bachelor's degree from Eastern Kentucky University where he began his law enforcement service as an EKU campus police officer. He attended graduate school at Xavier University, served as an instructor at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Academy at Glynco, GA, has taught at numerous police academies, and has been a speaker at many law enforcement conferences.

Before working with Appalachia HIDTA, Frank was a special agent with the U.S. Treasury Department for 32 years. He was a member of the National Undercover Resource Pool and the National Response Team. Over the course of his long career, he has served many assignments with the U.S. Secret Service and State Department, including working as a member of the Southeast Bomb Task Force that investigated the Olympic bombing case in Atlanta in 1996.

While with the Treasury Department, Frank received four Special Achievement Awards, a Special Act Award, a Performance Award, and the Director's Award/Masengale Memorial Award.

After 46 years in law enforcement, I wish Frank congratulations on a job well done and best wishes in his retirement. Countless Kentuckians owe their thanks to Frank as well.

Frank regularly describes the practice of asking his granddad: What did you do in the war? He feels prepared to be asked the same question himself now as he nears the end of his career. He knows someday there will be an accounting. He has worked all his professional life so that his answer to that question can be: I fought back against a tide of illegal drugs and saved lives. He has certainly done that, and more.

I know my colleagues in the Senate join me in thanking Director Rapier for decades of service. The work he has done for so many years has created a safer, stronger Kentucky.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the final half.

The Senator from New Mexico.

REBUILD AMERICA JOBS ACT

Mr. BINGAMAN. Madam President, I rise today to speak in favor of the Rebuild America Jobs Act. I, first, just clarify for folks, because it is a little confusing, we have had several proposals to create jobs that have come to the floor in the last several weeks, and they have similar names. The one before us today is the Rebuild America Jobs Act, and it is a portion of the larger American Jobs Act that President Obama proposed and set out for the Congress to consider in September.

Let me talk first about that larger bill which the President proposed. This American Jobs Act the President proposed would have a very significant and beneficial impact on my State of New Mexico. Under that legislation, there would be payroll tax cuts for about 40,000 businesses in my State. There would be an expansion of payroll tax cuts for workers that would provide a typical household in New Mexico, having a median income of $44,000, with a tax cut of about $1,360 per year.

There would be support for up to 2,600 construction jobs in upgrading public schools. There would be $20 million to revitalize vacant and foreclosed businesses and homes. There would be over $49 million for community colleges in New Mexico. There would be unemployment insurance reforms that could help put 32,000 unemployed New Mexicans back to work. And there is funding in that legislation for up to 3,100 teachers and police officers and first responders to keep those people on the job so they can continue to provide services to our schools, to our students, and to our communities.

But despite the fact that all these important investments would be fully paid for—and that is made clear in the legislation; not a single dollar would be added to the national debt—this comprehensive legislation was blocked by a filibuster by our Republican colleagues a couple weeks ago. I commend Senator REID for continuing to fight to keep job creation on top of the legislative agenda and for bringing up parts of this broader legislation independently to see if we can get support for any of these individual parts because each of them has a great deal of merit.

Two weeks ago, we voted on the Teachers and First Responders Back to Work Act. This would have helped States and local governments keep over 400,000 teachers, police, and firefighters on the job during these tough economic times. It was disappointing to me that this effort failed to get enough votes so we could go ahead and consider the bill.

The legislation we are discussing would provide $50 billion in infrastructure investments in highways and transit and in rail projects across the country, and in doing those investments it would create thousands of jobs. Among other things, it would put Americans to work in improving 150,000 miles of roads, 4,000 miles of train tracks, restoring 150 miles of airport runways, and in implementing the NextGen air traffic modernization efforts that this Congress should be strongly supporting. Those are efforts to improve air safety and to reduce delays in air traffic.

So passage of this legislation would mean at least $284 million in my home State of New Mexico in immediate infrastructure investments. That investment of $284 million would support a minimum of 3,700 local jobs. These resources are greatly needed in my State. The Federal Highway Administration estimates that about 22 percent of New Mexico's major roads are in poor or mediocre condition; 19 percent of our bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete, according to the Federal Highway Administration.

In addition, the bill includes $10 billion to establish an independent national infrastructure bank in order to leverage private and public funds in advancing a broad range of infrastructure projects through loans and loan guarantees. Under this proposal that was modeled after bipartisan legislation introduced by Senators KERRY and HUTCHISON earlier this year, the bank would help finance large-scale transportation, water, and energy projects that are of national and regional significance. I am glad to see that the infrastructure bank included in this bill would begin to address some of the significant challenges we have of stimulating investment in new energy projects. There is simply not enough capital available in the country to deploy these technologies at the scale we need to deploy them to meet our national security objectives and to remain competitive in growing international markets for clean energy technologies. So the availability of this type of financing through this national infrastructure bank could be helpful in developing the transmission capacity required to bring renewable energies developed in my State of New Mexico to communities throughout the country.

Let me also briefly comment on the fact that there is revenue raised in order to pay for this set of investments that are being proposed; that is, there is a so-called offset for the cost of this legislation. That is because I think all of us agree the deficit is at unsustainable levels. We should not be committing to increased spending without finding a way to pay for it, and that is why this legislation contains a revenue-raising provision. The legislation would impose a 0.7-percent surtax on income exceeding $1 million.

What does that mean? That means that if a person's annual income is $1 million, then this legislation does not, in any way, change the taxes they are required to pay. So any garden-variety millionaire who only receives $1 million per year in income is not required to pay any more under this legislation. But if they exceed that and their income is $1,110,000, for example, they would have to pay an extra $700 toward the cost of this legislation.

The reality is, modernizing our Nation's infrastructure and stimulating job growth and enhancing policies to assist with our economic recovery does cost money. We all wish it did not, but it does. Frankly, if we are going to give more than just lip service to addressing our persistent deficits, I think it is reasonable to ask the wealthiest among us to pitch in to move America forward to get this economy moving again.

In New Mexico, less than one-tenth of 1 percent of taxpayers would be impacted by this modest surtax. That means 99.9 percent of New Mexicans would not be impacted at all, and the handful of filers who would be impacted would only pay the surtax on the portion of their annual income that exceeds $1 million.

I strongly believe this legislation, the Rebuild America Jobs Act, that we are going to try to proceed to tomorrow—or whenever we can get consent from our Republican colleagues to proceed to it—I believe is important legislation. It is an important step in turning our economy around, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Madam President, I rise because this week, once again, the Senate of the United States has the opportunity to create jobs, to find a way to work together to make a real difference in the long-term strength of this Nation, and to finally punch back against this recession which has taken so much from the working families of our States.

I rise in support of the Rebuilding America Jobs Act, a bill that will invest $60 billion in our Nation's crumbling infrastructure and put hundreds of thousands of Americans back to work.

Investments in America's infrastructure are investments in America's future, and they could not come at a more critical time for our country, our communities, or our future.

The rest of the world is pouring money into its infrastructure because they know it will not only make it easier for them to recover from this recession; they know it will make them more competitive for their long-term future, for their people, for their countries, for their economies. So at a time when our competitors are pouring money into fixing, expanding, building their infrastructure, we have turned off the spigot. We are starving our roads and our bridges, our sewers and our water systems, our tunnels, our ports, our runways, our railroad tracks. We are starving them of the repairs they need to function properly—not just today but to lay the groundwork for our competitiveness for the next generation of Americans.

China, one of our greatest economic competitors, is spending 9 percent of its GDP on infrastructure. As anyone who has visited China in recent years knows, all across the nation of China there are gleaming new highway systems, brandnew ports, brandnew airports and runways, brandnew transportation infrastructure that connects newly built cities leaping from the ground as if by magic because they have invested enormous amounts in a modern infrastructure. Europe broadly is investing 5 percent of GDP in modernizing their infrastructure. In the United States, where modern infrastructure has for a generation made us the envy of the world, we are investing just 2 percent—just 2 percent—of our GDP. This is foolish.

Few people argue that infrastructure isn't important. In fact, it is one of the few things that seem to enjoy broad support in this Chamber, in this city, and in this country. Folks as disparate as the AFL–CIO and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce agree that investing in modernizing our infrastructure is critical, not just for putting Americans back to work but getting America working for our country's future. They both support the idea of an infrastructure bank because they know investing in infrastructure isn't just about rebuilding our roads, it is about rebuilding our economy.

When companies make decisions about where to locate, about where to build a new factory, about where to expand production, about where to lease a new office, infrastructure is always at or near the top of their list. Proximity to a highway means everything if someone is going to run or expand a factory. Being close to a port is critical if their products need to be exported overseas. Access to airports and railways is imperative if someone wants to do business outside their community or our country. High-speed Internet can be every bit as important as these century-old transportation technologies and can be every bit as important as clean water, modern ports or new railroads.

Infrastructure is important in every State of our Nation and especially so in my coastal State of Delaware. The Port of Wilmington brings 4 million tons of goods through Delaware each year, providing high-wage, high-skilled jobs for the longshoremen and the communities immediately around our port that rely so much on its vital link to the global economy. Railways allow Amtrak to connect businessmen and women from New York to our financial services sector, to our legal and banking community in Wilmington, and it is one of the busiest railroad stations in America. I–95, the east coast corridor, connects truckers and motorists up and down the east coast to our little State.

But as folks have known for too long, one of the worst choke points in the whole East Coast on I–95 was in our State. I used to get calls all the time in my role as county executive because folks mistakenly thought it was somehow my role to modernize this highway. It was John F. Kennedy who cut the ribbon on this modern interstate highway, and we, frankly, have failed to invest in keeping up with the times, in keeping up with the growth in traffic, in keeping up with the tempo of global commerce since then.

Delaware has finally solved these problems. With the leadership of the Obama administration and this Chamber, the investments that were made in infrastructure over the last 2 years, we finally have solved that chokepoint on I–95. Today, motorists move through at great speeds—pay their tolls to Delaware, yes—and are able to get on their way, north or south, and engage in commerce at the speed that the modern economy demands. That is what we seek to do nationwide. That is what the Rebuilding America Jobs Act can do.

For the last 25 or 30 years, we have been building off the infrastructure built by our parents' generation, hoping that a little bandage here, a little ointment there, a little wire, a little bubble gum would be enough to get us through another year. But that is not a strategy for laying the groundwork for a great future for our children. It is not even a strategy for keeping up. The chokepoints on America's roads can't be allowed to choke America's economy for the next generation. One-third of our Nation's major roadways are in poor or even mediocre condition, and one-quarter of our bridges have been rated structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. We have even faced the human suffering and the reputational disaster of having bridges collapse across this country in recent years. We have failed to invest in our future. As a country, we can keep swerving to avoid these potholes, but eventually we are going to hit them.

The Rebuilding America Jobs Act would fill that pothole, would make smooth the rough places of this Nation, and accelerate our economic growth for the future. I am a cosponsor of the Rebuilding America Jobs Act because this bill would fill the pothole we have been avoiding for decades. It would rebuild 150,000 miles of American roadways, maintain 4,000 miles of train tracks, upgrade 150 miles of airport runways. It would restore critical drinking water and wastewater systems for our communities, and strengthen our energy infrastructure. In short, it would make us competitive. It would put people back to work. It would get us on the right road to a sustained recovery. It would put hundreds of thousands of Americans back to work in that sector of economy that took the first and hardest hit from the recession.

More than 2 million Americans who worked in construction have lost their jobs since this tragic recession hit, including 8,000 in my home State of Delaware alone, and we have thousands of folks in the skilled building trades ready to go. They need us to get over our differences, find a way past these endless, mindless filibusters, and get them to work. This week we have an opportunity to invest in those people and invest in our country. Infrastructure is such a smart investment, and in this economy and in this competitive global environment where our allies and competitors are outstripping our investment because they see clearly the road to the future, we simply cannot afford to continue to refuse to act.

It was 1 year ago today that the people of Delaware elected me to represent them in Washington. Every day since I have wondered when this Chamber was finally going to come together across the partisan divide and start moving on jobs. The persistent partisanship here that has plagued this body is in my view not worthy of the very real human needs of the people who sent us here.

Last month, folks in this Congress, mostly from the other party, prevented us from acting on jobs—not once, not twice, but several times. I do not understand the strategy here, but the endless filibusters must stop. I know there is debate over how we are going to pay for this particular proposal to put $60 billion into infrastructure, but as Senator BINGAMAN commented just before me, this is a modest increase in revenue from the very wealthiest Americans that I believe is justified in this critical economic time. Too many of my neighbors, too many of my constituents, are out of work.

I don't think we have a choice. We need to act. The President is right, we cannot wait to act. The Rebuilding America Jobs Act not only invests in America's jobs for today but in our economy tomorrow. We cannot wait any longer to fill this pothole. This bill deserves bipartisan support and I hope my colleagues will join me in voting for it this week.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. BEGICH. Madam President, I rise to speak also on the Rebuild America Jobs Act. Our Nation's infrastructure is in a state of disrepair. We see it in the potholes in our streets, in the congested highways of public transit that lack the capacity to safely and efficiently get Americans where they need to go. The American Society of Civil Engineers gives our Nation's infrastructure a D grade. One in four bridges in the United States is structurally deficient. Our deteriorating infrastructure has negative impacts on commerce and our economy. We no longer have an infrastructure system that is the envy of the world.

When you invest in public infrastructure, you have two results: You create immediate construction jobs and you lay the foundation, the groundwork, to improve communities and facilitate commerce. That was certainly my experience when I was mayor of Anchorage.

I became mayor in 2003 at a time of economic slowdown—not quite as bad as the national recession we face today, but we inherited huge budget deficits and a dramatic slowdown in our economy. Our answer to turn Anchorage around was to invest in our basic system of roads and water and sewer and power—basic infrastructure. One of the best examples of the public infrastructure investment was a small community in the northern part of Anchorage called Mountain View. We knew there was great potential for economic turnaround in this community. We knew it because the community was interested. But in that community the public infrastructure hadn't been invested in for decades. We did some simple things at first—upgraded the roads, basic systems that move people from one end of Mountain View to the other. We invested in schools. Then we invested in some public facilities. Today, Mountain View is the home of a branch of one of our large credit unions which is now their top performer in new accounts. Also new retail was established there—restaurant, phone store—and housing developments where no housing was being developed in this neighborhood. As a matter of fact, this neighborhood—I know it well because I grew up not far from there—was the neighborhood where people lived and then they tried to figure out how to move out of the neighborhood. Today it is a community of choice, a place where people want to go. Well over 140 housing units have been developed in this community in the last 5 years. Also additional public offices and a library were developed there for the first time in over 22 years. Simple investments created private sector investment along with it.

Another example is, we built a new $100 million convention center in our downtown Anchorage. The new Dena'ina Center is now an economic engine attracting bigger conventions and meetings and tens of thousands of visitors a year. In September alone the new convention center generated almost $12 million in revenue supporting restaurants, shops, and hotels.

Again, as someone born and raised in Anchorage, I remember when businesses were fleeing the downtown. They saw it as not an opportunity for economic development. By making these simple investments, we can have a long-term impact. This $100 million may sound like a lot of money. Let me give another example—$40,000 we invested in improved street lights in a small part of downtown along G Street. Property owners had legitimate concerns of safety after dark. When winter hits in Alaska, there is a lot less light, so we invested about $40,000 per street light, installing some simple street lights, a dozen or so along the road there. As a result, the character of the street has dramatically changed. We have seen 10 new businesses spring up in a three-block section of G Street because it is safer. People move freely at any time of the day. There are year-round retail and restaurant businesses such as an Urban Greens, Jo Jo A Go Go, Modern Dwellers, Alaska Cake Studio, and Octopus Ink—a variety of new businesses. Retailers are investing their hard-earned capital, reaching out to expand opportunity for Anchorage. These businesses probably would not have made the investment without the small investment of the public infrastructure.

In my view, we need to follow this model on a national level. Failure to invest in our crumbling infrastructure—our roads, bridges, airports—will cost us nearly a million American jobs without this investment. It is incredibly important to move our economy forward by legislation such as the Rebuild America Jobs Act. We have an opportunity to reverse this trend while helping to put hundreds of thousands of people back to work. This could put Alaskans back to work on important projects—bridge repairs outside the Denali National Park, a critical route between Alaska's two population centers and a heavily traveled route for tour operators and shippers; intersection upgrades on two of the busiest roads in downtown Fairbanks; highway safety improvements along the Seward Highway outside of Anchorage that reduce deadly traffic accidents and delays; safety improvements along the Sterling Highway on the Kenai Peninsula—other areas of high visitor traffic in the summer.

We know these improvements will support local economic growth all around Alaska, which is still a very young State compared to many States, and has tremendous transportation needs. Two years ago, this Congress approved the Recovery Act which funded sorely needed projects across my State—projects such as the Gustavus dock, Alaska Railroad line improvements, Glenn Highway repairs, and airport upgrades. These all created immediate construction jobs and have also improved access points so private companies can increase revenues and create long-term jobs.

The Rebuild America Jobs Act not only provides desperately needed repair funds, it also provides the seed money for the National Infrastructure Reinvestment Bank that will attract private sector capital to help fund a broad range of nationally significant projects. The concept for the infrastructure bank has broad bipartisan support and is currently being championed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Moody's estimates for every $1 spent on roads and water and sewer—the basic infrastructure of this country—GDP is raised by $1.59. The Rebuild America Jobs Act would make some key investments—$27 billion to rebuild roads and bridges; $9 billion to invest in public transit; $3 billion to invest in our airports and modernization of our air traffic control system, which will make aviation more efficient and safer.

For Alaskans, this investment would fund $220 million in much-needed transportation improvements and modernization which of course means good jobs—an estimated 2,900 jobs in Alaska from this bill.

Infrastructure development and investment has historically been a bipartisan effort. The American people want

Congress to work together. This is a good bill to deal with our Nation's roads, bridges, rails, ports, and runways.

Let me close by saying I have been here almost 3 years. We have some good bills that passed and we argued over some that we wished would pass. We have had some success over the last couple of weeks here, when you think about the China currency bill, the three trade bills. Now we have this bill. We have put three jobs bills up. Two have not been able to pass because of opposition from the other side but here is one that we know has bipartisan support. The infrastructure bank, the Chamber of Commerce is actively promoting this because they see the melding of the public and private sectors moving together to invest in the future of this economy. They also know when you lay down those roads or that better infrastructure on rail or transit, the net result is private sector investment will occur either right after it or simultaneously.

I hope folks on the other side will make the decision that it is wise to invest today and move this bill forward so we can have a long-term economic impact for our country.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TAX REFORM

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, as we debate here in the Senate how to get our economy going again to deal with what is a stagnant economic set of circumstances, something that we have been grappling with now for a few years, I think it is instructive to look at what is happening in Europe. It was interesting to me as we look even at the papers this morning, the front page of the Wall Street Journal, ''Fears of Political Chaos Tank Global Markets as Europe's Bailout Plan Teeters.'' Then much of the paper today, at least in the news reporting, is all about what is happening in Europe and the Greek crisis and the sovereign debt crisis that is being experienced in that country.

The business page in the New York Times, ''Aftershocks for Athens and Wall Street; European Debt Crisis Tightens Its Chokehold On Global Markets.'' There is a whole series of stories again there about the same issue.

The front page of the Washington Post above the fold, ''Europe Bailout Again In Doubt, Greece Seeks Referendum.''

My point is as we have observed now what is happening in Europe, it should be a lesson to us and a warning sign about what we need to be doing to get our economy back on track in this country. What is really saddling Europe right now is the fact that the European governments have gotten too big for their economies to support, so they are drowning in all of this debt. They have debt-to-GDP ratios that way exceed the normal levels that are required for admission into the European Union. Yet they continue to struggle with these huge amounts of debt, much of which was created over a long period of time. It didn't happen overnight. It is, frankly, that many governments made promises they could not keep. So now they are dealing with that and trying to figure out how they are going to work their way out of it. It is becoming increasingly concerning, I think, to people all across the globe and certainly to us in the United States.

If we look at the debt-to-GDP ratios in some of these countries around the world, they are pretty staggering. Greece is somewhere in the 180 percent debt-to-GDP area; in Portugal, Spain, countries like that, in some cases it is in excess of 200 percent debt-to-GDP.

Where are we in this country? We are already at 100 percent. We are 1 to 1. Our debt-to-GDP now is at a level we have not seen since the end of World War II. Spending as a percentage of our economy, debt as a percentage of our economy, deficits as a percentage of our economy—all at historic highs relative to anytime in history, at least in recent history going back to World War II.

I think, hopefully, the lesson to take away from all of this is we have to get our fiscal house in order. We are in a deep hole. We cannot continue to dig that hole deeper. When I hear the discussion about how to revive our economy, and I hear it revolve around we need to have more government intervention, we need to have more government spending, to me, that is literally a warning sign that we are on the wrong path. That is exactly what has happened in Europe. Governments have gotten too big. Their economies can no longer support them, and they are now faced with untenable circumstances; serious, dramatic austerity measures, accompanied by contracting economies, all leading to a complete mess in Europe. Hopefully, one that will not spill over into this country and around the globe. That concern clearly exists today, which is why we see so many of these headlines in our American papers focusing on that particular issue.

My point is simply this: I think as we look at how we deal with our economy in the United States, it starts with balancing our budget, getting our fiscal house in order, trying to get that debt and spending as a percentage of our economy down to more normal historic levels. If we go back over the past 40 years in American history, our spending as a percentage of our GDP has been in the 20-percent to 21-percent range on average. That is a 40-year historical average. Incidentally, the five times we have balanced the budget since 1969—and there have only been five times, regretably, where we actually balanced the budget—the spending-to-GDP ratio was 18.7 percent on average. So, clearly, in those times when we balanced the budget going back to 1969, those 5 years, we had an economy, obviously, that was expanding and growing, but also we had government spending under control at a reasonable level.

Today we are in the 24-percent to 25-percent range of spending as a percentage of our economy. Debt to GDP is now literally at 100 percent. That is something we have not seen. It is historic in terms of our country's economy and our fiscal situation. I think it suggests that we cannot spend our way out of this; we cannot borrow our way out of this. All that will do is compound the situation, make it worse rather than better. I think we have seen that in the first couple of years of this Presidency.

President Obama, when he came into office, had a very aggressive agenda. He wanted to expand the role of government. So we had a stimulus program funded with borrowed money that was focused on government spending, government stimulating the economy. We had a massive new health care bill, $2.5 trillion when it was fully implemented. That was a big expansion, the biggest expansion of government we have seen, literally, in the last 40 years.

We have seen excessive regulation to the point that there are now 61,000 pages of new regulations that have been issued or pushed through this year, all of which, again, compounds and makes worse the problem we have of growing spending as a percentage of GDP, growing debt as a percentage of GDP, and a shrinking private economy, or at least an economy that is not growing at the rate we would like to see, and continuing to run unemployment rates that are north of 9 percent. So these are serious economic circumstances and worsened, I believe, by the policies that have been put in place since this President took office.

I believe we need to take a different approach. We need to move in a different direction. We cannot continue to double down on what we know does not work. Clearly, government spending, government stimulus of the economy—if the last stimulus bill was any indication of that, certainly it has not worked. So much of what I hear being talked about now from my colleagues on the other side and from this administration is very similar to that. We are talking about a lot of the same prescriptions for our economy: We need to spend more here—which, of course, entails more borrowing or higher taxes on the people who create jobs.

In fact, the more recent iterations of that have entailed a tax increase on people who create jobs—a permanent tax increase, I might add—to pay for temporary spending programs, temporary spending ideas that have already been proven not to work. It