.

My dad had to quit school in ninth grade because of the Depression. He fought in World War II. He was in the Battle of the Bulge. As a cement finisher, he did backbreaking work to put food on the table for the family. That is where I really learned about hard work, by pushing wheelbarrows of heavy, wet cement every summer in high school and college.

Every day growing up, my dad would say: You should thank God every day you live in America. You don't know how fortunate you are. It is the same lesson I try to pass on to my children Peter and Emma, because in America, through hard work, even the son of a cement finisher can have the opportunity to serve in the U.S. Senate.

My dad would have been 90 when I was sworn in. We lost him 2 years ago. I had his dog tags from World War II in my pocket when I took the oath of office.

Now, my mom's lesson was different. Since the day I started kindergarten, my mom would always say: This year, this one right now, is the most important year of your life. What she was saying is that whatever you are doing, focus on it, do it right because the future depends on what you are doing today. In the Senate, I want to spend this next year, this most important year, working for a better future for our families—the families of Wyoming and the families of America.

In Wyoming, many people refer to me as Wyoming's doctor. For over two decades, folks have invited me into their homes with statewide television and radio health reports. I give people information on how to stay healthy and how to keep down the cost of their medical care. I end each report by saying: "Here in Wyoming, I am Dr. John Barrasso, helping you care for yourself." That is also my philosophy for Government—helping people help themselves.

I believe there is a role for Government, but that role must be limited. Government should not do for people what they can and should do for themselves. Nor should Government put obstacles in the way of people pursuing their American dream. Limited Government means limited in size, limited in scope, and limited in spending—limited but effective. That means a government that gives us value for our tax dollars.

Speaking of values, to me that means families, schools, communities, and charities. I believe, as Ronald Reagan believed, we should rely more on ourselves and less on our Government. That is why I will champion legislation to cut wasteful spending and to make

sure taxpayers get value for their money.

Now, some may wonder why and how an orthopedic surgeon became interested in serving his community in elective office. As a high school senior, I attended a program right here on Capitol Hill. The program is called A Presidential Classroom for Young Americans. It is the Nation's premier program in civic education. Both of my children have attended. This past year, 50 Wyoming students attended on scholarships. I would enthusiastically recommend A Presidential Classroom for Young Americans to any high school student.

I have been privileged to serve in the Wyoming State legislature. It is a true citizen's legislature. Through the years, it has been a great training ground for the folks Wyoming sends to Washington. During my two terms in the Wyoming State Senate, I built a reputation for getting the job done by working with members of both parties. That includes being a strong advocate for our veterans and members of the National Guard, working to keep our roads safer for young drivers, and reducing the tax burden on all the people of Wyoming by eliminating the sales tax from groceries.

I was one of the original sponsors of the Hathaway scholarship program. The Hathaway scholarship is designed to give opportunity for all Wyoming high school students to further their education at the University of Wyoming or one of our community colleges. It is a way we used our State's mineral wealth to invest in our people and in our future. The original bill was introduced by four State senators, two Republicans and two Democrats. Members of the senate and members of the house improved the bill considerably. The bill was signed by Governor Freudenthal, a Democrat, and named for former Governor Hathaway, a Republican. It is a great example of members of both parties working together to improve the quality of life for our citizens.

Now, as a Senator, I will continue to work with all people, regardless of party, on issues that are important to the people of Wyoming. As one of only two physicians in the Senate, people are already coming to me to ask about health issues. Well, health issues go way beyond a twisted knee or a painful shoulder. The concerns include those of people living longer and needing care; the concerns of access to care, of affordable care; the concerns of substance abuse and mental health; and the concerns of what to do with a sick child or elderly parents when the caregivers are not available because they are working full time, and sometimes more. This country deserves a serious discussion on our health care needs and our health care system. I will be actively engaged in that discussion, along with my Wyoming Senate partner, MIKE ENZI.

Craig Thomas knew that rural States such as Wyoming have special needs

when it comes to health care. He was cochair of the Rural Health Caucus for over 10 years. There are obstacles that our hospitals and providers must overcome to deliver quality care to families in an environment with limited resources. The week he passed away, Senator Thomas was set to reintroduce a followup health care bill, along with Senators ROBERTS, CONRAD, and HARKIN. This bill has been renamed the Craig Thomas Rural Hospital and Provider Equity Act. I will ask to cosponsor the legislation and to join the Rural Health Caucus.

While health care is near and dear to my heart, I am very pleased to be serving on three committees that are critical to Wyoming. So much of Wyoming's heritage and Wyoming's future is tied to our land, our people, and our natural resources. Wyoming has been represented on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee for over a century. I am grateful that my Republican colleagues recognized that long tradition and allowed me to keep Wyoming's voice on the committee.

The Environment and Public Works Committee also has a major influence on daily activities in the Equality State, and the Select Committee on Indian Affairs will allow me to continue to serve the needs of our Native American citizens, as I have done before as a trauma surgeon.

Energy, Public Lands, and the National Parks are all vital to our State's economy and our Nation's. I will work to make sure that public lands remain open to multiple use, while at the same time ensuring our environment is protected.

As an outdoorsman and a conservationist, Craig Thomas worked on two bills affecting the western part of Wyoming that were very close to his heart. While he is not here to carry on the work, the work needs to continue as part of his legacy. One is called the Snake River Headwaters Legacy Act of 2007. The bill, S. 1281, designates sections of the Snake River and several tributaries as "wild and scenic." This will create a lasting legacy for Wyoming people and for future generations. The designation of wild and scenic announces to the world that this river is the best of the best.

The legislation he was working on also ensures that access, multiple use, and private property rights are not restricted. As a tribute to Senator Thomas, and in recognition of his years of leadership in the Senate, and specifically the Energy Committee, I will ask that my name be attached to S. 1281. I will work hard for passage of the bill that achieves Senator Thomas's vision, while balancing the concerns shared with me during August by private landowners and the agriculture community in Wyoming.

The second bill affecting the western part of Wyoming deals with a very special area named the Wyoming range. The Wyoming range is part of the Bridger-Teton National Forest. As a

strong supporter of multiple use, Senator Thomas still believed there are areas of our State that are so sensitive that they must be protected from development. In 2005, Senator Thomas said:

We ought to seek a balance of energy development and conservation. We can have both. Wyoming's economy is thriving because of the positive role of energy in our State. And most folks live in Wyoming because of our outstanding natural resources and quality of life.

A bill to protect the Wyoming range was in the final stages of development when Senator Thomas died. I had talked with him about it. I have his draft bills. I have visited the Wyoming range and listened to those whom the legislation affects. I am completing that work and will soon be introducing a bill in the Senate to protect the undeveloped areas of the Wyoming range from any future oil and gas leasing. My legislation is intended to achieve that goal while respecting private property rights that currently exist in the Wyoming range.

When I think of the history of our great State, I am reminded of one rugged individualist who loved Wyoming—Teddy Roosevelt. We take our kids to Mt. Rushmore to see his face chiseled into the mountain, along with Washington, Lincoln, and Jefferson. He gave a speech at the University of Wyoming about 100 years ago. There were 10,000 people in the crowd. Now, back then, that was a huge number for a sparsely populated State. He said:

People of Wyoming, I believe in you and in your future. The government can only supplement the work of the individual. The work of the individual depends on the character of the individual.

Here we are, 100 years later, and the lesson is still the same: The Government can only supplement the work of the individual. It is the same message Ronald Reagan delivered in Cheyenne, WY, 25 years ago. He talked of why he loved the frontier spirit of the West. He said:

Wyoming is a place where people are still sure that the future is ours to shape.

Still sure that the future is ours to shape. In Wyoming, we do believe the future is ours to shape. To shape the future, you need to have a vision for the future. I can see a specific future for Wyoming that helps all Americans. Imagine a future where America breaks its dependence on foreign energy. Imagine a future of affordable domestic sources of energy. Imagine a future where we solve the issue of carbon emission. And imagine a future where we can accomplish all of this while we protect the environment. That is the future I see for America, and that is the future I see for Wyoming.

Wyoming is blessed with incredible resources—coal, natural gas, oil, and alternative sources of energy, with wind leading the list. The University of Wyoming's School of Energy Resources is prepared to become the leading energy research institute in the world,

converting coal to liquid, converting coal to gas, pumping carbon dioxide back into the earth to enhance our ability to get more oil.

The world's most powerful computer is being assembled in Wyoming to help make this possible. We can and we will do it while preserving the natural beauty and the wildlife of our State. That is the future I see for Wyoming.

As a Senator from Wyoming, I am always asking myself: What can I do today for Wyoming's future? I will tell you what I heard at 30 town meetings since I have been sworn in. What I heard is: Fight for Wyoming, fight every day, fight for our future, fight for quality education for our children, fight for quality jobs for our families, fight for health care, and fight for our core values—the values that come from within us, from our families, our communities, and how we were raised. That is what I plan to do every day because, like my mom's lesson, this is our most important year.

Mr. President, I conclude by thanking the Members of the Senate who have all been so gracious in making me feel so welcome. I also want to tell you I feel very blessed. I am blessed with a wonderful team of Wyoming folks with whom I serve—Vice President CHENEY, Senator ENZI, and Representative CUBIN. I am blessed with a wonderful staff, who served with Senator Thomas. And I am blessed with a wonderful family—my children Peter and Emma—and the love of my life, Bobbi Brown, and her daughter Hadley.

Bobbi is a breast cancer survivor. She is a remarkable person. At last month's Race for the Cure in Wyoming, we announced our engagement. I joked with the crowd that I believed if I ever made anything out of myself I would ask Bobbi to marry me. The newspaper headline told the story: "Barrasso proposes—Brown says yes." And I am very grateful.

There is a passage in the Bible, a letter from Paul to Timothy, which says:

In the end, he fought the good fight, he finished the race, he kept the faith.

As I enter the Senate, it is my goal to fight the good fight, to finish the race, and to keep the faith—faith in God, faith in my family, faith in Wyoming, and faith in America.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I am hard pressed to remember a time when I complimented a Democratic Governor for a great appointment, but I think I will have to say once again that the Governor of Wyoming made an outstanding selection in picking our new friend JOHN BARRASSO to replace our late and beloved colleague Craig Thomas.

I have heard a few maiden speeches. Actually, some people on the floor right now have made their initial Senate speeches in the last few years, but I believe we just heard one of the best.

So I want to add, on behalf of all the Republican conference, our congratulations to Senator BARRASSO on an outstanding opening address.

He pointed out that one of his specialties, which is greatly needed around here, is the fact he is a physician. That is extremely important. So your skill set, in addition to your leadership abilities, is certainly welcomed here in the Senate.

Mr. President, I congratulate our colleague from Wyoming on a great maiden speech and welcome him once again to the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I, too, congratulate my colleague on his official first speech, so I will officially give my first welcome. He and I and the people of Wyoming know this is not his first speech, and definitely not his first effort. He has been helping people in Wyoming. He gave up a great orthopedic practice that he founded, which is a disappointment to a lot of people in Wyoming who were actually still hoping they would have an operation from him. But because of the quickness of the appointment, he was back here, ready to work, and at work. He has done a phenomenal job since he has been here.

I am glad to have the help explaining Wyoming, as he did so aptly in this speech. There is a lot of work to be done here, teaching the East about the West so they understand better that one size fits all does not work.

I have been across Wyoming and talking with my colleagues here explaining what a hard worker and a fast learner the new Senator is. He has certainly proven that on his own. He did mention the 30 town meetings he held prior to September 1. That leaves out a lot. Besides 30 town meetings, he had meetings with officials, he had meetings with special groups, he went to a lot of events. He was even in a bocce ball tournament in Cheyenne, where he narrowly lost to the reporter who wrote a wonderful three-page article after that.

When we talk about 30 town meetings in Wyoming, we are talking about one of the bigger States in the United States. We are a small population, but we are a big State. To get to those people you have to travel a lot of miles and talk to a lot of small groups. He does that willingly. He shows up at everything. I am pretty sure, by my count, he was in Jackson six times during August. Jackson is on the far side of the State where the Grand Tetons are. We hope everybody in America visits there and visits there frequently. It is just on the south of the Yellowstone, which is even a little better known, but it is on the far side of the State. It is very difficult to get to from anywhere in Wyoming. It is pretty easy to get to from Houston or Atlanta or Minneapolis, but it is very difficult to get to from Wyoming. He was there six times. That means traveling probably

250 miles a trip, each way, to get there, and then to get back on schedule, meeting with the constituents with whom he promised to meet. That is the kind of dedication he has. He did a marvelous job of answering questions, gathering information. He is a good listener, but he is also a good doer.

He served in the State senate. That has been a training ground for people who have served here for years. That legislative experience makes a difference in how fast you can adjust to the way things operate here compared to the way things operate in the State legislature—compared to not knowing about either one of them. He had some marvelous achievements while he was in the State. He has mentioned some things he wants to get done here. Watch out for him. He will get those done. Help him out. They are worth doing.

He is a tremendous asset to the Senate, and I am very proud to welcome him as my colleague and part of the delegation.

I yield the floor.

DEPARTMENTS OF TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of H.R. 3074, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3074) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes.

Mrs. MURRAY. 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.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the substitute amendment be considered and agreed to, the bill as amended be considered as original text for the purpose of further amendments, and that no points of order be waived for purposes of this agreement.

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

The substitute amendment (No. 2790) was agreed to.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I am very pleased that the Senate is now debating the Senate amendment to H.R. 3074. This is the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill for this coming fiscal year. This bill has been supported by the broadest possible bipartisan majorities.

The Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations subcommittee has 21 members, more than one-fifth of the Senate. It is one of the largest subcommittees in the Senate. Despite the diversity of views on our very large subcommittee, back on July 10 we voted unanimously to report the bill to the full Appropriations Committee, and 2 days later, each and every one of the 29 members of that committee voted to report this bill to the Senate.

This bill has broad, bipartisan support because it addresses pragmatically the very real housing and transportation needs of American families across all regions of the Nation. Rather than endorse the many arbitrary and destructive cuts called for in the administration's budget, we worked in this bill to target our limited resources on getting citizens out of traffic jams and home to their families; keeping our low-income tenants in their homes and out of shelters; providing housing for the elderly and the disabled; investing in crumbling infrastructure, and improving safety on our runways, highways, and railways.

Much has been said recently about a looming battle between the White House and Congress over spending priorities and the funding levels in these appropriations bills. There is no question that the bill before us spends more than the level sought by the Bush administration, both for transportation and for housing. Yet this bill still has broad bipartisan support, and I believe the Senate would benefit greatly from a detailed explanation as to why that is the case.

More than any other reason, this bill spends more than the administration's budget because it rejects many of the most punitive and misguided cuts that were proposed by the White House. The President's budget that he sent us for fiscal year 2008 proposed cuts across the board. Those included cuts that would put low-income tenants and their children on the streets. It proposed cuts that would undermine transportation safety, especially when it comes to aviation and railway safety; cuts that would worsen congestion on our Nation's roadways and runways; and cuts that undermine the community development efforts of mayors and county executives and Governors across this country.

So this bill spends more than the President's budget, not because it includes vast new spending initiatives but because it simply refuses to acquiesce to the President's reckless cuts. These are the very same cuts that have been proposed in recent years by the Bush administration and rightly rejected by the then-Republican-led Congress. That is why every member of the Appropriations Committee voted to support this bill.

In addition to restoring funding to the cuts that were proposed in the President's budget, there are a limited number of selected funding increases in