

connecting the United States by rail from coast to coast.

The transcontinental railroad was born thanks to the support of President Abraham Lincoln. He, along with Civil War leaders, envisioned and planned the creation of the railroad. Not only did the completion of the railroad result in the ability to deliver goods and people across the country, it ultimately bound the East with the West, further unifying the country as the divide between the North and the South was beginning to mend.

The transcontinental railroad was the first of its kind. It was an engineering marvel completed with great precision and speed. The railroad was an engineering wonder and it set the example for how transcontinental railroads would be built across Canada and Russia some 20 to 25 years later.

Completion of the transcontinental railroad created a new sense of wonder and enthusiasm for discovery and entrepreneurship across the country. It set the stage for a great migration of businessmen, created a new frontier for those seeking a new way of life, enabled faster movement of people and goods, and provided the country with a great opportunity to expand the economy.

Today, we are witnessing a rebirth of passenger rail in America. In the same way that the transcontinental railroad was critical to our Nation in the late 19th century, a strong national passenger rail system is vital today. To strengthen intercity passenger rail in this country, I have introduced H.R. 6003, the "Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008." The bill authorizes \$14.4 billion for Amtrak over the next 5 years. The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will mark up the bill next week.

The National Railroad Passenger Corporation, more commonly known as Amtrak, operates a nationwide rail network, serving more than 500 destinations in 46 states over 21,000 miles of routes, with nearly 19,000 employees. Amtrak recently marked the beginning of its 38th year of operation. Our passenger rail service has come a long way since its beginnings in 1971, and has faced many challenges since, but continues to grow stronger with each passing year. Despite uneven Federal investment over the years, Amtrak has persevered, achieving many successes in improved operating efficiency, increased ridership, and higher revenue.

In fact, in FY 2007, Amtrak set a new ridership record for the fifth year in a row, exceeding 25.8 million passengers. At the same time, Amtrak increased ticket revenues by 11 percent to more than \$1.5 billion, a figure that increased for the third straight year. These successes are being enjoyed across Amtrak's entire network. In fiscal year 2007, Amtrak held 56 percent of the air/rail market between New York and Washington and 41 percent of the market share between New York and Boston. This shows that where Amtrak is provided the resources to succeed, it provides a trip-time competitive alternative to air and automobile.

America needs to look toward Amtrak as we address our growing transportation needs. The Department of Transportation describes the problem of congestion on our highways and in the air as "chronic." Amtrak removes almost 8 million cars from the road annually. Airports are experiencing significant delays too, with more than 400,000 flights departing or arriving late in 2006. Amtrak eases air congestion by

eliminating the need for 50,000 fully loaded airplanes each year.

Amtrak is also a substantially more environmentally friendly mode of transportation than automobiles or airplanes. According to the World Resources Institute, rail transportation produces 57 percent less carbon emissions than airplanes, and 40 percent less carbon emissions than cars.

Mr. Speaker, I lend my strong support to the commemoration of National Train Day on May 10, 2008, and encourage all of my colleagues to use this excellent opportunity to reflect on the benefits that Amtrak and intercity passenger rail provide to our Nation.

Mr. BOOZMAN. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1176.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

CONGRATULATING WINONA STATE UNIVERSITY ON WINNING THE 2008 DIVISION II MEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1133) congratulating Winona State University on winning the 2008 Division II men's basketball championships, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1133

Whereas on March 29, 2008, the Winona State University Warriors of Winona, Minnesota, won the 2008 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division II National Basketball Championship with a victory over Georgia's Augusta State University, with a score of 87-76 in Springfield, Massachusetts;

Whereas Jonte Flowers was named the 2008 NCAA Division II Elite Eight Tournament's Most Outstanding Player for his performance throughout the tournament;

Whereas Jonte Flowers also holds the NCAA Division II record for player career steals, with 414;

Whereas the Warriors finished the 2008 season with a record of 38-1, an NCAA Division II record for most victories in a season by an NCAA men's basketball team;

Whereas over the past 3 years, the team's overall record is an impressive 105-6;

Whereas the senior class, which includes John Smith, Jonte Flowers, Quincy Hender-

son, Shane Neiss, and Brent Riese, accrued a record of 129-17 in their 4 years of play together at Winona State University;

Whereas John Smith was named the NCAA Division II Player of the Year by four separate organizations, which include 2 consecutive years of recognition from Basketball Times and DII Bulletin, as well as the National Association of Basketball Coaches, for his outstanding performance throughout the year;

Whereas John Smith also holds the NCAA Division II record for consecutive starts, with 146;

Whereas the Winona State University Warriors men's basketball team boasts two national titles from 2006 and 2008, three straight North Central Region titles from 2006, 2007, and 2008, four straight regular season championships, and three straight conference tournament championships;

Whereas head coach Mike Leaf has been named the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference Coach of the Year four times and National Coach of the Year two times; and

Whereas in 2006 and 2007, the team broke the NCAA Division II consecutive win record by winning 57 straight games: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) congratulates the Winona State University Warriors for winning the 2008 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division II Basketball National Championship; and

(2) recognizes Bryce Welch, Brad Meyer, Travis Whipple, Quincy Henderson, Curtrel Robinson, Ben Fischer, Brent Riese, Jonte Flowers, David Johnson, Jon Walburg, Luke Doedens, Max Hintz, Josh Korth, Matt Smith, Shane Neiss, Ryan Gargaro, John Smith, Mike Muller, head coach Mike Leaf, and all other coaches and support staff who were instrumental in this achievement.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) and the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. I ask unanimous consent that Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material on House Resolution 1133.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Minnesota?

There was no objection.

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Today we're here to congratulate a basketball team at Winona State University, but I think it's important to put it into the greater context of what our young people are doing here.

I'll talk a little bit in just a minute about the great accomplishments of what this team did, but I think it's equally important to understand the institution that they're coming from. Winona State University is in the town of Winona, Minnesota. That's on the western bank of the Mississippi River.

Winona State University was founded at the same time as the State of Minnesota was founded. We're celebrating our sesquicentennial in the North Star State this year. And Winona State University was the first teachers college

west of the Mississippi River. That institution, that public institution of higher learning has fulfilled its calling and its mission for the last 150 years, at the highest quality of achievement that we could ask for. I congratulate President Judith Ramaley for her work. I also congratulate Vice President Jim Schmidt. He's the Vice President of Advancement.

There are some things going on at Winona State University, like the National Child Protection Training Center, the work they're doing educating our teachers, nurses, law enforcement officials that I think are equally as important.

But I think it's important to understand that in a well-balanced education like our student athletes are getting at Winona State University, stressing the extra-curriculars and the teamwork that goes to that, and the striving for excellence is important, so I'd like to talk just a bit about this time.

A little over a month ago, during our own March Madness in Minnesota, Winona State defeated Augusta State 87-76. This was the second national championship in the last 3 years, and three straight trips to the national championship. We're really proud of this dynasty that's being developed amongst these student athletes.

In addition to their national championship, they've won nine conference titles in a row. They've also won three straight Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference titles.

In 2006 and 2007 they broke the Division II record of 57 straight victories. In 2008 the Warriors finished with a record of 38-1, an NCAA Division II record. Over the past 3 years, their record is 105-6.

Five seniors have been together throughout this entire run, and they should be congratulated. They'll all be graduating this year, and I'd like to congratulate each one of them individually. John Smith, Jonte Flowers, Quincy Henderson, Shane Neiss and Brent Riese. Together, those five individuals compiled a 129-17 record in 4 years.

Of course all of this wouldn't be possible without the leadership of coach Mike Leaf, who's done an outstanding job of working with the character as well as the accomplishments of these fine young athletes. I'm extremely proud to have Winona State University in the district that I represent; extremely proud of the student athletes that represent Southern Minnesota so well.

I ask today for, hopefully, unanimous consent from my colleagues to recognize them on this great achievement.

I would also make, as a side note, Winona State boasts some famous alumnas. One of them is my colleague on the minority side, Mrs. BACHMANN, and we're very proud to have her here, and Winona State for producing our Congresswoman from up in the Sixth District.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I thank and congratulate the gentleman from Minnesota with respect to Winona State University's great year and great record over the last 3 years.

By sort of coincidence, I happened to watch part of this game on television, I think the last half of the game, and they had a remarkable comeback as they beat the Augusta State University team. They are really a superb basketball team.

I had the pleasure of playing a little bit of Division III basketball many years ago. And either basketball's improved tremendously in those intervening years, or Division II is a heck of a lot better than Division III. These guys could really play basketball, and they were extremely impressive in terms of what they did.

I also congratulate the young men for their academic prowess. This is a college of some distinction. For that, they and all administrators deserve congratulations as well. We congratulate the head coach, Mike Leaf, who was named the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference coach of the year four times, and national coach of the year two times.

This is a team which has won two national titles and three straight North Central Region titles from 2006, 2007 and 2008, and four straight regular season championships and three straight conference tournament championships. Not many teams at any level of sports can make claims such as that.

The college, as the sponsor has indicated, is a significant institution in Minnesota, and does a wonderful job in its programs preparing young people for the rest of their lives.

We congratulate the President, Judith Ramaley, and the Athletic Director, Larry Holstad, the head coach, as I've indicated, and all the friends and supporters of a fine university which had a tremendous year this year in basketball. But just recognizing the tremendous school which they are and for which they deserve great credit.

I urge everybody to support the resolution, and I yield back the balance of our time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1133, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

AMERICORPS WEEK

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1173) recognizing AmeriCorps Week.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1173

Whereas the AmeriCorps national service program, since its inception in 1994, has proven to be a highly effective way to engage Americans in meeting a wide range of local needs, national response directives, and promote the ethic of service and volunteering;

Whereas over \$5,000,000,000 in AmeriCorps funds invested in nonprofit, community, educational, and faith-based community groups since 1994 have leveraged hundreds of millions of dollars in additional funds and in-kind donations from other sources;

Whereas each year, AmeriCorps provides opportunities for 75,000 citizens across the Nation to give back in an intensive way to our districts, our States, and our Nation;

Whereas a total of 542,000 citizens since 1994 across the Nation have taken the AmeriCorps pledge to "get things done for America" by becoming AmeriCorps members;

Whereas those same individuals have served a total of more than 705,000,000 hours nationwide, helping to improve the lives of our Nation's most vulnerable citizens, protect our environment, contribute to our public safety, respond to disasters, and strengthen our educational system;

Whereas AmeriCorps members last year recruited and supervised more than 1,700,000 community volunteers, demonstrating AmeriCorps value as a powerful volunteer catalyst and force multiplier;

Whereas AmeriCorps members nationwide, in return for their service, have earned nearly \$1,430,000,000 to use to further their own educational advancement at our Nation's colleges and universities;

Whereas AmeriCorps members, after their terms of service end, remain engaged in our communities as volunteers, teachers, and nonprofit professional in disproportionately high levels;

Whereas AmeriCorps members served 4,100 nonprofit organizations, schools, and faith-based and community organizations last year; and

Whereas 2008's AmeriCorps Week, observed May 11 through May 18, is an opportune time for the people of the United States to salute current and former AmeriCorps members for their powerful impact, thank all of AmeriCorps' community partners in our Nation who make the program possible and bring more Americans into service: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) encourages all citizens to join in a national effort to salute AmeriCorps members and alumni, and raise awareness about the importance of national and community service;

(2) acknowledges the significant accomplishments of the AmeriCorps members, alumni, and community partners;

(3) recognizes the important contributions to the lives of our citizens by AmeriCorps members; and

(4) encourages citizens of all ages to consider serving in AmeriCorps.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) each will control 20 minutes.