

Nick, we miss you. And until we meet again in the presence of our Lord, I want to use a nice Southern saying: Nick, you done good. Thank you, sir.

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. This is a photograph from 1956, before we had a national transportation policy in the United States of America; and if the Republicans are successful with their budget and with their vision, this will be the future for the United States of America.

There are a substantial number of Republicans on that side who have drunk the Kool Aid of a guy named Grover Norquist, who says that he wants government so small, he can strangle it in the bathtub, and that we should devolve—devolve—this is interesting—not evolve—devolve transportation to the States. That's right. Our national transportation policy will be set by the 50 different States.

Well, this is 1956, before we had a national transportation policy. This is the brand spanning new Kansas Turnpike. Isn't that beautiful. Well, look where it ends—in a farmer's field in Oklahoma because Oklahoma chose not to build its section, which they had promised to build. That's the way things used to be, and that's the way they want things to be again.

We're now on the precipice of basically walking away from investing in our Nation's infrastructure. There are 150,000 bridges that need replacement or repair in the national system; 40 percent of the pavement needs total replacement, not just an overlay. We have a \$70 billion backlog in our 19th- and 20th-century transportation systems in our major urban areas, in our transit. And that's not even talking about building an efficient 21st-century transportation system to deliver people and goods more efficiently.

And what's their proposal? A 31 percent cut in an already inadequate budget or maybe no money at all. Actually, it's a bit odd. Mr. RYAN's budget, according to the Congressional Budget Office, would not be enough to fund the uncontrollable outlays, i.e., projects already under way by the States for which the Federal Government has contracted to reimburse at the end of the construction of these projects. His budget wouldn't even meet that number. And in terms of authorizing the bill, they decided for the first time in history to make this a partisan issue.

Dwight David Eisenhower, a Republican President, he came up with the idea of a national transportation network. Ronald Reagan put transit into the highway trust fund. They want to take out Ronald Reagan's step of putting transit in the highway trust fund as an interim step before they do away

with the program altogether. That's pretty extraordinary stuff. Their vision is that we will go back to this state of affairs in America. We cannot afford that.

Next week or the week after, the temporary highway funding expires. The Senate has passed a bipartisan bill by an overwhelming majority. The Republican leadership has threatened that their right-wing devolutionists will do away with Federal transportation by saying, We might make you vote on that Senate bill. That passes for a threat in the Republican Caucus. We might make you vote on a good bill that would continue the current system with some improvements for a couple of years—that's what passes for a threat—unless you vote for our crazy H.R. 7, which does away with transit funding and basically dismantles the program over a longer term, or the Ryan budget, which would immediately end the program next year.

But they won't let us vote on that because they know that a bunch of Democrats—just like in the Senate, where Democrats and Republicans came together with an overwhelming majority and passed a transportation bill, they know that would happen here. So they got 80 or so ultraright-wingers who wouldn't vote for it. Big deal. I could match that with 150 Democrats, and we could have a bipartisan bill next week, putting millions of Americans back to work, rebuilding the crumbling infrastructure in this country. But instead, they want to devolve us back to the future.

Smaller government. Smaller government. Yes, that's great, guys. A transportation policy for the United States of America, competing in a world economy, set by the 50 States without funding. What a great vision.

WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Washington (Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Madam Speaker, I rise today, on March 21, a very special day, to celebrate the many contributions of those with Down syndrome, also known as trisomy 21. Today, March 21, has been officially designated by the United Nations as World Down Syndrome Day. The date is significant in and of itself because the origins of Down syndrome and the underlying cause is a duplicate 21st chromosome. We are all born with 23 pairs, an X and a Y. Those with Down syndrome have an extra 21st—therefore, three and 21. And today is March 21. The reason it's called Down syndrome is because these characteristics were discovered by a doctor by the name of Dr. Langdon Down. He had a wonderful heart, a caring heart, for those with disabilities; and, therefore, we call it Down syndrome today.

Five years ago, my husband, Brian, and I gave birth to a beautiful little

baby boy whose name is Cole, and he was born with that extra 21st chromosome. Cole has given me a whole new perspective for being a mother and also for being a Member of Congress. Cole's birth has given me a whole new purpose for serving in Congress, and he reminds me every day of the significance, the tremendous positive impact that every single person has on this world. And the fact that he has Down syndrome today only makes me more curious as to the impact he's going to have both on our lives and this world. He is an inspiration, and he makes me a better person.

Through Cole, I've been introduced and welcomed by the disabilities community, a wonderful group of people in America who every day also celebrate the tremendous impact and the potential of every life in this world.

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I find myself grateful to so many who have walked this path before me and have improved the opportunities that Cole, as well as anyone with disabilities, is going to have. Today, there's greater opportunities through early intervention, education, advanced education, and lots of opportunities for independent living. However, there's so much more that needs to be done, and so today is my turn to help carry the baton to help work to unleash the potential of all those living with disabilities.

I'm proud to cochair the Congressional Down Syndrome Caucus with Representative PETE SESSIONS, Representative CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, and Delegate ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON. We are committed to working on policies that are going to enhance the quality of life for those living with Down syndrome and other disabilities. It's within the walls of Congress that we will do just that. We're working to pass legislation, hold briefings, and promote policies that will help those with Down syndrome all across the country.

So today is World Down Syndrome Day. A few minutes from now at the United Nations headquarters there's going to be a poem read. It's called, "Welcome to Holland." The author is Emily Perl Kingsley. I thought I wanted to read it to all of you today.

WELCOME TO HOLLAND

I am often asked to describe the experience of raising a child with disability—to try to help people who have not shared that unique experience to understand it, to imagine how it would feel. It's like this:

When you're going to have a baby, it's like planning a fabulous vacation trip—to Italy. You buy a bunch of guidebooks and make your wonderful plans: the Coliseum, the Michelangelo David, the gondolas in Venice. You may learn some handy phrases in Italian. It's all very exciting.

After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives. You pack your bags and off you go. Several hours later, the plane lands. The stewardess

comes in and says, "Welcome to Holland."

"Holland?" you say. "What do you mean, Holland? I signed up for Italy. I'm supposed to be in Italy. All my life I've dreamed of going to Italy."

But there's been a change in the flight plan. They've landed in Holland and there you must stay.

The important thing is that they haven't taken you to a horrible, disgusting, filthy place, full of pestilence, famine, and disease. It's just a different place.

So you must go out and buy new guidebooks, and you must learn a whole new language, and you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met.

It's just a different place. It's slower-paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But after you've been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around, and you begin to notice that Holland has windmills and Holland has tulips. Holland even has Rembrandts.

But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy, and they're all bragging about what a wonderful time they had there. And for the rest of your life you will say, "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I had planned."

The pain of that will never, ever, ever go away because the loss of that dream is a very, very significant loss. But if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to go to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things about Holland.

SUDAN: STOP USING FOOD AS A WEAPON OF MASS STARVATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, in about 6 weeks, the rainy season will begin in Sudan. Villagers will no longer be able to plant or harvest their crops. The roads will become impassible. It is the time of the year when people live off their harvests, their orchards, and the land. But there is no food in the states of South Kordofan and Blue Nile inside Sudan—not because of drought, not because locusts have destroyed the crops. No, Madam Speaker. This is a deliberate, man-made catastrophe created by Sudanese President Bashir.

For months, Khartoum has been launching rockets and dropping bombs on villages and fields throughout South Kordofan and Blue Nile. The people of the Nuba Mountains, primarily of black African descent, cannot work their fields for fear of being bombed. They hide in caves as bombers and helicopters fly overhead. Rockets bombard their villages. Sudanese soldiers march into their villages, killing, raping, setting fire to their homes, carrying out a "scorched earth" policy.

The people of South Kordofan and Blue Nile are already suffering from

malnutrition and a severe shortage of food. Thousands are fleeing south, crossing into the newly independent nation of South Sudan, setting up refugee camps along the northern borders. Mainly women and children, they arrive traumatized, exhausted, and malnourished.

President Bashir has denied humanitarian access to South Kordofan and Blue Nile for the delivery of desperately needed food aid. He wants no witnesses to his deliberate use of mass starvation as a weapon against his own people. And the clock is ticking, Madam Speaker, because the rainy season is coming soon, and then no one will be able to get food into these areas, but the bombs will continue to fall from the sky.

Take a look at these photographs. The first one is a remarkable satellite image of villages being bombed in South Sudan. You see the Antonov bomber flying north, back towards the Sudanese military airbase. You see the smoke plumes rising up from civilian villages. You see fields and orchards being bombed. These are not military targets, Madam Speaker. There's not even a truck or a pickup that might be used for military purposes. All you see are villages, huts, orchards, and fields. Antonovs don't do precision bombing, Madam Speaker; they just open up the back bay of the airplane and roll out barrels of explosives.

This is an image, Madam Speaker, of the indiscriminate bombing of civilians. This is a war crime. It took place on March 8. And here, Madam Speaker, are the targets of the bombs and rockets: children, Madam Speaker, hiding and starving in caves.

This photo was taken by John Prendergast, of the Enough Project, and George Clooney, who were in South Kordofan on March 8. They saw the planes and rockets striking villages. The satellite picture is from the Satellite Sentinel Project, set up by Mr. Clooney and DigitalGlobe, which has donated millions of dollars of imagery from its satellites in an effort to provide an early warning system for human security in this region of Sudan.

Last Friday, I stood on the steps of the Sudanese Embassy with George Clooney and my House colleagues, Congressman JOHN OLVER, JIM MORAN, and AL GREEN. We were all arrested protesting the humanitarian crisis in Sudan. We were joined by George's father and journalist, Nick Clooney; John Prendergast of the Enough Project; our former colleague Tom Andrews, now with United to End Genocide; Martin Luther King III; Ben Jealous, president of the NAACP; Nicole Lee, president of TransAfrica Forum; Faye Williams, chair of the National Congress of Black Women; Activist Dick Gregory; Rabbis David Saperstein and Steve Gutow; Fred Kramer, with the Jewish World Watch; and Ian Schwab, with American Jewish World Service.

We had a simple message: Let food and humanitarian aid reach the suffering people of South Kordofan and Blue Nile. Stop raping, killing, bombing, and starving innocent women, children, and men.

I commend the Obama administration for pressuring Khartoum to let food reach these desperate people, but more must be done. I urge the President to engage China at the very highest levels to also demand unfettered access for humanitarian aid.

Madam Speaker, the world must increase the pressure on President Bashir or watch another crime against humanity take place in Sudan. We must not be silent.

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STOP MILITARY RAPE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Speaker, I rise again today to highlight the epidemic of rape and sexual assault in the military. This is the 17th time that I've stood here on the House floor to tell the story of a brave member of our military who has been raped or sexually assaulted by a fellow servicemember.

Today I will tell you the story of Elle Helmer, who served at the prestigious Marine Barracks in Washington, D.C., at 8th and I from 2005 to 2006. The Marines who serve here in Washington are known throughout the military as the tip of the sword. They perform ceremonial roles and participate in the silent drill platoon. They are the *creme de la creme*.

You will notice that Elle's story follows the exact same pattern as the dozens of stories I've told before and probably the same pattern of the estimated 19,000 rapes and sexual assaults that occurred in the military in 2010. This is the pattern of the epidemic.

This is Elle's story: The harassment started as soon as she arrived in Washington. Lieutenant Helmer was told that she was selected to be the public affairs officer for the barracks based on her appearance. She was told that Command wanted a good-looking female officer to serve as a "poster child." In addition to her role in public affairs, Lieutenant Helmer was also notified by mail that she was made a sexual assault and response coordinator. No one told her what the role required, and the only thing she knew about the position was that she'd been appointed to do it.

In March of 2005, a captain continually commented on her appearance and began to harass her. He told Lieutenant Helmer that he picked her to be a Public Affairs Officer because she was the "prettiest." He made sexual advances and kept sending her social emails. She spurned his advances and complained to the Marine Barracks' equal opportunity officer, and provided