

The result was announced—yeas 68, nays 26, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 276 Leg.]

YEAS—68

Akaka	Gregg	Nelson (NE)
Alexander	Hagan	Nelson (FL)
Baucus	Harkin	Pryor
Begich	Inhofe	Reed
Bennett	Inouye	Reid
Bennett	Johnson	Roberts
Bingaman	Kaufman	Rockefeller
Bond	Kerry	Sanders
Boxer	Klobuchar	Schumer
Brownback	Kohl	Sessions
Burris	Landrieu	Shaheen
Cardin	Lautenberg	Shelby
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Levin	Tester
Cochran	Lieberman	Udall (CO)
Collins	Lincoln	Udall (NM)
Conrad	Lugar	Voinovich
Dodd	McConnell	Warner
Dorgan	Menendez	Webb
Durbin	Merkley	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Mikulski	Wicker
Franken	Murkowski	Wyden
Gillibrand	Murray	

NAYS—26

Barrasso	DeMint	Kyl
Bayh	Ensign	LeMieux
Bunning	Enzi	McCain
Burr	Feingold	McCaskill
Chambliss	Graham	Risch
Coburn	Grassley	Snowe
Corker	Hatch	Thune
Cornyn	Isakson	Vitter
Crapo	Johanns	

NOT VOTING—5

Brown	Cantwell	Specter
Byrd	Hutchison	

The motion was agreed to.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I move to reconsider the vote and to lay that motion upon the table.

The motion to lay upon the table was agreed to.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:50 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. WEBB).

TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2010—Continued

Mr. WICKER. 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. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

AMENDMENTS NOS. 2370, 2371, AND 2372

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I have decided to come to the Chamber in my capacity as chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee to address a number of Coburn amendments that he has either laid down or intends to lay down, and I hope we can work to defeat these amendments, as I understand them, and I want to say why.

We have a very important relationship with our States when it comes to transportation and highway programs, and we work with them on many aspects of transportation. We have something called the Transportation Enhancement Program. It is a TE program. It was created in 1991 in the ISTEA bill, and one of the purposes was to encourage investments in many areas that have been overlooked. I want to give you an example of those.

Since 1992, because of this TE Program, over \$11.5 billion has been made available to the States for some very important purposes that deal with safety, that deal with making sure our highways are kept in a condition we want to see them kept. I will give more examples of the funding. But over that period of time, that \$11.5 billion has created 399,000 jobs. Let me repeat that. This special program Senator COBURN wants to strip—and he wants to strip parts of it—is responsible for 399,000 jobs since 1992. I am here to say—because I know my friend, Senator MURRAY, agrees with me—of all the times not to visit more job losses on our people, it certainly is now. Jobs are key, and the Coburn amendment is a jobs killer.

Let me tell you about the various areas that fall under this program he is taking the ax to.

Environmental mitigation. This includes projects that address water pollution due to highway runoff. We just read a front-page story in the New York Times where we see terrible water pollution affecting our children. They had a picture of a child who has been drinking water that really has not been tested in the right way according to the law. This child's teeth all have to be capped because his teeth rotted. So we want to make sure we do not let that runoff get into waterways.

Also, we hear about wildlife mortality. Anyone who has seen the result of a crash between a car and, let's say, a deer on a road knows this is a horrific situation for all parties, and it is a matter of life or death for drivers and their passengers. That is what some of this money is used for and that is what our friend, Senator COBURN, wants to take the ax to, as far as I understand it.

Then there are facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists and safety and educational activities for pedestrians. Residents of my State are strong supporters of spending transportation funds on bicycle paths and pedestrian facilities. We all know walking and biking are forms of transportation which should not be cut but, rather, encouraged.

Other categories of TE, the transportation enhancements, that it is my understanding Senator COBURN wants to cut: acquisition of scenic easements and scenic history sites, including historic battlefield sites. Does he think that little of the history of the country that he wants to take an ax to this, scenic or historic highway programs,

including the provision of tourist and welcome center facilities? Again, tourism is one of the things we need to build up. There are many millions of jobs related to tourism, landscaping, and other scenic beautification. We all know and take pride in our communities. Highway beautification, to me, is a key part of our quality of life—historic preservation, rehabilitation, and operation of historic transportation buildings.

We have seen some of those. We have seen them in places as far flung as New York to places in St. Louis, MO, to San Francisco, CA—preservation of abandoned railway cars, including conservation and use of the cars for pedestrian or bike trails; inventory control and removal of outdoor advertising and archeological planning and research. Senator COBURN would have us believe that transportation enhancements are a low-priority project. These are investments that put hundreds of thousands of Americans to work. These are investments that improve safety, prevent pollution, save fuel, and improve the quality of life for millions of Americans.

I wonder if Senator MURRAY and I can engage for a minute here through the Chair.

What is the timing of when these amendments will be voted on? Can the chairman tell me?

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, in response to the Senator from California, the Senator from Oklahoma has offered a number of amendments. We are hoping to debate them this afternoon and vote on them tomorrow morning.

Mrs. BOXER. May I ask, through the Chair, if the chairman of the subcommittee would allow me to be heard for a minute before we have a vote on any of these amendments that deal with transportation enhancement programs.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, we will make sure, as we put together the order for tomorrow, the Senator can be heard before the votes occur.

Mrs. BOXER. I thank the Senator.

I yield the floor.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

AMENDMENT NO. 2366, AS MODIFIED

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment and call up amendment No. 2366, as modified.

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

The clerk will report.

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Mississippi [Mr. WICKER] proposes an amendment numbered 2366, as modified.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To permit Amtrak passengers to safely transport firearms and ammunition in their checked baggage)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. (a) FUNDING LIMITATION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, amounts made available in this Act for the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) shall immediately cease to be available if after March 31, 2010, Amtrak prohibits the secure transportation of firearms on passenger trains.

(b) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term “secure transportation of firearms” means—
(1) if an Amtrak station accepts checked baggage for a specific Amtrak route, Amtrak passengers holding a ticket for such route are allowed to place an unloaded firearm or starter pistol in a checked bag on such route if—

(A) before checking the bag or boarding the train, the passenger declares to Amtrak, either orally or in writing, that the firearm is in his or her bag and is unloaded;

(B) the firearm is carried in a hard-sided container;

(C) such container is locked; and

(D) only the passenger has the key or combination for such container; and

(2) Amtrak passengers are allowed to place small arms ammunition for personal use in a checked bag on an Amtrak route if the ammunition is securely packed—

(A) in fiber, wood, or metal boxes; or

(B) in other packaging specifically designed to carry small amounts of ammunition.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I rise today in support of amendment No. 2366, as modified, which I have offered on behalf of millions of law-abiding gun owners across the country.

Earlier this year, I offered an amendment to the budget that would have limited certain budget opportunities to Amtrak, unless this federally subsidized agency enacted policies to accommodate passengers' second amendment rights. The amendment I offered passed by a bipartisan vote of 63 to 35, but it was not included in the final version of the legislation when it returned from conference.

Therefore, I am here on the floor to try again. In our country today, airline passengers may transport firearms and ammunition in secure checked baggage when declared during the check-in process. But, on the other hand, Amtrak passengers are not permitted to do likewise. This means that sportsmen who wish to use an Amtrak train for hunting trips cannot do so because they are not allowed to bring a firearm in checked luggage—something that is done every day at airports across our country.

I want to emphasize that this amendment only deals with secured and checked luggage, as checked baggage on Amtrak trains. Law-abiding gun owners should not be penalized for seeking alternative means of travel. At one time, Amtrak accepted firearms in

secure checked baggage, but this policy was changed in 2001.

The commonsense amendment before us today is straightforward. It simply says that if Amtrak continues to deny the right of gun owners to securely transport firearms in checked luggage, the rail line will no longer receive a Federal subsidy of \$1.55 billion. At the request of the leadership of the committee, I have modified my amendment to make it effective only after March 31, 2010, in order to give the agency adequate time in which to comply with this amendment.

I want my colleagues to know that the amendment before us today mirrors current TSA requirements to check a firearm for air travel. I must say these requirements are detailed and strict. For example, should my amendment pass, the following requirements must be met:

No. 1, a passenger who wishes to transport a firearm must be travelling on a route that accepts checked luggage.

No. 2, the passenger must declare the firearm before boarding the train.

No. 3, the firearm must be unloaded and stored in a hard-side container that is locked, as is required on the airlines.

No. 4, only the passenger can have the key or combination for the container.

This was done successfully by Amtrak prior to 2001, without incident. Regional rail lines, such as Alaska Railroad Corporation, allow firearms, as I am trying to do in this amendment, and that is done currently in Alaska Railroad Corporation, again, without incident.

It is sometimes much more convenient for sportsmen to travel by rail, particularly in rural and remote parts of the country. The Alaska Railroad Corporation knows there is no need to show prejudice to lawful American sportsmen. That is why their travellers may transport firearms in checked luggage, and that is why we are asking nothing more than that and nothing less than that of the government-controlled Amtrak system.

I might also add that spending is certainly out of control in Washington, and it is hard for me to imagine Congress considering providing over \$1.5 billion to Amtrak, while the rail line intentionally limits its revenue and chooses not to receive passenger miles from this specific and law-abiding segment of travelers.

Americans should not have their second amendment rights restricted for any reason, particularly if they choose to travel on America's federally subsidized rail line.

A vote in support of this amendment is a vote in support of the second amendment and for the right of gun owners across America. I urge adoption of the amendment.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. UDALL of Colorado). Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2376

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside any pending amendment and call up amendment No. 2376.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Louisiana [Mr. VITTER] proposes an amendment numbered 2376.

Mr. VITTER. I ask unanimous consent the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To affirm the continuing existence of the community service requirements under section 12(c) of the United States Housing Act of 1937)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available in this Act shall be used to restrict implementation or enforcement of the community service requirements under section 12(c) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437j(c)).

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, my amendment, No. 2376, is very simple and straightforward. To understand it, we need to go back a little bit, to 1998. In 1998, Congress passed the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act, a law requiring all able-bodied people living in public housing to perform 8 hours per month of community service, with the idea that individuals who are getting this benefit from all of the other taxpayers should give back, should contribute to the community as some partial repayment for the very significant benefit they are getting. I think that concept had—and I certainly hope it still has—widespread consensus, bipartisan support. It has been the law since 1998.

Unfortunately, some folks in Congress—I believe a minority, but some folks in Congress—want to throw this basic, straightforward community service requirement out the window. In fact, in 2001, these proponents actually got language included in the VA/HUD appropriations bill which temporarily, for that one fiscal year, did do away with this community service requirement. It was just that 1 year. That is the only year since 1998 where the requirement was thrown out the window, but it did happen in that year.

Unfortunately, those same folks, like-minded folks, have made the attempt again, and in this year's VA/ HUD appropriations bill on the House side, before a lot of advocates for the community service requirement were

able to take notice, a similar amendment doing away with the community service requirement was passed through the House by voice. Again, this slipped through. The advocates of the community service requirement did not notice; otherwise, they would have demanded a rollcall vote. But it did slip through by voice.

It is very important that we correct that and preserve the community service requirement in the Senate version of the bill so we can also preserve it in the final version of this appropriations bill. This is a very basic, straightforward idea with which I believe the huge majority of the American people agree. It is simply saying: If you are getting a benefit from the taxpayer, you are getting free or highly subsidized public housing, and you are able-bodied, then you should help repay for that benefit by simply devoting 8 hours per month—not per week, 8 hours per month—to community service.

I want to emphasize a few things. No. 1, this applies to fully able-bodied recipients of the benefit only. Exempted residents, for instance, include those who are 62 years old or older, those who are disabled and can certify they cannot comply with the requirement, caretakers of a person with a disability, those engaged in work activities or are exempt from work activities under TANF, family members in compliance with TANF, or the State welfare program's work requirements. That is separate, and they would be exempt and are exempt from this.

Still, according to the Congressional Research Service, after you take all those exempt individuals out, HUD estimates there are approximately 100,000 to 150,000 households that include folks who would have to meet this requirement.

I believe, when you consider the requirement, 8 hours of community service per month, when you consider the exemptions for folks over 62, for folks who have any disability, for folks who are not able-bodied in any way, this public service requirement is truly minimal and thoroughly reasonable. I believe that is why it passed into law in 1998 with broad public and bipartisan support. I believe that is why we should retain it in law today and make sure the House attempt to throw that requirement out the window is not successful.

Public housing authorities are given broad discretion in implementing and enforcing this requirement. There is no absolute penalty for not meeting this requirement. Folks are not immediately thrown out of their public housing. All of this has been done in an as modest, frankly, and absolutely reasonable way as possible. I urge my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans, to retain this important part of present law, to retain this commonsense approach that a wide majority, a broad majority of the American people support. I certainly hope this amendment could be accepted or, if not, retained by

a good vote on the floor of the Senate that is overwhelming and bipartisan.

With that, I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator withhold the request for a quorum call?

Mr. VITTER. I will.

Mrs. MURRAY. The Senator from Louisiana offers an amendment that makes sure the community service requirement for people living in public housing remains in effect. This includes part of the existing law and is currently being enforced by public housing authorities. What the amendment of the Senator does is simply restate current law. I will be happy to accept it. If the Senator is willing, we can take it on a voice vote at the present time. I am willing to move forward with it.

Mr. VITTER. I will be happy to consider that offer and get back to the distinguished Senator. My only concern is we have as much ammunition as possible to retain this provision in conference, which a very good rollcall vote could perhaps give us. That is my only concern, since the House version of the bill has taken this language out. I will be happy to consider that offer and personally follow up with the distinguished Senator.

Mrs. MURRAY. Again, we are happy to accept the amendment right now. If the Senator wants to have a vote, if we can work out a time to do that, I am happy to do that as well.

Mr. VITTER. I yield my time and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to give actually a little bit of a history lesson, to look back and also look forward. I ask my colleagues to join me in looking back some 300-and-almost-75 years. Roughly at that time the first Swedes and Finns sailed to America on a couple of boats, one of which was called the Kalmar Nyckel.

The first Swedes and Finns came to shore—actually, they came up the Delaware Bay, up into the Delaware River, and they took a left turn at an uncharted river and decided to name it after the child Queen of Sweden, naming the river the “Christina River.” They landed their boats at a place which we now call The Rocks and decided to name that area the “Colony of New Sweden.” The first Swedes, the first Finns in America came ashore in what is now really Wilmington, DE. For the first year, they never called it Wilmington, they called it the Colony of New Sweden.

They came by ships, and for about the next 300 years, a lot of ships were

built along the banks of the Christina River, especially during the period from 1945 to 1946 during the heart of World War II. Among the ships that were built there were destroyer escorts, troop landing ships, and a variety of other ships that helped to win the war, helped to win World War II.

When World War II was at its most robust, fullest form, we had 10,000 people who worked on the banks of the Christina River building those ships. A few years after the war ended, what had been a vibrant shipbuilding area along the Christina River dried up, the activity went away. The war was won, and what had been a vibrant shipbuilding area became, over time, a decaying industrial wasteland with relatively little new activity.

In the 1960s, I-95 was built up the northeast corridor of our country, the mid-Atlantic part of our country, and it literally cut Wilmington, DE, in half. Off to the right, to the east of I-95, was the Christina River, and add to that the northeast corridor, the Amtrak main lines between Washington and Boston. The main line of Amtrak also sat between I-95 and the Christina River and served to make it difficult for people even to access the river, almost hard for them to even know it was there.

I became Governor in 1993, and toward the end of that year, I was visited by a former Governor, Russ Peterson, and by a former president of the University of Delaware.

They said: We have been thinking of an idea. We have actually been working under the direction of a joint resolution signed by former Governor Mike Castle to think about what the potential could be for development along the Christina River and the Brandywine Creek not far away. We haven't finished our job. We have had a good start on it, but we need more time. We are about to run out of time under the joint resolution. We wonder if we can have a little more time to think it through.

I said: Hey, look, I am up to my eyeballs in alligators. I have been Governor for less than a year. You guys take as much time as you need.

They went away, and I wasn't sure I would ever see them again or talk to them again. As it turns out, in about 6 months they came back, and they said: Do you remember our coming in and talking to you?

I said: Yes, I remember that.

They said: We have gone back and done more work on a vision, if you will, of what the Christina River, this industrial wasteland along either side of the river, of what it could be, and we would like to share that with you today.

I said: Have at it.

By that time, I had been Governor about a year and a half, things were settling down, and I was ready to listen. They had these big architect renderings of a riverfront that certainly looked nothing like the Christina River, didn't look at all like an industrial wasteland. There was a river

that was pristine, with parks, walking paths, boats out on the river, museums, restaurants, places for people to live, places for people to work, theaters, museums. And I never will forget—I looked at them. I was blown away by the vision.

I said to former Governor Peterson: Who is going to make all of this happen?

He looked me right in the eye and he said: You are.

I said: Why me?

He said: Well, because you are the Governor.

I said: Well, I love this vision, and let's see if we can't help to realize it.

I think that conversation was in 1994. Anybody who today takes the train up the northeast corridor and stops at the Wilmington train station would say we have made a lot of progress. The place is cleaned up. We actually have walking paths along the river. We have parks. We have beautiful places where people live and condominiums and apartments as well as other homes. We have restaurants and we have museums. We have hope—that is what I am here to talk about today—for a children's science museum along the riverfront. But it is a vision that has been realized. A lot of people come there to eat at restaurants along the riverfront. And the river itself is being cleaned up, the water quality is being cleaned up, and the environmental hazards, and so forth, the waste that was left there has been for the most part cleaned up.

Probably in another month or so, less than a month or so, we are going to open a 250-acre wildlife refuge named after former Governor Peterson, built in partnership with the DuPont Company and the Nature Education Center. People will come and just enjoy, literally on the outskirts of the city, a large, urban wildlife refuge with walking paths and see what might have been some 100 years ago or 50 years ago in that place.

About 10 years ago, when I was nearing the end of my time as Governor, my second term, a group of citizens in our State came to see me, and they said they were exited about the riverfront and what was happening there.

They said: You know, Delaware does not have a children's museum.

I think every other State does. We do not. In fact, it turns out there are about 250 children's museums across the country.

They said: We are interested in having a children's museum to go with all of the other attractions on the riverfront.

We talked about it for some time, and I said: I like the idea. I like the concept. But to tell you the truth, I would be a lot more interested in it if it were a children's science museum.

At the time, I was trying to figure out, how do we get kids motivated, excited about science, how do we get them excited about careers in science? It is all well and good, the State is big in tourism, big in financial services, we

have had a great history with the chemical industry, shipbuilding at one time. But in our Nation and in my State, we need more scientists, we need more engineers, we need more people who have facility in mathematics and who are going to go out and become inventors, create things, things of value that will help us, among other things, create jobs in the 21st century. Whether it is in clean energy or conservation or wind, solar, new ways to create nuclear power, we need people with those credentials too.

It starts very young. We have adopted, in my State, rigorous academic standards for math and science, English and social studies, with a real focus on the math and science. We say: This is what we expect you to know and learn and be able to do. And we are going to measure students' progress on that. Most every State has done that. As I said earlier, most every other State has decided it is going to have its own children's museum.

I told the folks who presented their idea to me about a decade ago: If you want me to be involved, if you want me to be as excited as you are, I want to change the focus not just to be a children's museum in Delaware, I want it to be a children's museum that focuses on science. I want young kids in the target audience of 6 to 12 to come here and leave here excited about wanting to be astronauts or wanting to be environmentalists or wanting to create new ways to harness the energy of the Sun or the wind or to find ways to deal with spent fuel rods from nuclear powerplants. That is where my interest is.

Over time, the focus of this concept, this idea of the children's museum, has turned to focus on science, and to date I am told we have raised over \$11 million for the project. We actually have picked out the building. I think they have a lease or a sort of a contract on a large structure right at the bend of the Christina River there in Wilmington, which is where Kahunaville used to be. Kahunaville sort of conveys the idea of a good time, and for many years, people went there and had a really good time. It was a great nightclub with some big acts over the years. Bob Dylan performed there and Hall and Oats, all kinds of people over the years. It is no longer a nightclub; it is an empty building, and it is a large empty building that actually lends itself to being, we think, a terrific site for a science museum for the kids of Delaware.

So far to date we have raised, as I said, over \$11 million. To date, the Federal Government has provided about \$250,000. So out of over \$11 million, less than 3 percent has come from the Federal Government.

I have asked for an appropriation, a directed appropriation, of about another \$198,000, and I appreciate very much the support of the Appropriations Committee to include that amount. If it is included in what we have already appropriated, it would be

about \$450,000 out of a budget of roughly \$11.5 million—roughly 4 percent of the total project. A lot of the money is going to come from the private sector, a fair amount from local sources, State and local sources, as well.

I will give you a flavor of the kinds of exhibits we are going to have there. I will mention the names of some of the sponsors. The DuPont Company has been great, and it is a wonderful environmental company. It has agreed to help sponsor over the next couple of years an exhibit that focuses on environmental issues, I think largely focusing on estuaries. We have a big estuary in the Delaware Bay and not far away in the Chesapeake Bay. This will really excite our kids about the water and preserving the quality of our water and improving the quality of our water. AstraZeneca is going to help us create an exhibit on the human body, something interactive that the kids can really get into and enjoy and learn from. One of our larger banks, JPMorgan Chase, is going to help us with a project to focus on financial literacy. If there is anything that would help us all, young and old, that is, I think the events of the last year or two have pointed this out. We will have exhibits that focus on clean energy, whether it is wind, solar. We will have ways to use wind and solar, to show and demonstrate how we rely on those. We will have an exhibit that will focus on conservation, smart grid, to show how we can be better consumers, smarter consumers. We will have some focus on, among other things, nuclear energy and show how we actually create electricity from nuclear power. Those are some of the dynamics.

Our vision is, that when the kids leave the children's science museum on the banks of the Christina River, they will be juiced, they will be excited, and they will want to come back. But just as importantly, when they go back to class the next day or the next week, they will be thinking about their math assignments and even their science assignments a little bit differently and trying to provide a connection: How is what I am learning in my classroom relevant to what is going on in our world? How is it relevant to what I might be doing as a life work later on when I am finished with school and go out into the world?

We need more scientists, we need more engineers. I know we need both of those. We need people who have a lot of expertise in math. We need people who are going to invent things to help us make this a better world. And for what I think is a fairly modest investment on behalf of the Federal Government—about 4 percent of a much bigger project—I think this is a very good investment, and not just for kids in Delaware but for the kids who are going to graduate from the schools and go on and do things in their life to help all of us in Delaware and across the country and maybe even around the world.

Those are some of the reasons I have asked for this appropriation. I am

grateful to the Congress for supporting this a year ago. When we asked for about \$250,000, it was included. With this money, if we are successful in gaining this appropriation, we will be able to go forward and hopefully actually open the Delaware children's science museum in the spring of next year, which would be a very good thing, not just for us in Delaware, not just for those who visit Delaware, but I think, on a broader scale, for a lot of folks in our country.

I see I have been joined by the former Governor of Virginia, in whose State I visited a number of those children's museums, those science museums. I remember taking our boys, when they were between the ages of 6 and 12, to a couple of them around the country. Just remember, we have one who is a mechanical engineer, at a 4-year college up in Boston, and his little brother—now a very big brother—he is really good in math and a bunch of other things as well, and I think maybe a little bit of that came from those visits all those years ago.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I commend my colleague and good friend from Delaware for his compassionate interest, not only in what sounds like a very worthy project in Delaware, but his constant commitment to making sure we are always looking over that next horizon, whether it is in education or energy issues he has been involved with as a Member of Congress and as a Governor, and now as the senior Senator from Delaware. The project he describes sounds like a good one, and I hope it gets favorable consideration from the Senate. I welcome the chance to support him.

I wanted to take a moment to talk about a project that is already in this very important 2010 Transportation-HUD appropriations bill. I commend the subcommittee chair, the Senator from Washington, and the ranking member for their good work on this bill. There is a certain amount of celebration in this bill for us in the greater Washington region because this Transportation appropriations bill is actually the culmination, in many ways, of an effort that has been ongoing for close to 50 years. Even when your dad served in the other body, one of the things I know he probably experienced was flying into our region, particularly flying into Dulles, and he might have found it difficult to get from Dulles into greater Washington.

One of the most remarkable things that has always stunned me as a Virginian, and as a long-time resident of the national capital area is that we have never had rail or metro linkage from our international gateway airport out at Dulles into our Nation's capital. With this legislation, with actions taken earlier this year, we finally have in place a financing arrangement and the beginnings of construction for the long overdue Dulles Metrorail project.

The Dulles metrorail project is part of a 50-year plan that started with the construction of Dulles Airport. Throughout that time, there was always a reserve. Anybody who made that drive—and I know the Presiding Officer has made that drive many times—has seen the corridor in the middle of the road. That corridor has been reserved for ultimately building out rail, from the existing Washington metro system, all the way to Dulles.

This is a project that my predecessor, John Warner, worked on for years. It was one of his proud accomplishments, finalizing Federal support for this project. I commend his efforts in the past. It is a project I have been involved with for over 20 years, first when I was on the Commonwealth Transportation Board, when we had to preserve that corridor for a metrorail project. I recall, back in the late 1980s and early 1990s, efforts to try to take away that right-of-way so it could be used for additional highway construction. There was always a need to say: No, we have to reserve that. At some point, we will finally get metrorail to Dulles. This has now become a reality.

It was a project I worked on as Governor. There were a number of times we tried to put together a very complex financing arrangement in order to make sure all the partners, State and local and Federal, would step to the plate and do what was right but also do what was terribly important to the national capital region: making sure our international gateway airport is linked to the capital. I am proud to report that earlier this year in March, Secretary LaHood and former Senator Warner and myself, Governor Kaine, Congressman FRANK WOLF, who has been a long-time supporter, got together and signed the final funding arrangement that committed the Federal Government, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and local communities on this critically important project.

It is needed for a variety of reasons. It is needed not only to link international and domestic passengers who come into Dulles to visit our Nation's capital, but this corridor has rapidly become the economic hub of all northern Virginia. Dulles Airport currently serves about 24 million passengers each year. Population in the Dulles corridor is expected to increase by 50 percent and employment to increase by 47 percent by 2030. As someone who I know travels that corridor on a regular basis, you have seen how it has been built up, and there will continue to be the expansion of a great deal of economic activity for all northern Virginia and for the entire Washington area, particularly in the high-tech sector.

This past March, the full funding agreement was signed, and \$900 million over the period of the whole project was committed from Federal funds. But let me make clear it is not only the Federal Government that is stepping up on this critically important project. The Commonwealth of Vir-

ginia has committed to be a major partner in funding. The localities have stepped forward in terms of funding. There have been very creative activities in terms of creating a special taxing district of our local property owners in the region who will benefit from this metrorail extension. They have skin in the game as well. The State is contributing some of the toll revenues from our toll road in the corridor. This is a project, even during these difficult economic times, where the State, the localities, and the Federal Government have stepped up in a major way.

It will be enormously beneficial to our whole region. It will be enormously beneficial to the Commonwealth and to our Nation's capital in terms of the millions of visitors who come in from all over the country and the world. They will have the opportunity not only to take one of those increasingly expensive cabs, but also simply to jump on the train and come into Washington.

There is also another very important reason for continuing this project. The Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project is an important multimodal project with critical homeland security implications. Expanding metrorail into the Dulles corridor is terribly important in terms of evacuation opportunities, should the capital ever be under assault. It is obviously terribly important in economic development activities, in terms of tourism activities. This project is crucial to the well-being of the whole national capital region.

As a matter of fact, earlier today I was out in Tysons Corner, one of our major development areas on the way out to Dulles rail. Although we were caught in some pretty dreadful traffic, it was a little bit of a mixed blessing. Part of the traffic was because construction has actually started on some of the rail stops in the Tysons area that will ultimately relieve not only traffic congestion but will, obviously, decrease greenhouse gases. So this project has added benefits as well, an issue I know is very important to the Presiding Officer in terms of dealing with climate change.

I know there are others in this body who perhaps have raised questions about some of the projects that are included in this 2010 Transportation-HUD appropriations bill. This is one of those projects I can't imagine anyone being critical of. This has been 50 years in the making. Enormous time, effort, and resources have gone into it. The fact that the final funding agreement has now been signed and we actually have broken ground is a time to celebrate. The \$85 million included in this year's appropriations funding for the downpayment and first installment of what is going to be a critical Federal funding stream is a very worthy sum that is going to provide benefits for this region and for our capital for many years to come.

I, again, commend the chair of the Appropriations subcommittee, my colleague and friend, the Senator from

Washington, for her great work on not only this particular Dulles metroraill project, which I believe, as a frequent flier in and out of Dulles, I hope she will be the immediate beneficiary of as well, but to all members of her subcommittee. I thank them for their good work on this bill, this important project, and the many other projects in this legislation.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COCHRAN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, the Senate Appropriations Committee has reported all 12 appropriations bills for fiscal year 2010, and the Senate has considered and passed 4 of those bills. I expect passage of the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development bill we are now considering will be the fifth. I am pleased the full Senate has had the opportunity to consider and debate the policies and priorities embodied in these bills. All Senators have had the opportunity to question the managers and to offer amendments, if they wanted to do so.

By next week, I expect the House and the Senate will be convening conference committees to complete action on the bills that have already passed the Senate. It is a fact, however, there are only 2 weeks remaining in this fiscal year. We will probably need to pass a short-term continuing resolution to keep the remainder of the government running beyond September 30. While we anticipate we will be able to pass such a resolution, I think it is important we complete action on the remaining appropriations bills as soon as possible.

We have sent a letter, dated March 24, to the majority leader of the Senate—suggested by the distinguished Senator from Tennessee, Mr. CORKER, back last March—and in that letter we requested the leadership “allocate an appropriate amount of time for the Senate to consider, vote, and initiate the conference process on each of the 12 appropriations bills independently through a deliberative and transparent process. . . .”

That letter stated a goal of passing 8 of the 12 bills before the August recess. While the Senate did not meet that goal of passing eight bills prior to the recess, I think we did make good progress. I have to congratulate the distinguished chairman from Washington for helping lead the way and helping us achieve that progress. To a degree, we have been hampered by the lateness of the President's budget request and the necessity of waiting for the House to pass the appropriations bills first.

But the House has now passed all of its bills, and we have a window of floor

time available to consider the remaining bills in the Senate. I believe strongly all Members should have the opportunity to consider the bills and participate in this process and offer amendments, if they choose to do so. But with the end of the fiscal year approaching and floor time becoming a precious commodity, we should not have to spend large blocks of time in quorum calls waiting for Senators to offer amendments.

At some point, the bills will have to be taken up and passed one way or another. In the past, this has meant packaging bills together into omnibus bills, and we know how well that is received. Not at all. And all but a few Members lose the opportunity to participate and contribute through the amendment process and debate and influence the outcome of conference reports.

I have concerns about the budget proposed by the President, most of which is embodied in the congressional budget resolution that provides the framework for the appropriations process. I voted for several amendments to the budget resolution that would have reduced spending from the levels proposed by the President. I also voted against the resolution itself. I think the level of debt we have accumulated is alarming.

The fact remains, however, that Congress has approved the President's budget. While an Omnibus appropriations bill would highlight the problems with the President's spending policies, I do not think that course of action would be helpful to the process. By considering the bills individually, though, all Senators will be given an opportunity to have meaningful input and participation in the process, and that is as it should be.

So I look forward to continuing to work with the distinguished chairman, Mr. INOUE, our subcommittee chairs, and our two leaders, and all Senators to complete the appropriations process in an orderly and timely fashion that will reflect credit on the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. NELSON of Nebraska). The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Mississippi for his remarks. As ranking member and former chairman of this committee, he knows full well we work very hard to accomplish and complete these bills and to get them done in a timely fashion. We are working our hearts out to get that done.

To that point, the bill before us, the transportation and housing bill, has now been on the floor of the Senate Thursday afternoon and evening, Friday, Monday, all of today, and we will finish it tomorrow. So for any Senators who are sitting out there with issues, you need to come to the floor and get them resolved. We hope to start a series of votes tomorrow morning to get through a number of the amendments that are out there and finish this so we

can move to the Interior appropriations bill tomorrow.

So, again, for the notification of all Senators, to the point the Senator from Mississippi raised, come to the floor, resolve your disagreements, or help us schedule a vote. We are going to finish this bill tomorrow.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

EMERGENCY SENIOR CITIZENS RELIEF ACT

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I want to touch upon an issue I think has not gotten as much consideration in the Senate as it might; that is, for the first time since 1975, and in the midst of a major recession, senior citizens in our country who are on Social Security will not—unless we act—be receiving a cost-of-living adjustment this year.

Let me repeat that. For the first time since 1975, and while we are in the midst of a major economic recession which is causing havoc with the lives of all of our people, including senior citizens, this year—unless Congress acts—senior citizens will not be getting a cost-of-living adjustment.

Among other things, this would mean monthly Social Security payments would drop for millions of retirees because Medicare prescription drug premiums—the Medicare Part D Program—which are deducted from Social Security payments, are scheduled to increase.

So what we are looking at is that not only will tens of millions of America's seniors not receive any increase in Social Security but many, in fact, will see a reduction because their Social Security checks will go to pay for an increase in Medicare Part D payments. I would suggest in the midst of the worst recession since the Great Depression, we cannot allow that to happen.

Many senior citizens in this country have recently, within the last year or two, seen a significant decline in their savings because of the losses they incurred with the drop in the stock market. Many have seen their pensions disappear. Many have seen the value of their home dramatically diminish. All of this is taking place at a time while poverty among senior citizens is going up. And the number of seniors who are declaring bankruptcy is also increasing.

Most importantly, I think it is imperative that sooner than later we take a hard look to determine how COLAs for Social Security beneficiaries are, in fact, determined. Some years ago, when I was a Member of the House, I introduced legislation to establish a separate index for seniors because the simple reality is, it is wrong to include seniors in the overall index because their needs—how they spend their money—are often very different than how the rest of the population spends their money.

If you are a young person or a middle-aged person and you want to go out and buy a laptop computer today, for example, the odds are you are going to get a pretty good price on that computer, and the price of that computer will be substantially lower than it was a couple years ago. So for you, inflation for your expenditures on technology may well have gone down.

On the other hand, if you are a senior citizen, especially one who does not have a whole lot of money, how are you spending your money? Well, a very significant cost for seniors, obviously, is health care. For those needs Medicare does not cover, the truth is, health care costs, as we all know, are exploding. They are going up.

So if you are a senior, the odds are you are spending a lot more for health care out of your own pocket this year than you did last year. If you are a senior and you get caught in the doughnut hole of Medicare Part D, you are spending a lot of money because prescription drug costs, in many instances, are also going up.

So I think when we take a look at the COLA, we should understand the needs of somebody who is 75 or 80 years of age and how he or she spends their money, from an inflation perspective, is very different from somebody who is 18 years of age or maybe 40 years of age. But be that as it may, there can be no debate that millions of senior citizens today, in the midst of this recession, are hurting very badly. I think we would be doing a great disservice to them by turning our back on their needs and not making sure we are providing some financial support to them.

Therefore, I am asking my colleagues to join me in becoming an original cosponsor of the Emergency Senior Citizens Relief Act, legislation I will be formally introducing on Thursday. Under this legislation, all Social Security recipients, railroad retirees, SSI beneficiaries, and adults receiving veterans benefits will receive a one-time additional check of \$250 in 2010. Since seniors living on fixed incomes are most likely to spend this money—whether it is on health care, whether it is trying to keep warm this winter—this legislation would provide a boost to our economy as it emerges from the economic crisis.

I very much appreciate that my colleague from Vermont, Senator LEAHY, is an original cosponsor, and I hope within the next couple of days we can have more.

For more than three decades, seniors have relied on a cost-of-living adjustment in their Social Security benefits to keep up with their increased expenses. Unfortunately, the current formulation for determining Social Security COLAs, in my view, does not accurately take into account the purchasing needs of today's seniors who often do not buy items such as laptop computers and cellular phones but spend, as I mentioned a moment ago, a disproportionate percentage of their in-

come on health care needs and prescription drugs.

The truth is, what we are proposing now is something very similar to what the Obama administration provided for in the stimulus package. This legislation we are offering is fully paid for by simply applying the Social Security payroll tax to household incomes above \$250,000 and below \$359,000 in 2010.

Under current law, only the first \$106,000 of earned income is subject to the Social Security payroll tax, thus a worker earning \$106,000 pays the same payroll tax as a CEO making \$300 million. This legislation begins to correct this inequity in 2010, while making sure seniors receive a fair increase in benefits next year. I should point out, in terms of this offset, no one in America earning \$250,000 or less would see their payroll taxes go up at all.

So I think this is an important issue. I think seniors all over this country are worried about their financial situation. They want the Congress to pay attention to their needs. I think the one-time financial support of a check of \$250, while not a whole lot of money, would at least help many people not see a reduction in their Social Security checks and would be of real help.

Mr. President, with that, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar Nos. 416, 417, 423, 424, 425, and 426; that the nominations be confirmed en bloc, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table en bloc; that no further motions be in order; that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; and that the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

The nominations considered and confirmed en bloc are as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Steven M. Dettelbach, of Ohio, to be United States Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio for the term of four years.

Carter M. Stewart, of Ohio, to be United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio for the term of four years.

Peter F. Neronha, of Rhode Island, to be United States Attorney for the District of Rhode Island for the term of four years.

Daniel G. Bogden, of Nevada, to be United States Attorney for the District of Nevada for the term of four years.

Dennis K. Burke, of Arizona, to be United States Attorney for the District of Arizona for the term of four years.

Neil H. MacBride, of Virginia, to be United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia for the term of four years.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2010—Continued

AMENDMENT NO. 2366

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise to speak in opposition to the Wicker amendment, No. 2366, pending before the Senate on the THUD bill, as it is known around here—the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development bill. This is a bill which obviously includes Amtrak. Senator WICKER, of Mississippi, has offered an amendment which relates directly to the funding for Amtrak and whether it will be cut off.

The Senator from Mississippi says in his amendment he would cut off all Federal transportation funding for Amtrak in the next fiscal year unless Amtrak allows its passengers to transport guns in their checked baggage. This amendment would essentially impose upon Amtrak the standards for checking guns and ammunition that currently applies to airplanes. However, planes and trains have very different systems for handling checked baggage and different security concerns.

Let's talk about the effect of the Wicker amendment. Amtrak has said it is not ready to allow guns and ammunition to be transported in checked baggage. Amtrak doesn't have the security infrastructure, the processes or the trained personnel in place to ensure that checked firearms would not be lost, damaged, stolen or misused. Senator WICKER is imposing a new burden on the Amtrak train system in America—clearly an unfunded mandate—so some passengers—I don't know how many—can check firearms in their baggage. If this amendment becomes law, Amtrak would have to let guns checked in baggage onboard, regardless of the fact that they aren't prepared for this, or they forfeit Federal transportation funding that the railroad desperately needs to provide services to millions of Americans.