

America's infrastructure finance. The user pays—people who benefit the most pay the most—and it served us well for over half a century.

But over the course of the last 10 years, it is no longer adequate. The fixed amount that hasn't been increased, the erosion due to inflation, increasing the fuel efficiency of vehicles all combine to mean that we are falling short of the mark. We have been required to transfer over \$60 billion from the general fund just to maintain our already inadequate levels of funding, and the current patch expires in May. The clock is ticking. There are opportunities to make a difference.

It is interesting. It is not just the newspaper editorial writers who focus on this as the simplest, most effective, commonsense approach. We are finding in the other body a number of Senators, including Republican Senators, who indicate that they are open to finally addressing and updating the gas tax.

My colleague on the Ways and Means Committee, JIM RENACCI from Ohio, wrote a very insightful article in a recent issue of Roll Call. He made the case for our moving forward with increasing the user fee to be able to maintain our roads and bridges, highlighting the costs and consequences.

Mr. Speaker, there is an opportunity for us to move forward. This does not have to be something that is complicated or partisan. This is something that Ronald Reagan in 1982 called upon the Congress to do, where he in his Thanksgiving Day address asked for the Congress to more than double the gas tax. Tip O'Neill and Ronald Reagan did it. We can do it today. I strongly urge my colleagues to address this simple, commonsense approach and help us rebuild and renew America.

THE VALUE OF VACCINATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, this morning, I feel compelled to speak again about the necessity of increasing the knowledge and the notice given by the FDA—the Food and Drug Administration—and the Centers for Disease Control on what seems to be a surge in the getting of measles by many across this country. The numbers have gone past 100. It is clear that measles is a disease that quickly spreads, and it is also clear that medical science affirms the value of vaccines.

So I believe it is extremely important today to again ask the FDA and the CDC, as I did yesterday in a letter, to raise the level of warning and concern to parents, schools, counties, and States in the entire Nation on being able to provide information to encourage vaccination, if that is what is the ability to have—if you are the age or if your child is of the age to be able to receive that vaccination and to do so.

Over the last couple of weeks, we have seen measles spread to enormous

numbers. We have seen the numbers grow in California and then spread. We have heard of cases in which the measles started in an entertainment facility, and people moved around the country. One example, in particular, I think, is potent because the father of the children has been speaking out. He is a pediatrician, and he is calling upon families to vaccinate, particularly the MMR, which is the vaccination dealing with measles.

Unfortunately, an innocent visit to a clinic, which a child needs to do for pediatric services, exposed an 8-month-old to the possibility of measles and exposed his 3-year-old sister, who is suffering from leukemia. Now, as I understand it, they are in isolation. There is the thought of someone traveling on an airplane with measles. Unlike a number of other diseases, measles spreads extremely quickly. Stories have been told or examples have been given that if you have measles and if you are in a room and if you leave that room—and maybe you have coughed or done something—an hour later, someone comes in, and there is the possibility that you still may be exposed to it. When riding on an airplane, you may expose a whole number of persons to measles if you are, in fact, infected.

I think it is extremely important. Though we realize there are differences of opinion, I am glad to find in the political landscape that this is not a political football and that, in essence, we come together and recognize the importance of having this information and of encouraging vaccination.

I am asking for the State and city health departments and county health departments across the Nation to provide their own information to parents and schools. I wonder whether or not there is need to again reassess the importance of reinstating the obligation and the responsibility of all families who have children who are going into a public school system to have them vaccinated within the realm of their own health conditions and their own assessments by their pediatricians.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important issue. This is an issue of which we in a modern day, 21st century nation—and as an example of health care to those around the world—need to show the importance of preventative medicine and protecting our children. We have worked on these issues in many ways. We have fought for a vaccine for HIV. As has been said in the past, they are looking for a vaccine for Ebola because we understand how that can intervene and, in those instances, save lives. In this instance, in not knowing the condition of individuals, we know that this disease can be damaging.

It is important that we focus on educating the public. I believe an alert should go out that we have a problem and that we should be working with our local health facilities and disciplines and districts to be able to establish best practices and protocols, and that parents and others should be informed to make intelligent decisions.

More importantly, I think this is an issue that should be quickly assessed on behalf of the CDC and the FDA. Mr. Speaker, it is important for the children of America that we provide them the safety and security for their lives.

FIFTY YEARS FROM SELMA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, in one of his great books, Martin Luther King, Jr., asked the question: Where do we go from here—chaos or community?

Mr. Speaker, today, 50 years after Selma, that question is still in need of an answer.

One area in need of aggressive action is persistent poverty, and I want to thank President Obama for sending us a budget that equalizes the Tax Code and that, if substantially enacted, will move us closer to what Dr. King often referred to as the “beloved community.”

Statistics show that there are nearly 500 counties and thousands of communities in the United States that are classified by the Census Bureau as “persistent-poverty areas.” They are certified because 20 percent of their populations have lived below the poverty line for the last 30 or more years. They are diverse communities, including Caucasian communities in States like West Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee; Native American communities in States like South Dakota, Alaska, and Oklahoma; Latino communities in States like Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas; and African American communities in States like South Carolina, Alabama, and Mississippi. They are urban communities in States like New York and heartland communities in States like Missouri.

There are 139 of these counties that are represented in this House by Democrats, 331 by Republicans, and 18 are split between the two parties. Combating persistent poverty should matter to all of us regardless of party, geography, or race.

In early 2009, as we were putting together the Recovery Act, I proposed language to require at least 10 percent of funds in three rural development accounts to be directed to efforts in these persistent-poverty counties. This requirement was enacted into law. In light of the definition of “persistent-poverty counties” as having at least 20 percent poverty rates over 30 years, this provision became known as the “10-20-30 initiative.”

In using the 10-20-30 formula, the Recovery Act funded a total of 4,655 projects in persistent-poverty counties, totaling nearly \$1.7 billion. I saw firsthand the positive effects of these projects in my district. We were able to undertake projects and create jobs that would have otherwise languished. Among these investments were a \$5.8 million grant and a \$2 million loan to

construct 51 miles of water lines in the rural community of Brittons Neck in Marion County, South Carolina.

There are many other success stories. In Lowndes County, Mississippi, \$17.5 million was spent to install a water line, elevator tank, and two wastewater pump stations, providing potable water to rural Mississippians and creating badly needed construction jobs.

In 2011, I joined with our former Republican colleague, Representative Jo Ann Emerson of Missouri, to introduce an amendment to the continuing resolution that would have continued 10–20–30 for rural development and would have expanded it to 11 additional accounts throughout the Federal budget to enhance economic development, education, job training, health, justice, the environment, and much more.

I want to make one thing clear about the 10–20–30 approach. It does not add one dime to the deficit. It simply targets resources from funds already authorized or appropriated.

Over the past 30 years, the national economy has risen and fallen multiple times. During these economic downturns, we have been rightly focused on getting our economy, as a whole, on track. We have not given adequate attention to these communities that are suffering from chronic distress and Depression-era levels of joblessness.

Mr. Speaker, I would hope that, as we undertake this budget, we will find ways to work together to move our Nation closer to Dr. King's dream of a beloved community.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 29 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Loving God, thank You for giving us another day.

All of Congress today remembers the heroic sacrifices and accomplishments of the First Special Service Force of World War II when Americans and Canadians formed for the first time a combined unit trained to be a small, elite corps capable of accomplishing the seemingly impossible.

May their story be an inspiration to the Members of this people's House where a similar cooperative effort toward a shared common goal appears all too often to be seemingly impossible.

We ask, O God, that all who populate these hallways this day be possessed of goodwill, appreciative of the great exploits of so many of our American ancestors.

And may all that is said and done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. CARTWRIGHT) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. CARTWRIGHT led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S BUDGET PROPOSAL

(Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, President Obama released his budget. Unfortunately, it is right out of the liberals' tax-and-spend playbook.

Apparently, the President thinks that since he has already added \$7.5 trillion to America's record \$18 trillion debt, what is \$8.5 trillion more?

As chairman of the Social Security Subcommittee, I am also concerned that President Obama has once again ignored the grim finances of Social Security, and that is a shame because we cannot keep kicking the can down the road. It is just not fair or right to the millions of hardworking Americans who have paid into Social Security.

Mr. Speaker, contrary to what Obama likes to say in his speeches, too many Americans are still struggling. The last thing this country needs is more taxes, more spending, and more debt.

Americans want, need, and deserve better.

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S BUDGET

(Mr. SWALWELL of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, this week, the President put forward his budget. Now, this House has an opportunity to put forward one of our own that reflects the values of those we represent.

We have a choice. We can embrace and support the President's budget that lifts all Americans up, or we can pass another House Republican budget that keeps Americans down.

In California's East Bay, access to child care is going down while costs go up. Access to education has been reduced while costs go up for those who are lucky enough to get in. Paychecks are going down while everyday costs around us are going up.

With this budget, we can address and fix these problems for the families we represent. We can expand access to child care and cut taxes for families paying child care. We can pass and expand access to community colleges with tuition-free community colleges. We can see paycheck progress by making investments in transportation and infrastructure.

We have a choice. Pass the House Republican budget which will keep families down, or we can lift America up and provide more opportunity for everyone with this President's budget.

PUNXSUTAWNEY, PENNSYLVANIA, CELEBRATES 129TH ANNUAL GROUNDHOG DAY

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the town of Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, held its 129th annual Groundhog Day celebration.

Each year, I am honored to be a part of this celebration, being in the Pennsylvania Fifth Congressional District, but a snowstorm moving across the region forced me back down to Washington sooner than expected.

Punxsutawney Phil was awakened from his burrow yesterday at 7:28 in the morning and, despite overcast skies, saw his shadow and predicted 6 more weeks of winter.

Groundhog Day is not only about Phil's prediction of the future and how soon the next season will be upon us; it is a celebration of our past, the Commonwealth heritage, and a time for