

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 22,
SURFACE TRANSPORTATION RE-AUTHORIZATION AND REFORM ACT OF 2015

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN C. CARNEY, JR.

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 3, 2015

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Speaker, I submit this statement regarding House passage of Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. With many reservations and a sense of frustration, I will vote for this bill. I believe in the bill's core goals—investing in our infrastructure and providing stability to our transportation system. The legislation raises funding levels to meet the needs of our crumbling roads and bridges and avoids the short-term patches that have plagued the bill for years. I'm also glad it's the result of a bipartisan effort, and supports infrastructure projects and programs like the High Density Transit Program and the Export-Import Bank.

That said, once again, Congress missed an opportunity. We had the chance to responsibly and sustainably fund our transportation system with real revenue sources. Instead, we cobbled together one-time funding sources that will put us right back where we are today when the bill expires: in the midst of a funding shortfall and a crisis. I had long advocated for funding our transportation bill by collecting taxes on corporate profits trapped overseas. This would be a step towards fixing our broken tax system and would discourage American companies from moving overseas. Doing so also would have provided a significant source of funding for the bill, and created the momentum to reform our international tax code. Instead, our tax code is still broken, and we no longer have the leverage of a must-pass transportation bill to fix it.

Passage of this bill means we're better off than we were before. States and local transportation agencies have the certainty they need to map out the infrastructure improvement projects our nation sorely needs. And our public transit system will be strengthened. I remain committed to finding a more responsible way to fund these programs and to fixing our tax system.

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SPEECH OF

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 3, 2015

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, the passage of H.R. 22, Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, is a significant accomplishment. It ends the embarrassing string of 37 short-term extensions. It provides five years of certainty with modest, but important, increased spending levels. There are provisions that deal with safety, innovation, and integrating passenger rail into overall surface transportation, among many other notable items.

I am pleased that a number of provisions that I have authored and championed have

found their way into the final version of this legislation. One of the unheralded provisions potentially has the most significant, far-reaching consequences—the expansion of work on an alternative user-fee to replace the gas tax. This reflects legislation I have introduced that builds upon the Oregon pilot project on road user charges. There is also a specific title dealing with innovation. The next five years will see unparalleled changes in transportation practices and technology that can have a transformational effect on our way of life, and this bill embraces this.

Unfortunately, Congress continues to refuse to address a Highway Trust Fund that is inadequate and losing purchasing power by the month. Refusing to increase the gas tax for 22 years or to have any other source of revenue has complicated passage of a long-term bill. Instead, the collection of budget gimmicks paying for the legislation are, in many cases, questionable. For example, using private bill collectors to hound low-income taxpayers who run into financial difficulty is a money loser, as well as ineffective and unpopular. This is one of many ways the bill is paid for, basically to disguise the use of the Treasury's general fund instead of the traditional user fee model.

I am hopeful that we can use the next five years to build upon the positive framework of the legislation and for Congress to accept the overwhelming consensus of the people who build, maintain, and use our surface transportation system. They want to increase user fees to adequately fund transportation, and so should we as well.

I will vote for this bill because the positive policy features are compelling and because it gives us an opportunity to use this five-year period of stability to get it right. I will spare no effort to do so, and I hope I'm joined by my colleagues so that the next reauthorization truly enables us to rebuild and renew America, put millions of Americans to work at family wage jobs, and strengthen communities from coast to coast.

CEDAR CLIFF UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 7, 2015

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call to your attention the achievements of an outstanding faith community, the Cedar Cliff United Methodist Church (UMC), which celebrated their ministry's 125th Anniversary of successful service to the community of Haledon on Sunday, December 6, 2015.

Since December 7, 1890, when it first opened its doors, the church has stood in its current location, serving as a house of worship in the town of Haledon, on 18 Zabriskie Street. The church has its own unique piece of history, through their bell which was donated by U.S. Vice President Barret A. Hobart. Many members of the church have also served in the military since World War I.

Cedar Cliff UMC is located in a neighborhood that is ethnically diverse and constantly changing. It has one traditional Sunday morning worship service. Current ministries within the church include the prayer shawl ministry, Bible study, Monday night yoga classes, a

food pantry and joint fellowship events with a partner church that shares its facilities. The church has also been home to many Boys & Girls Scout troops throughout the years.

The church has been a place where many babies have been baptized, a place where couples get married, and also a place where family members have laid their loved ones to rest in their sanctuary. But most importantly, many lives have been changed by the people that have called Cedar Cliff UMC home since 1890. The ministry has been a major part of the Haledon community and continues to serve all. The Church members and organizers have worked passionately to build many bridges between different groups within the faith community.

The Cedar Cliff UMC has had many leaders throughout its years. Today, it is led by Reverend Pamela Grant James, who has inspired many to follow the path of faith and kindness. Reverend James has helped shape our society and is deserving of every bit of recognition for her selfless actions.

It gives me pride to recognize the excellence of the Cedar Cliff UMC and I thank them for servicing the residents of Haledon. I am grateful to represent the Church and its congregation within the 9th Congressional District of New Jersey.

The job of a United States Congressman involves much that is rewarding, yet nothing compares to recognizing and commemorating the achievements of faith communities such as the Cedar Cliff UMC.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join our colleagues, and the Cedar Cliff UMC in celebrating their 125th Anniversary and recognizing their leadership, dedication and loyalty to serving the community.

RECOGNIZING PETER H. CRESSY,
ED.D.

HON. TODD C. YOUNG

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 7, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize and commend Dr. Peter H. Cressy, Ed.D., the President and CEO of the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States on his remarkable career and wish him well as he is set to retire from this position in January.

Dr. Cressy has led an impressive career that includes 28 years of service to our nation in the United States Navy which concluded with his retirement as a Rear Admiral. His leadership roles continued with some of the nation's most prestigious academic institutions, and in government service roles where he held senior positions at the State Department, on Capitol Hill, and the Pentagon.

Dr. Cressy's most recent leadership role at the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States has led to a stronger, more responsible, and transparent industry. Under his leadership the distilled spirits industry has grown both domestically and internationally all while placing an emphasis on and commitment to responsible and transparent practices. This commitment is evident in the industry's advertising and marketing Code of Responsible Practices which has been referenced as a model of responsible industry self-regulation as well as the Council's efforts to work with retailers and wholesalers, universities, and

health professionals to support programs to prevent alcohol abuse. Dr. Cressy's leadership has demonstrated the value of transparent and responsible ethics and has resulted in tangible successes across all facets of the industry.

Dr. Cressy's passion for responsible business practices and the expansion of business are tremendous but he also takes great pride in preserving the storied history and heritage of the U.S. distilled spirits industry. One of his most notable successes with respect to historical preservation was his leadership in undertaking the \$1.6 million dollar reconstruction of George Washington's Distillery at Historic Mount Vernon. Since the project's completion the Council and the industry have maintained an ongoing relationship with the estate which now carries out a historic preservation and educational mission. In fact it is where they hold their annual industry Spirit of Mount Vernon dinner gala which has raised over \$4 million to advance the educational mission at Mount Vernon.

Dr. Cressy's leadership will be sorely missed at the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States and by those who have come to know him through his work, but I know the entire distilled spirits industry and many others join me in recognizing his career full of achievements and wishing him the best as he moves into a new chapter of his life. Again congratulations to Dr. Cressy on his retirement and a job well done.

CONGRATULATING THE ROMEON BULLDOGS FOOTBALL TEAM ON WINNING THE DIVISION 1 MICHIGAN STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. CANDICE S. MILLER

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 7, 2015

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct privilege to recognize a special achievement recently accomplished by the Romeo Bulldogs High School Football Team. Romeo capped off a remarkable and extremely memorable 2015 season by taking home to Macomb County the school's first ever Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) Division 1 State Championship. After a hard fought, one loss regular season the Bulldogs charged into the playoffs facing great adversity, challenging weather conditions and tough competition before upsetting the number four ranked Detroit Cass Tech Technicians at Ford Field.

In 2002, Romeo was in need of a football coach. Assistant coaches Curt Rienas and Jason Couch both applied for the job and were named co-coaches. Coaches Rienas and Couch had Romeo Bulldogs football in their veins, first meeting each other as teammates on the field and the friendship grew. The two had made it to the semifinals together, but never further until this team. Coach Curt Rienas and Coach Jason Couch became the first co-coaches in playoff history to win a state championship. The Bulldogs played strong hard-nosed football focusing on the basic fundamentals and taking each play one at a time. This meant each player executing his designated assignment and beating the man in front of him. This also included playing

sound defense with solid tackling and implementing an offensive scheme that would make an NFL playbook look elementary. The Bulldogs kept constant pressure on their opponents by blocking a punt, recovering an onside kick and making big plays on offense.

Before making it to the State Championship game, the Romeo Bulldogs played what will probably be remembered as the second most memorable game of the season. The Romeo Bulldogs faced off against Grand Ledge in Brighton, Michigan for a game of the ages. Over a half foot of snow fell during the game and the Bulldogs ended Grand Ledge's historic undefeated season with a 48–21 victory.

With victories against current state champion Clarkston, Lapeer, Detroit Catholic Central and finally Grand Ledge, the Bulldogs were ready for their final challenge against the Detroit Cass Tech Technicians. The team brushed aside any potential distractions and purely focused on winning the game. Despite the best efforts of Detroit Cass Tech, the Romeo Bulldogs would not be denied because this was their day alone.

After an exciting first quarter and a 13–7 Bulldogs lead, the game remained close at the half with the Bulldogs holding on to a 19–14 lead. Romeo started the second half off by recovering the opening onside kick. The Bulldogs would use the favorable field position to drive 48 yards to the end zone putting the Bulldogs ahead 26–14. On Cass Tech's next possession, the Technicians went three-and-out which forced a punting situation. Romeo blocked the punt, again giving the Bulldogs excellent field position. The following play was a 20-yard run for a touchdown to put the Bulldogs in the lead by a score of 33–14. Nearing the end of the third quarter, Cass Tech would put six points on the board and follow it up with a touchdown halfway through the fourth quarter cutting the Bulldogs lead to 33–27. The Romeo Bulldogs would continue to pressure and push the play, resulting in a touchdown with 1:29 left in the game to seal the victory and make school history.

The Bulldogs throughout the year exhibited the intangible ingredients which make up a winning football team: heart, discipline and a positive attitude. As legendary Hall of Fame Green Bay Packers Coach Vince Lombardi once said, "A man can be as great as he wants to be. If you believe in yourself and have the courage, the determination, the dedication, the competitive drive and if you are willing to sacrifice the little things in life and pay the price for the things that are worthwhile, it can be done."

I applaud these young men for remaining both mentally and physically ready to compete. In addition, I want to commend the Bulldogs for staying energized and focused each time they stepped on to the gridiron. I understand this can be an extremely difficult task considering the numerous pressures and distractions high school student-athletes can encounter.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize the hard work and sportsmanship displayed by all the members of this football team. I also want to congratulate administrators, teachers, cheerleaders, parents, students and fans alike for their assistance and for making this an unforgettable season. The Bulldogs proved they had the talent, fortitude and resilience to rise to the challenge and accomplish their ultimate goal—a State Championship. Teamwork, per-

severance and friendship all contributed to this title as well. I know the community takes great pride in what these young men were able to achieve.

In closing Mr. Speaker, I share that same pride. I want to offer my personal congratulations and best wishes. All the accolades, awards and trophies are rightfully deserved. Way to go Bulldogs.

HONORING BELINDA ESPINOSA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 7, 2015

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize and honor Belinda Espinosa, the City Manager of Pinole, California. After more than thirty years, Ms. Espinosa is retiring from public service.

Ms. Espinosa's city management career has spanned over four cities and two states. Beginning in the cities of San Antonio and Grand Prairie, Texas, Ms. Espinosa worked on budget and financial issues, managed infrastructure projects, and oversaw hundreds of millions of dollars in bond funds. In 1994, Ms. Espinosa moved to California to become City Manager for the City of Soledad, where she supervised critical water and wastewater projects, the construction of new affordable housing, and the completion of the Soledad Community Library.

In 2000, Ms. Espinosa moved to the City of Pinole, California. Initially hired as the Assistant City Manager, she was promoted four years later to City Manager and Chief Executive Officer, overseeing the police and fire departments, public works planning, wastewater services, recreation and redevelopment. Ms. Espinosa spearheaded several efforts to revitalize Pinole, including the construction of the Pinole Shores Industrial Business Park, the Pinole Valley Shopping Center and the Kaiser Permanente Medical Office. Under her leadership, Pinole voters approved two half-cent sales tax measures, which generate \$3.6 million for public safety and other supplemental services. Ms. Espinosa also successfully negotiated Pinole's first Project Labor Agreement, for the \$48 million Pinole-Hercules Wastewater Treatment Plant project.

Ms. Espinosa has received numerous accolades for her years of public service, including the 1996 Monterey County Public Administrator Award, the 2007 Contra Costa College Woman of the Year Award, and the 2009 Distinguished Project Award. Ms. Espinosa has also served as President of the Pinole Rotary Club and the International Hispanic Network, and was the first female President of the Grand Prairie Kiwanis Club. Ms. Espinosa has long worked under a philosophy of approaching problems with collaboration, honesty and understanding. She is well-known for being forthright in her dealings, and has always maintained the highest integrity in serving her constituencies.

Mr. Speaker, Belinda Espinosa has had a long and remarkable career in public service. It is fitting and proper that we honor her here today, and wish her the best in retirement.