

Senate had 10 minutes of time. I would want to think the Senate can spare 10 minutes of time to send the Egyptians a signal that we will not tolerate this and they must let our citizens come home.

The United States will not and should not stand for the detention of American citizens. The United States will not stand for imprisonment or travel restrictions on its citizens, and the United States should not send aid to a government that so casually accuses American citizens of political crimes.

So while some will say I am holding up the business of the Senate, I argue this is the business of the Senate; that foreign policy was delegated—much of it—to the Senate, that we are abdicating our role, and that we as the Senate should send a clear and unequivocal message to Egypt. So I will continue to argue, despite much opposition, to have a vote to send a signal to Egypt that we will not tolerate the detention of U.S. citizens.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak in morning business.

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

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. President, I also ask unanimous consent that following my statement, the Banking Committee's ranking member be recognized, followed by Senator MENENDEZ of New Jersey, and that all time they consume be counted toward the postcloture time.

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

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION ACT

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. President, I am pleased to present the Banking Committee's public transportation bill to the Senate as an amendment to the surface and transportation legislation now before us. The transit bill was reported by our committee unanimously. Maintaining investment in our Nation's transportation infrastructure is a priority of mine and of our committee.

I wish to thank our committee's ranking member, Senator SHELBY, who has worked for a long time on this bill. Without his support, this bipartisan legislation would not be possible. I also wish to thank our committee chairman, Senator MENENDEZ, and all the other members of the committee who offered their contributions.

With this bill, we have the opportunity to preserve public transportation funding for 2 years at current levels and deliver critical investments in the Nation's aging transportation infrastructure. In addition, the bill will institute much needed reforms, such as eliminating earmarks and speeding the construction of public transportation projects. The bill also includes transit safety provisions that have been stalled for 2 years. These are important reforms that many Senators have worked on. Now is the time to move them forward.

Finally, our bill increases formula funding for all types of transit: additional urban and rural funds, new money for every State to address the state of good repair needs and more money for tribal transit. Our Nation's transit systems need more than \$77 billion to address backlogged repairs. This bill cannot address all those needs, but it can ensure that our transit systems don't fall further behind, and transit funding will support more than 386,000 jobs.

Americans make 35 million trips on public transit every weekday. Many of these trips are in our cities, but in places such as South Dakota rural transit service connects seniors with their doctors and helps the workers travel long distances to get to jobs. Everyone benefits from public transportation, and I urge Senators to support this bipartisan bill.

I yield the floor for the ranking member of the Banking Committee.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, I rise in support of legislation to reauthorize the surface transportation bill, and, in particular, the Federal Public Transportation Act of 2012, which is the transit amendment before us today.

While we are nearly 3 years beyond the September 2009 expiration date of SAFETEA, I am pleased we are finally moving one step closer to legislation that would allow infrastructure investments to move forward.

Chairman JOHNSON and I worked together to produce bipartisan legislation that eliminates outdated, inefficient programs and promotes greater efficiency and effectiveness in public transportation systems all across America. The Federal Public Transportation Act passed the Banking Committee with unanimous support. This legislation before us reflected in the amendment currently under consideration maintains funding for public transportation programs at \$10.5 billion a year. Unlike previous reauthorization bills, the committee was unable to provide an increase in the baseline funding amount for public transportation. We were, however, able to provide a substantial increase to existing programs by eliminating the bus discretionary program which previously contained earmarks totaling \$984 million.

In fact, we did not just eliminate one account that included earmarks, we

eliminated all earmarks that were previously included in the reauthorization bill. These reforms have allowed us to provide public transportation systems with an increase in their guaranteed formula funding over the next 2 years. In addition to providing a stable source of funding, I believe we must institute a system that ensures greater accountability and encourages real investment in maintaining our aging public transportation infrastructure all over America.

This issue, also known as state of good repair, is extremely important for public transportation, and our amendment makes it an integral part of the transit programs. The new starts process has undergone significant reforms in order to streamline and to improve delivery of capital investment projects. It also includes a new pilot project with the sole purpose of expediting project approval and attracting private investment.

Setting aside, for a moment, the specific issues related to this amendment, I wish to speak briefly to what I believe is the most significant issue surrounding the reauthorization of SAFETEA—the solvency of the highway trust fund. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the mass transit account of the highway trust fund will end in 2013 with \$2.8 billion—\$6 billion short of what it will need to continue to meet its obligations resulting from this reauthorization bill before us. While the Senate is considering a 2-year authorization bill, others have advocated a longer term reauthorization. The length of the reauthorization is not as important, however, as the need to pay for all this spending before us.

I believe most Americans would agree that a reauthorization bill that leaves the program insolvent or near insolvency upon its expiration would be irresponsible. I hope this is not what we are doing with this bill. Infrastructure spending is essential to our long-term economic stability and growth in this country. Nevertheless, this country cannot continue to deficit spend its way out of its problems for infrastructure or anything else. Therefore, I think we must begin this discussion with the realization that difficult decisions are going to have to be made, and for our part I believe the Banking Committee has begun to make some of these difficult decisions by providing level funding and eliminating unnecessary earmarks from the program structures.

I look forward to continuing this debate and moving one step closer to completing a responsible and paid-for reauthorization bill.

I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, let me begin by recognizing the hard work and dedication of my friend from South Dakota, Chairman JOHNSON, and for his tireless leadership on this legislation

that made this possible. Let me also recognize the ranking member, Senator SHELBY, for his efforts to work in an incredibly positive, cooperative, and bipartisan manner that, in fact, created the ultimate result of a unanimous bipartisan vote, something we would love to see more of these days. It was his work, along with the chairman's, that got us to that point. I am glad to have been added to that as the subcommittee chair as well.

Millions of Americans take over 10 billion transit trips a year. It has taken over 2 years of hard work, and it is part of an overall bill that creates or saves 2 million jobs, but those trips and the jobs that get created by it and the opportunity of people to get to employment, to get to a hospital, to go see family and friends are incredibly important in the context of our national economy. At a time when job creation is essential, it invests in every State to keep us competitive as a nation in the global marketplace.

Under this legislation, for example, my home State of New Jersey stands to receive about \$519 million in Federal transit funding without any increase in Federal spending. This bill cuts waste and eliminates earmarks so New Jersey will see benefits from a \$63 million increase in transit funding, more transit funding than in any previous year. This bill invests in our infrastructure and improves public transportation without increasing the Federal budget, and it provides more funds to make the improvements they need to ease congestion and mitigate transportation delays. It is good for America because it will help communities concentrate on smart growth around transit hubs that mirror my Livable Communities Act and my State's Transit Village Program that will help make New Jersey attractive to businesses and a model job creation hub. It can do that for other communities throughout the Nation.

It is good because it is energy smart and increases competitive funding for clean fuel transit vehicles to help agencies to switch from dirty, expensive fuels to cleaner, cheaper fuels. It not only streamlines the process for Federal approval of new transit projects, but it will help upgrade older systems by adding a new station or another track or a bigger train car to increase capacity rather than having to build new systems from scratch.

It also includes a provision establishing a program to allow public transportation providers temporary flexibility during periods of high unemployment to use a limited portion of their Federal funds for up to 2 years, provided they meet the established criteria for operating expenses.

One last but perhaps most important thing the bill accomplishes is to provide for a strong Federal role in transit safety oversight by establishing a national public transportation safety plan to improve the safety of all public transportation systems that receive Federal funding.

Under this legislation, the Secretary will develop minimum performance standards for vehicles used in public transportation and establish a training program for Federal and State employees who conduct safety audits of public transportation systems. Fundamentally, this bill improves the effectiveness of State safety oversight agencies, increases Federal funding for safety, and provides new enforcement authority over public transportation safety to the Secretary of Transportation.

At the end of the day, making our transit system as safe as humanly possible in every State, from coast to coast, must be a national priority.

So let me conclude by saying, once again, thanks to Senators JOHNSON and SHELBY for their leadership over the last 2 years. I think the bill is a victory for every American community. It is a commonsense investment that will create jobs, keep this Nation competitive, and make our communities more productive, accessible, and livable. It is a victory for those who believe we can create jobs, get people back to work, and keep us on the cutting edge of the global economy.

So now we need to make sure we continue to reach across the aisle, as the chairman and the ranking member and I have done during this process, and get this investment in America's future to the President's desk and signed into law as soon as possible.

With that, I yield the floor.

RECESS

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

Thereupon, at 12:32 p.m., the Senate recessed until 12:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. WEBB).

NOMINATION OF ADALBERTO JOSE JORDAN TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE ELEVENTH CIRCUIT—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

ARIZONA'S CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize an important milestone in our Nation's history.

On February 14, 1912, Arizona officially became the 48th member of these 50 United States. I am proud to salute my home State on this her centennial celebration.

Yes, we were the last of the contiguous 48 States to join, but we were certainly not the least of them. Today I would like to tell you just a little bit about why I say that is so.

Arizona is not the largest or the oldest member of the Union. It did not participate in the Revolutionary War. It does not border an ocean or one of the Great Lakes. The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution do not bear a single Arizonan signature.

Yet there is something about Arizona that is great, something that truly sets the Grand Canyon State apart from the rest. The Grand Canyon, of course, comes to mind.

I would like to quote one of America's most famous explorers, John Wesley Powell, who once said:

The wonders of the Grand Canyon cannot be adequately represented in symbols of speech, nor by speech itself. The resources of the graphic art are taxed beyond their powers in attempting to portray its features. Language and illustration combined must fail.

I agree. I have hiked the Grand Canyon. I have seen it from above, and I have seen it from below. Words literally cannot describe its power or its beauty. That is why every year millions of tourists come from all corners of our Nation and from across the Atlantic and the Pacific to experience the majesty we are fortunate enough to have right there in our own backyard.

But as big as it is, the Grand Canyon is just a small part of the Arizona story. There are the Sedona Red Rocks, the beautiful White Mountains, the Painted Desert, the Petrified Forest, Monument Valley, Saguaro National Park, the 12,000-foot San Francisco Peaks, and countless other natural wonders that span across our deserts and through our forests. There are almost 4,000 peaks and summits in our State alone.

Arizona is also home to manmade marvels, including innovative projects that have allowed much needed freshwater to flow to our communities. These include the Hoover Dam, the Glen Canyon Dam, the Central Arizona Project, the Salt River Project and its keystone element, and the Theodore Roosevelt Dam.

Arizonans share the land with owls, ocelots, and eagles, jaguars, lots of rattlesnakes, and falcons. Our landscape is foliated not just with agave and cacti but with majestic aspen, fir, and spruce and the largest Ponderosa pine forest in the world.

We are rich in natural resources. From an early age, all Arizonans learn about the State's five Cs: copper, cattle, cotton, citrus, and climate.

Copper. The mineral that attracted many Arizonans to our State in the first place has been used by American Indians in tool and weaponmaking for centuries. Today, Arizona produces more copper than every other State combined, and it is now being used to develop the alternative energy technologies and vehicles of tomorrow.

Cattle. Along with sheep and hogs, the ranching of cattle is deeply imprinted on our State's cowboy culture and continues to help drive our economy today.

Cotton. One of our most important cash crops at the turn of the last century, cotton is still an important industry in our State. This crop, including our very own Pima long-staple variety, is used to produce the clothing, fertilizer, fuel, and cooking oil used by millions of Americans every day.