

sporting leagues and the NCAA. So they will have time to prepare, we will call the hearing after the Easter break, but I hope to have it in a timely fashion.

I want fans all across America and I want players all across America to know that what happened in New Orleans that led to this action by the NFL is not going to be repeated.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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

#### MAP 21

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, you know very well, because you are such a leader on the issue of jobs for America, that the Senate passed a very important bill last week. It is called MAP 21, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century. What it did was reauthorize our transportation programs as they relate to highways, our bridges, and our transit systems.

This was a very difficult bill to get done because it took a lot of compromise. My friend in the chair knows this. He comes from Vermont where they have had a lot of issues with rebuilding their roads after disasters, and he knows how important it is, especially in those rural areas, to make sure we have a good transportation system both in our roads, our freeways, and our mass transit.

We got this bill done. It was remarkable, 74 votes. Actually, it would have been 75 votes. One of our colleagues was at a funeral and he was for the bill. So three-quarters of the Senate supported that bill. We excitedly found out some House Members were very happy with it and they have introduced it and that bill, MAP 21, is sitting over in the House. There is a lot at stake, and they are not moving this bill.

They could take that bill off the desk and they could pass it in 15 minutes. I served in the House. I know the rules. It is not like the Senate, where we can filibuster and do amendments and all the rest. It is a very quick process. They have not done that. Instead, they are talking about putting together a bill just with the Republican Party and not including Democrats in that at all. So they would have a very partisan bill, and they are not interested in going to the Democrats. They want to turn that bill into some offshore oil drilling, drilling in the Arctic, drilling in the lakes, drilling, drilling, drilling, when it has nothing to do with the bill and would only add contentious, non-germane issues to what is a very clear statement by the Senate, in a bipartisan way, that in order to be a great nation and in order to have a strong

economy, we need to move goods, we need to move people.

This idea of a national transportation system came to us from a Republican President named Dwight Eisenhower. He was a war hero and a general. He knew logistics, and he knew that if someone is in a war zone and they have to move their artillery, they have to move their equipment and all the rest, they need to have a logistics plan. When he became President, he knew: We are moving products from one State to the next. It is commerce. We had better get it right. And he started the highway system.

Since that time, we have had bipartisan support for transportation legislation. Whether it was Bill Clinton or whether it was George Bush or George Bush's father or it was Jimmy Carter or it was Ronald Reagan or it was Richard Nixon, we have had bipartisan support.

The American people must be really happy to hear that we were able to carry out that bipartisan spirit. Senator INHOFE and I, working in our committee; Senator HUTCHISON and Senator ROCKEFELLER, working in their committee—these are Republicans and Democrats working together—Republicans and Democrats in Finance, Republicans and Democrats in four committees worked on this bill and voted it out.

We asked the House to take up the bill and pass it. So far we have heard nothing at all to lead us to the belief that that is what they are going to do. This entire program expires at the end of next week. If they just send us an extension without funding, if they send us an extension without change in law, it is going to wreak havoc in our States. We already have letters from the States saying that they are very fearful because this is the construction season. You cannot enter into an agreement if you only have a short-term agreement to keep the highway program operating for 30 days or 90 days or 60 days. We call on them to pass this bill.

I did a press conference today with Democrats, Leader PELOSI and STENY HOYER and friends over there who work on transportation issues—NICK RAHALL, the ranking member of the committee, and Mr. BISHOP, who has introduced the Senate bill, and Mr. DEFAZIO from Oregon. We had one message, and the message was this: Speaker BOEHNER, do what every great Speaker has done before you—reach out to the other party, come to the table and get 218 votes and pass this. So far we do not hear anything like that. I am very worried and I am concerned. Why?

Mr. President, 1.4 million construction workers are unemployed. That would fill 14 football stadiums. Fourteen Super Bowl stadiums filled with unemployed workers—that is what we have in construction because we have had such a downturn in housing. We ask Speaker BOEHNER respectfully,

take up the bill. Put these people to work. Our bill will save 1.9 million construction jobs, and it will create up to 1 million more. We can take this 1.4 million, hire 1 million workers, and you would bring down that unemployment rate—way, way down. It is 17.1 percent.

How about our businesses? Our businesses need help. Mr. President, 1,075 organizations—the vast majority of them are businesses—have begged us to do this bill. We say to Speaker BOEHNER respectfully, listen to more than 1,000 organizations. Pass the bill.

I am going to read an amazing array of editorials. I will not read them in whole, I will read them in part. The idea is that maybe Speaker BOEHNER isn't listening, maybe he is not paying attention, but the country is.

Here is an editorial—not from a blue State but from a bright red State called Oklahoma, the Tulsa World:

Bipartisanship in the Senate Moves Transportation Bill.

This is what they said:

With rare bipartisanship, the U.S. Senate on Wednesday passed a much-needed and much-delayed national transportation bill that could create jobs and fund road projects. . . .

They finish by saying:

House Speaker John Boehner has called for the House to either take action on its bill or close it. That could clear the House to consider the Senate bill.

The country's infrastructure has been ignored for too long, and it is in dire straits. This is an important and necessary extension of the Transportation bill. It will make needed improvements to our transportation infrastructure and, just as important, it is a real job-creator.

This is an editorial from Oklahoma—far from a blue State. They want us to finish our work, and they are calling on Speaker BOEHNER to do it.

Here is another red State, the Fort Worth Star-Telegram:

What an exciting thing to see the U.S. Senate pass a surface transportation funding bill last week on a 74-22 vote. Such bipartisan support for maintaining and improving this crucial part of the national infrastructure makes it almost seem like the good old days in Washington. . . .

At one point, [House Speaker John Boehner] said he would put the Senate bill before the House. . . .

Now he says:

It's beginning to look like Boehner doesn't have a clue what the House will do. . . .

If the Star-Telegram is right and BOEHNER doesn't have a clue as to what to do, I would like to respectfully ask him to take up the Senate bill and pass it.

We just passed a bill they sent us with 73 votes. Our bill passed with 74. We did it. They should do it. In their bill that we passed, there is not one estimate of how many jobs will be created by it—not one. We are hoping there will be. It is the IPO bill. This one is 3 million jobs, unequivocal. They name a bill the "JOBS bill," they send

it over here, and it gets 73 votes. We are going to pass it. We took it up. Now they should pass the bill we passed. They call it the “congressional follies” if he doesn’t act.

This is from the Oregon Register Guard. It is entitled “A Solid Transportation Bill.”

By an impressively bipartisan 74-22 vote, the U.S. Senate on Wednesday passed a two-year blueprint for transportation. The House should pass this massive bill swiftly after setting aside an outrageous Republican version that would link highway, bridge and other transit spending to an expansion of oil drilling from the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. . . .

It praises our bill and points out that our bill is supported by labor and business, and it will create 3 million jobs.

I am going to read a few more of these. I hope somebody in Speaker BOEHNER’s office is watching. I really do, because we are showing what is happening in the country. Everybody is calling on Speaker BOEHNER to pass the bill.

This is the Sacramento Bee. Who could say it better? “Stop dithering, pass transportation bill.”

The Senate’s two-year bill, while not ideal, would provide states stability through the end of 2013. It also would give lawmakers a year to work on long-term funding. . . .

Some House Republicans are saying they won’t act on a multiyear bill until . . . after the Easter break.

That is unacceptable, that is what I think.

They quote something I said, and I am going to repeat it because I think it is important.

This was a bill that brought us together, and Lord knows, it’s hard to find moments when we can come together.

Isn’t that true, Mr. President? It is hard to find times when we come together, when we came together, three-quarters of the Senate.

Speaker BOEHNER, what more do you want? You had 22 Republicans vote aye. Take up our bill and pass it.

Here is another one: “Highway bill would boost stability.” How important is that as we climb out of this recession?

A two-year, \$109 billion highway bill that passed the Senate this week buoys the hope of interest groups like roadbuilders and the travel industry that the House can be prodded by the senators’ action to pass its own bill before a March 31 expiration. . . .

The bill has no earmarks.

This is from Mississippi, another red State.

Mississippi could derive major benefits from a part of the bill called the RESTORE Act amendment, supported by Wicker and Cochran. It would establish a restoration fund for Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana and Texas—

Et cetera—the gulf coast—to restore the damage caused in the calamitous oilspill.

Here we have newspaper after newspaper.

I will be finished in about 6 minutes.

Here is another Chicago Sun-Times editorial: “For a Better Commute, Pass Transportation Bill.”

How about this:

The U.S. Senate just delivered a gift to the House: a bipartisan transportation bill at a time when America really could use a lift. Here’s hoping the House Republicans don’t mess it up. . . .

News for them: Right now, they are messing it up. All they have to do is take our bill from the desk and pass it, and, guess what, that would mean 3 million jobs; thousands of businesses relieved that they know they can enter into contracts to build our roads and fix our bridges. There are 70,000 bridges in a state of disrepair, deficient, meaning they could have serious consequences. We saw bridges collapse. That is not a game. And infrastructure is aging.

I love this editorial. Essentially, it says:

A spokesman for Speaker John Boehner tells us that “the hope is that the House can coalesce around a more responsible, long-term extension” of the transportation bill.

That is a hope. That is a prayer. They tried it for more than a year. Guess what. They got nowhere. They will not talk to the Democrats over there.

I served in the House for 10 years. It was a wonderful experience. Tip O’Neill was a great Speaker. They have had a lot of great ones over there, but Tip O’Neill knew that the way to get things done was to get to 218. He didn’t care if the people voting were Democrats or Republicans; if he saw a need, he got to 218. He would go to his friend Bob Michel on the other side, like I went to JIM INHOFE, and they worked together the way we did.

Speaker BOEHNER, reach your hand out to Leader PELOSI. She is ready to go. She will work with you.

Here is one from Ohio. This is the State of Speaker BOEHNER, from the Akron Beacon, an editorial: “Road to Compromise.”

On Wednesday, 74 Senators, Republicans and Democrats, joined together in a real accomplishment. They approved a two-year, \$109 billion transportation bill. . . . The timing couldn’t have been better. Authorization for federal highway spending ends on March 31. Without action, construction, repair and maintenance will halt across the country.

What will the House do? It should take the cue of the Senate, and quickly approve the legislation that won bipartisan support. . . .

This is Speaker BOEHNER. You know, in Speaker BOEHNER’s State, at a minimum, 55,000 jobs are at stake—at a minimum. That is without our new program that leverages funds. That could be doubled, but right now there are 55,000 jobs we protect and we could create about another 40,000. In Leader CANTOR’s State, it is 40,000 jobs and we could create another 30,000. I don’t know what they are thinking about over there. I honestly don’t know. What are they thinking about?

Here is one. This is from Florida, an editorial: “Pass This Transit Bill.”

How could you get it clearer?

In an all too rare display of bipartisanship, the Senate by a vote of 74 to 22 last week passed a transportation bill of vital interest to South Florida and the rest of the country.

Unfortunately, House members apparently haven’t gotten the word. The Senate bill extends funding for federal highway, mass transit and other surface transportation projects for two years. That would save or create three million jobs. . . .

Speaker John Boehner appears to have recognized that this version favored by some GOP hard-liners in his caucus doesn’t stand a chance of becoming law, but there’s no immediate plan to go forward with a reasonable compromise.

This uncompromising approach is why public approval of Congress stands at 10 percent or below in recent polls. Mr. Boehner should urge the members of his caucus to set aside their job-killing intransigence and accept the bipartisan Senate version. . . .

Let me repeat that.

This uncompromising approach is why public approval of Congress stands at 10 percent or below in recent polls. Mr. Boehner should urge the members of his caucus to set aside their job-killing intransigence and accept the bipartisan Senate version before funding runs out.

Let’s hold this here. I am going to conclude here because I know Senator FRANKEN has been waiting and I so respect his right to speak. But I did want to point out that this particular editorial comes from the newspaper that is home to the chairman of the committee over there, JOHN MICA, the chairman of the T and I Committee, Transportation Infrastructure, and this is what they say:

Congress is gridlocked again—surprise!—this time over Federal transportation funding.

Last week a bipartisan majority in the Senate passed a \$109 billion measure that would maintain Federal funding for highway and mass transit projects for two years. But a five-year bill . . . drafted by . . . John Mica, has stalled amid opposition from Democrats and some Republicans.

Rather than let transportation projects grind to a halt, lawmakers should pass the Senate bill as the only bipartisan vehicle available. Then, they should get started on fixing the problems . . . [in the long run]—before the next bill becomes due.

Let’s put up the last one. This is from the Tampa Bay Times. This is a part of Florida that is pretty red, so I will close with this one.

House Should Fix Partisan Potholes and Pass Transit Bill.

With new signs every week that the recovery is taking hold, Congress should be relishing the chance to pass a transportation bill. But House Republicans are more keen to continue waging ideological wars in the run-up to elections than to bring some much-needed relief to America’s commuters and to workers hard hit in the construction industry. The House should follow the Senate’s lead and pass a transportation bill without further delay. . . .

So everybody seems to be getting the message, but I am not so sure Speaker BOEHNER or Leader CANTOR are listening, and they have to listen. Because if they don’t listen and as a result of their inability to pass this bill—or not want to pass it—what will happen is there will be another jolt to this economic recovery. Because we are talking 3 million jobs at stake. Thousands of companies are hurting, and I am hearing from States all over this great

Nation that they are in chaos because they don't know what the House is going to do.

So we took up a House bill, we didn't play partisan games, we passed it in a couple days, and it got 73 votes. Our jobs bill for highways and transit and roads and bridges got 74 votes. I say they wanted us to do this, we did it. How about they take a look at this bill. How about they save 3 million jobs. How about they do the people's work before they go off on their break. They owe it to the American people. BOEHNER, CANTOR, MICA, all of them owe it to the American people. They said it is a priority, and they do nothing. They are dithering, as the papers have expressed. Today, they can stop dithering. Tomorrow, they can get our bill ready for a vote. Next week, they could pass it, we can go home, and we can all celebrate with our businesses and our construction workers and know we have done something great for the American people.

Thank you very much. I yield the floor.

Mr. FRANKEN. Madam President, I would like to associate myself with the words of the Senator from California for the tremendous work she did on the Transportation bill, which is a bipartisan bill that passed overwhelmingly in the Senate.

#### HEALTH CARE

Mr. FRANKEN. Madam President, I would like to join many of my colleagues who are each talking a little bit about the affordable care act, which celebrates its second anniversary of being signed into law by the President tomorrow. Even though the law will not be fully implemented until 2014, millions of Americans and Minnesotans are already enjoying the benefits from important provisions in the law.

For example, no child in Minnesota, no child in New Hampshire, and no child in America can now be denied health insurance coverage because he or she has a preexisting condition. Parents across Minnesota and around the country can sleep a little bit easier knowing that if their child gets sick, they will still be able to get the health care coverage they need. That is a big deal.

Speaking of parents, young adults can now stay on their parents' health insurance until they are 26. Thanks to the affordable care act, 32,189 young adults in Minnesota are now insured on their parents' policy. Because of this law health insurance companies can no longer impose lifetime limits on health care benefits.

Just a few weeks ago, I heard from a Minnesotan in his thirties who has hemophilia. He had already hit his lifetime cap three times, but because of the health care reform law he still has insurance. No American can ever again have their health insurance taken away from them because they have reached some arbitrary lifetime limit, and I am proud of that.

Let's talk about seniors. I go to a lot of senior centers around my State. I know the Presiding Officer goes to senior citizen centers around New Hampshire. Because of the health care law more than 57,000 seniors in Minnesota receive a 50-percent discount on their covered brand-name prescription drugs when they hit the doughnut hole, at an average savings of \$590 per senior. By 2020, the law will close the doughnut hole entirely. You know who likes that—seniors. You know what else seniors like—the fact that in 2011, 424,000 Minnesotans with Medicare received preventive services without copays, such as colonoscopies and mammograms and free annual wellness visits with their doctors. I could go on and on with what we have already gained, but I wish to talk a little bit about a provision I wrote with the catchy name “medical loss ratio,” which is sometimes called the 80/20 rule because of my medical loss ratio provision which I based on a Minnesota law.

Health insurance companies must spend 80 to 85 percent of their premiums on actual health care. This is 85 percent for large group policies, 80 percent for small group and individual policies on actual health care, not on administrative costs, marketing, advertisements, CEO salaries, profits but on actual health care. We have already heard the medical loss ratio provision is working. The plan is already lowering premiums in order for companies to comply with the law. For example, Aetna in Connecticut lowered their premiums on an average of 10 percent because of this provision in the law.

Another key provision in the law is the value index. The value index rewards doctors for the quality of the care they deliver, not the quantity—for the value of the care, not the volume.

My home State, Minnesota, is a leader—if not the leader—in delivering high-value care at a relatively low cost. Traditionally, in Minnesota, our health care providers have been well underreimbursed for it. For example, Texas gets reimbursed 50 percent more per Medicare patient than Minnesota does. This isn't about pitting Minnesota against Texas or Florida, it is about rewarding those low-valued States to become more like Minnesota.

Imagine if we brought down Medicare expenditures by 30 percent around the country while increasing its effectiveness. It will bring enormous benefits not just to Minnesota but across the country because it will bring down the cost of health care delivery nationwide, and that is what we need to be addressing, the cost of health care delivery, because we all know bringing down the health care costs is key to getting our long-term deficits in order. In fact, there is probably nothing more important that we can do. That is where the value index is so important.

I have gone over a number of the benefits from health care reform that have already kicked in, but I obviously didn't mention them all. According to

the Wall Street Journal, health care reform has already added jobs to our economy. I barely touched on the great stuff that kicks in, in 2014, such as the exchanges which will allow individuals and small businesses to pool with others to get more affordable health insurance that is the right fit for them. Of course, while presently no child can be denied health insurance for preexisting conditions, starting in 2014 no American will be denied health insurance or penalized for having a preexisting condition.

The Congressional Budget Office, a nonpartisan agency of Congress, has crunched the numbers and reported that the affordable care act will insure 31 million additional Americans and bring down our national deficit by billions of dollars in its first 10 years and by approximately \$1 trillion in its second 10 years.

I ask the American people not to fall victim to disinformation. There are no death panels. The affordable care act cuts the deficit. Under this law, businesses under 50 employees don't have to provide insurance for their employees and will not suffer penalties if they don't. They will not have to pay fines and they will not be dragged into prison. There is so much junk out there that is just plain false, and it is doing everyone in this country a giant disservice.

My colleagues and I disagree on many things. Can we all at least agree to talk about this law in a factual manner? The benefits of this law are tremendous and Americans across the country are already experiencing it. I urge all my colleagues to acknowledge these benefits and to support the continued implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

(The remarks of Mr. FRANKEN pertaining to the introduction of S. 2225 are printed in today's RECORD under “Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.”)

Mr. FRANKEN. I thank the Chair and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. JOHANNIS. I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes.

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

Mr. JOHANNIS. Madam President, the anniversary of any new law should be a time to celebrate accomplishments and new landmarks. But the almost constant flow of bad news, unfavorable reports, and broken promises makes the second anniversary of the health care law anything but a celebration. Rather, it is something that even the White House seems embarrassed to mention.

The truth is the policy behind the bill was flawed. The truth is that the law is fundamentally flawed. It raises taxes and health care costs for working Americans. It puts bureaucrats between patients and their doctors. It tangles our Nation's job creators in regulations and redtape, and it defies