

Meeting this impressive new demand for public transportation services is no small task for our transit agencies. While recordbreaking numbers of commuters are riding transit, the cost of fuel and power for public transportation has sharply increased, and the slowing economy means less local money is available to increase or even maintain transit services. This bill provides much needed support to public transportation agencies and increases incentives for commuters to choose transit options, thereby reducing their transportation-related energy consumption and reliance on foreign oil.

A primary objective of H.R. 6052, the "Saving Energy Through Public Transportation Act of 2008," is to reduce the United States dependence on foreign oil by encouraging more people to use public transportation. According to a recent study, if Americans used public transit at the same rate as Europeans—for roughly 10 percent of their daily travel needs—the United States could reduce its dependence on imported oil by more than 40 percent, nearly equal to the 550 million barrels of crude oil that we import from Saudi Arabia each year.

To increase public transportation use across the United States, H.R. 6052, the "Saving Energy Through Public Transportation Act of 2008," authorizes \$1.7 billion in funding over 2 years for transit agencies nationwide that are temporarily reducing transit fares or expanding transit services to meet the needs of the growing number of transit commuters. The National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission, established to develop a national transportation vision to address surface transportation needs for the next 50 years, calls for a total annual investment of between \$26 billion to \$46 billion for public transportation. We consider this bill an important first step in increasing our investment in public transit infrastructure.

H.R. 6052 also increases the Federal share for clean fuel and alternative fuel transit bus, ferry or locomotive-related equipment or facilities, thereby assisting transit agencies in reducing transportation-related emissions. In fiscal years 2008 and 2009, the increased Federal share for these activities is 100 percent of the net capital cost of the project. Public transportation use is estimated to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 37 million metric tons annually. When a solo commuter switches from a single occupancy vehicle to a transit commute, this single mode shift can reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 20 pounds per day—more than 4,800 pounds in a year. This provision will allow American commuters to further decrease their greenhouse gas emissions.

H.R. 6052 also extends the Federal transit pass benefits program to require that all Federal agencies offer transit passes to Federal employees throughout the United States. Current law requires that all Federal agencies within the National Capital Region implement a transit pass fringe benefits program and offer employees transit passes. This requirement originated from Executive Order 13150, signed by President Clinton on April 21, 2000. The Executive Order also required the Department of Transportation, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of Energy to implement a nationwide 3-year pilot transit pass benefit program for all qualified Federal employees of those agencies.

Data from the Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority covering the first 3 years of the National Capital Region transit pass program show that more than 15,500 automobiles were eliminated from roads in the Washington, DC, area as a result of Federal employees shifting their travel mode away from single occupancy vehicle, SOV, use to public transportation use for commuting to work. The Department of Transportation estimated that emissions and energy savings from this mode shift included the reduction of more than 8 million gallons of gasoline, nearly 40,000 tons of carbon dioxide, and over 675 tons of carbon monoxide for each of the 3 years that they studied. DOT also studied the results of the nationwide pilot program and found that, within the three covered agencies, 11 percent of the participants shifted their travel mode away from SOV use to public transportation use for commuting to work, again producing marked energy and emissions savings, reduced congestion and cleaner air.

The Department of Transportation has determined that both the National Capital Region transit benefits program and the nationwide pilot program produce marked energy and emissions savings, congestion reductions, and cleaner air, and recommends that the transit pass benefits program be extended to Federal employees nationwide. This provision will implement the Department's recommendation by providing more Federal employees the incentives to choose transit options, thereby reducing their transportation-related energy consumption and reliance on foreign oil.

H.R. 6052 also creates a pilot program to allow the amount expended by private providers of public transportation by vanpool for the acquisition of vans to be used as the non-Federal share for matching Federal transit funds in five communities. Under current law, only local public funds may be used as local match; this pilot program would allow private funds to be used in limited circumstances.

The provision will require the private providers of vanpool services to use revenues they receive in providing public transportation, in excess of their operating costs, for the purpose of acquiring vans, excluding any amounts that the providers may have received in Federal, State, or local government assistance for such acquisition. The Department of Transportation will implement and oversee the vanpool pilot projects, and will report back to Congress on the costs, benefits, and efficiencies of the vanpool projects.

Finally, H.R. 6052, the "Saving Energy Through Public Transportation Act of 2008," increases the Federal share for additional parking facilities at end-of-line fixed guideway stations. This provision increases the total number of transit commuters who will have access to those facilities.

Public transportation use in all of its forms—bus, rail, vanpool, ferry, streetcar, and subway ridership to name a few—saves fuel, reduces emissions, and saves money. The direct petroleum savings attributable to current public transportation use in the United States is 1.4 billion gallons per year. When the secondary effects of transit availability on travel are also taken into account, the equivalent of 4.2 billion gallons of gasoline is saved annually—more than 11 million gallons of gasoline per day.

Increasing public transportation use by providing incentives for commuters to choose transit options, thereby reducing their transpor-

tation-related energy consumption and reliance on foreign oil, as well as decreasing their greenhouse gas emissions, is a priority of this Congress.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass this important legislation.

HONORING WILLIAM KEARNEY OF LAKE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Bill Kearney, who is being honored by the Lakeside Wellness Foundation for his years of service to the citizens of Lake County. Mr. Kearney is being recognized for his outstanding contributions to Sutter Lakeside Hospital as well as the community at large.

Bill is deservedly known as "Mr. Community." Having previously served in the US Army in both Korea and Vietnam, he has since served on the Board of Sutter Lakeside since 1999 and has been President of the Board since 2005. He has given countless hours to the hospital over the years and always goes the extra mile, be it helping with physician recruitment or serving as a community ambassador. He also serves as the emcee of the annual Lake County Stars awards, lending his considerable charm and wit to what is always a memorable evening.

Mr. Kearney is not only a hero in the Lake County non-profit and health care communities, but a business leader as well. He owns two successful pharmacies and hosts a radio show discussing health issues. Bill is equally generous with his time and abilities in the business community. He has served two terms as President of the Chamber of Commerce and is affiliated with all local service organizations. He also leads the co-op for small pharmacies in Northern California.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, it is my distinct pleasure to recognize Bill Kearney for his many years of service. He has been a model citizen and leader in Lake County, his presence has enriched the lives of everyone in our community and I am honored to call him a friend. I join his wife Dana, four children and twelve grandchildren in wishing him continued success and fulfillment.

HONORING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF ISRAEL

HON. DANIEL LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Mr. LIPINSKI. Madam Speaker, sixty years ago today, as the world was still recovering from the horrors of the Second World War and the devastation of the Holocaust, the modern state of Israel was founded.

In the sixty years since its founding, Israel has overcome numerous security threats while serving as a model democracy in the Middle East and a beacon of freedom in the region. Importantly, Israel has also been one of America's strongest and most steadfast allies.

In fact, the strong relationship between our two countries dates back to Israel's very founding.

Within eleven minutes of Israel's declaration of Independence, President Harry Truman formally recognized the new nation and established America as Israel's first and closest friend.

Today, the strong partnership between our two countries continues through commerce, educational links, familial ties, and joint efforts to stabilize and bring peace to the Middle East.

So as we mark this important date and pay tribute to Israel's founding, let us also recommit to a continued friendship and partnership with Israel and a renewed dedication to securing a lasting peace in the Middle East.

CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENTS BY OUR FRIEND AND ALLY ISRAEL

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, as we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the founding of Israel, I am proud that the United States and Israel have built a strong, unique, and special relationship.

It took the United States, under President Harry Truman's leadership, only 11 minutes after Israel had been declared a state to officially welcome her into the community of nations. After, President Truman said, "I had faith in Israel before it was established, I have faith in it now. I believe it has a glorious future before it—not just another sovereign nation, but as an embodiment of the great ideals of our civilization."

The creation of the State of Israel was a bold step in May of 1948. The first prime minister of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, once said that "courage is a special kind of knowledge: the knowledge of how to fear what ought to be feared and how not to fear what ought not to be feared." It is from such courage that the State of Israel was formed and from which Israel continues to maintain its vibrant and strong democracy today. We can all learn examples from the struggles that the citizens have endured and the grief they have overcome to remain a democratic outpost in the Middle East.

The achievements of the Israeli people and their government over the past 60 years are remarkable. For instance, when it comes to education, well over half of Israelis aged 20-24 are enrolled in one of the country's institutions of post-secondary or higher education. Healthcare is guaranteed by law—for all Israelis—from infancy to old age. As for agriculture, the country produces almost 70 percent of its food requirements—from land that was once not remotely capable of sustaining crops or livestock. Finally, despite the growing demand for expansion of farmland and industrial centers, the Israeli government has set aside land for 150 nature reserves and 65 national parks throughout the country, with sev-

eral hundred additional sites in planning. While these achievements are each remarkable in their own right, they are only a sample of what Israel has accomplished in a mere 60 years.

As a lifelong supporter of our most important ally in the Middle East, I have had the pleasure of traveling to Israel. These visits have only reinforced my strong conviction that Israel, like all states in the world, has the right to respond in self-defense to protect her sovereignty and citizens.

As chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations Special Intelligence Oversight Panel, I know that Israel has been a loyal and cooperative partner in combating terrorism. Our country has a lot to learn from Israel and her experiences with acts of terrorism.

As Israel continues to face threats from her neighbors, America must continue to stand with her. Additionally, a strong American relationship with Israel is essential for regional stability. We have a responsibility to help Israel stand up to and prevent terrorist attacks. Last year, I supported \$2.4 billion in military assistance for Israel, and will continue to support additional U.S. foreign assistance for Israel.

I also strongly believe that the United States must remain actively engaged in ensuring a peaceful settlement of the current conflict between the two parties.

It is essential that the United States become more involved diplomatically to help diffuse conflicts like the one in Lebanon two summers ago and help move the parties to a broader settlement that will defang the militant and terrorist factions and will result in a peaceful Middle East and a viable two states.

Much work remains unfinished. We are all troubled by the daily rocket attacks by Hamas from Gaza against innocent civilians in Israel. Israel clearly has a right to defend herself against these deadly attacks. This has been yet another unique year for Israel, full of challenges that were admirably met.

I am pleased to join with the Jewish community of New Jersey and all Americans in celebrating 60 years of Israel's existence as a beacon of democracy and hope in the Middle East. I look forward to future anniversaries, and to the day when Israel and her citizens can live in peace without fear.

CREDIT AND DEBIT CARDS RECEIPT CLARIFICATION ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 13, 2008

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support for H.R. 4008, the Credit and Debit Card Receipt Clarification Act. This is common sense legislation that will free hundreds of businesses, from large corporations to "mom & pop" operations from legal damages that could total hundreds of millions or even billions of dollars for their harmless failure to redact expiration dates from their credit and debit card receipts.

This bill only provides relief to companies that otherwise complied with the Fair and Accurate Credit Transaction Act, also known as FACTA, it preserves the right for a customer to sue if real harm or fraud has occurred and it does not eliminate a business's obligation to properly truncate the account number or to redact the expiration date from its receipts.

I think it is important to point out that we are talking about businesses that did everything they thought they were required to do to comply with the new standards set forth by FACTA. These are businesses that purchased new machines, installed new hardware and incurred the expense of producing what they thought or were told was a compliant credit or debit card receipt. These are businesses that when they were told that they had to truncate the account numbers of credit and debit cards, they did so.

One of my constituents, Steven Hanson, is such a business owner. He is the founder and President of B.R. Guest Restaurants. After FACTA was enacted into law, Steve tells me that he and his company spent more than \$300,000 switching out credit card terminals in his restaurant to comply with the new law, only to find out that each and every new receipt he processed could result in a \$100 to \$1,000 fine. Steve tells me that B.R. Guest has a pending lawsuit against his company that could result in a \$100 million liability. This is not a liability that B.R. Guest or many businesses could absorb. Without this relief, B.R. Guest and hundreds of other businesses could be forced to close up shop.

In addition to B.R. Guest Restaurants, Zabars, Fairway Markets, Scholastic Books, Barneys/Jones Apparel Group, Estee Lauder, The Knot.com, Bally's North America, Buy Buy Baby and Ross Stores are among the New York Businesses named in similar lawsuits.

It is also important to note that while the lawsuits filed against these companies are seeking damages totaling in the hundreds of millions, if not billions of dollars, none of the 500 lawsuits that have been filed, make any allegation of consumer harm. Identity theft prevention experts have testified that the truncation of the credit card numbers accomplishes the intent of the statute because a potential fraudster would not be able to perpetrate account fraud without having the entire correct credit card number. The real harm to the consumer would come if Congress does not act. Consumers will be forced to pay higher prices to help these businesses absorb the cost of these lawsuits or will be faced with fewer options as businesses are forced out of business because they can not afford their cost.

This legislation enjoys wide bipartisan support and has been endorsed by The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Restaurant Association, Retail Industry Leaders Association, The National Association of Theater Owners, The International Franchise Association, The National Council of Chain Restaurants and the Food Marketing Institute.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, this is common sense legislation and I urge its adoption.