

continue to say that we want to work together on a bipartisan basis to get this done.

There was a time when it was not a partisan issue, when Republicans were leaders on building our infrastructure. In fact, President Eisenhower said in 1952: “A network of modern roads is as necessary to our national defense as it is to our national economy and our personal safety.”

What is interesting is that tomorrow is the day when it is 59 years—tomorrow, 59 years ago, Congress approved the Federal Highway Act, connecting all of our country for commerce, for farmers, for families. The rollcall, interestingly, was almost unanimous. Only one Senator voted no. Everybody else voted yes. Ninety-nine voted yes. Then it passed in the House on a voice vote.

Think about all the discussions we are having today. The Federal Highway Act passed on a voice vote in the House. Only one person in the Senate voted no. It was signed by President Eisenhower 3 days later. It was the biggest public works project in our Nation’s history. It could not have happened if not for a triumph of bipartisanship. A Republican President working with a Democratic Congress got this done.

When we look at who benefited from taking that dirt road, paving it, and being able to go across our country, it certainly was colleagues in the West, colleagues in the South. It wasn’t just the cities. In fact, they probably had roads already. It was everybody else, as we moved across the country. So this should not be regional. It should not be partisan. It doesn’t make any sense for us not to come together and get this done.

Behind the teamwork at the time, after they worked together to pass this, construction began on a system of 40,000 miles of highways, enough to circle the globe 1½ times. That is what was done when people worked together to build the strong infrastructure of the 20th century.

It didn’t take long before the economic impact was felt. By the late 1950s, our interstate highways were responsible for 31 percent of the annual growth of the economy. Over 30 percent of the growth in the economy came from that one act, developing the infrastructure to move goods and services and people across our country.

The people of this country were getting to their destinations faster, more safely than ever before. Every rural community was flourishing just as our urban communities had been.

Thanks to President Eisenhower’s leadership and a Democratic-controlled Congress, our roads in the mid-21st century were the envy of the world. Other nations noticed. Those nations aspired to be like us, to be like America in a global economy.

They now are making huge investments in their infrastructure, from China, at 9 percent of their GDP—four times more than we are—to Brazil.

I have said before that when I was in China a couple of years ago, they rolled out 20 new international airports—20 international airports. That didn’t count anything else they were doing.

In Brazil they rolled out for us—when I was there with the Secretary of Agriculture—their new rail system and road system that was going to get agricultural commodities to the ports and move people around their country so they could move forward as a global, economic power.

Today our European competitors spend twice as much as we do, and now it is time for America to step forward because, unfortunately, we are now playing catchup. The World Economic Forum’s Global Competitiveness Report for 2014 and 2015 ranks America 16th in the world in the quality of our roads. America is one spot behind Luxembourg and just one spot ahead of Croatia, as I said before. Yay, we are beating Croatia. It is an embarrassment, and it is not what our people need or our businesses need or what our farmers need or what our workers need.

In 2002, that same report had us at No. 5—the fifth best transportation system. Now we are 16th, and the American Society of Civil Engineers has given America a D. And how many of us would be satisfied if our children came home from school with a D? I know I wouldn’t be.

It also said that 32 percent of America’s major roads are in poor or mediocre condition. We know what has happened when bridges have fallen. We know what happens. I have seen it in Michigan and heard the stories of people driving under overpasses and cement falls down on the car. People’s lives are threatened. People’s lives have been taken.

Driving on bad roads costs motorists \$109 billion in road repairs a year. I talked to one colleague who told me that he had to replace all four tires on his car when he went through one pothole not long ago, and that in the last year he had bought seven new tires for his car, which is way more than he would have been paying if we had created a way to fund our roads on a long-term basis that made sense.

It is not right for Congress to neglect our responsibility to maintain and, in fact, strengthen our infrastructure. In fact, we, as individuals and business people driving on roads, driving across bridges, and moving across our country, are paying for the fact that we have not come together with a long-term plan. We cannot expect our workers and companies to compete in the 21st century global marketplace if we are forced to use 20th century roads and bridges.

So I would say, in conclusion, that we have 36 days left to act. Now, when we want to, we can act pretty quickly.

I commend colleagues from the EPW Committee who have come forward with a 6-year bill. We have in front of us a policy passed by the committee.

I congratulate Senator INHOFE and Senator BOXER for coming forward

with a proposal that will increase the funding over time, and I believe and hope we will do it in an even more robust way. They put forth policies that will, in the long term, create the economic stability for our businesses and the jobs for our workers and our families that they need. The DRIVE Act, as we call it, is an important step forward. I commend the chairman of the Finance Committee for holding hearings on how we finance that, because that is our responsibility.

I say, again, we have enough time to get this done because President Eisenhower, over 50 years ago tomorrow, with a Democratic Congress, got it done. Thirty-six days is enough time for us to meet the expectations of the American people on this issue.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I have been interested in how the Democrats are constantly pushing to get moneys for the Federal highway system. All of us are. Every one of us in this body wants to do everything we can for the highway system. However, they are talking in such big terms that the only way you could possibly reach those kinds of moneys would be with further tax increases.

Now, my experience here is that when our friends on the other side call for tax increases, it is so they can spend. Frankly, I would tell you, if we raised the amount of money they are asking for in tax increases, I could tell you all of the projects that are going to be done, and many of them are not the crucial projects in this country.

All I can say is that we are going to try to find the moneys, but we don’t want to raise taxes, and we certainly don’t want to raise the gas tax at this time. We will find enough moneys to do, hopefully, a multiyear approach toward the highway plan. I am dedicated to try to find that way.

The other committee, the Environment and Public Works Committee, is, I believe, the committee that has passed a bill calling for a 6-year highway program. I hope that it would meet my highest goal, if we could do that, but I don’t think we would be able to do that under the current monetary and economic systems that we have today.

But, nevertheless, I am going to do my best to try to help to get the highway bill through and to do it the right way.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator HATCH be recognized following my remarks.

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

TRIBUTE TO ALAN LEVIN

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, today I wish to honor someone I have had the

privilege of calling a friend for many years and who is retiring after serving the State of Delaware for the past 6 years, Alan Levin. Alan and I both had our first tours of duty in Washington working for the same Republican Senator. I was an intern for Senator William Roth in the early 1980s and Alan was his counsel in the mid-1980s. Alan, a well-known and respected statewide leader in Delaware's Republican Party, has, since 2009, served as the director of the Delaware Economic Development Office, where he has worked every day to attract businesses to Delaware and to help them create good jobs in our communities.

Alan took over at a time when communities throughout Delaware were hemorrhaging jobs and feeling the very worst effects of the great recession. Today Delaware's unemployment rate sits a full point below the national average at 4.5 percent, in part thanks to the great effort of Alan Levin's.

During his tenure, Alan exemplified what it means to be a public servant. It didn't matter to Alan if someone came to him who was thinking of starting a small business that would employ 4 people or if it was a company thinking of moving to Delaware and bringing 400 jobs. No matter what, if it was going to help Delaware, Alan was ready to meet with anyone and show them why there was no better place than the First State, our home State of Delaware, to run a business.

Of course, Alan's service to our State began well before 2009. Long a leader in the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce for more than two decades, Alan ran Happy Harry's Pharmacy, a family business that he grew over decades of discipline and capable leadership, ultimately expanding it to 76 stores in our region. That success is an important part of who Alan is, because to really know him is to know that his job at the Delaware Economic Development Office was not one he needed; it was one he chose.

Alan could have continued and built his success in the business world—anyone could tell you that—but he made a decision at that key point in his life to strive for something else, something more to make his home State a better place. He recognized his considerable skills, talents, and knowledge and decided to use them to help families and businesses across our State succeed. That is a profound thing. In a world where there are far too many people who shun public life and public service for good reason, Alan stepped up to the plate when Delaware needed him most.

Now, fortunately for all of us, Alan isn't going far. We will still get to see him in southern Delaware, where he will be working with SoDel Concepts in their successful restaurants. It is hopeful that he will get a chance to trade in his business suit for flip-flops and a beach chair from time to time. I just wanted to take this moment on the floor to thank Alan and to thank especially his wife Ellen and his wonderful

sons, Andrew, Daniel, Jason, and Jess, for letting us have Alan in public service for so many years where he has made such a difference. It is my hope he will get to enjoy his family, his grandchildren, and the entire Delaware community, which is so grateful to Alan for his public service.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). The Senator from Utah.

WORKING TOGETHER IN THE SENATE

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the progress of the Senate under the new Republican leadership. In the first 6 months of this Congress, we have passed bipartisan, commonsense legislation that has delivered meaningful results to the American people.

As we work to return the Senate to regular order—and that has not been an easy thing—we are rebuilding this institution's reputation as the world's greatest deliberative body, something that it has not been over the last number of years. To that end, we have renewed our commitment to the open amendment process and the committee system, which give all Members—from the most seasoned chairman to the freshman—a hand in drafting and improving legislation.

The progress we have made is remarkable, especially considering the difficult situation we inherited. At the end of the 113th Congress, partisan grandstanding and festering dysfunction had tarnished this body's reputation. This Senate was beset by gridlock and weak leadership more focused on political messaging than constructive legislation. At the end of the 2014, Congress had a historically low approval rating of only 9 percent and, in many respects, the way the Congress was being run, we deserved it. Americans had every reason to disapprove of what was going on. These persistent low approval ratings reflected the American people's frustration with their Federal Government and the direction of our country under the failed policies and leadership of the President and his party.

Under our new leadership, we are working to regain the trust of the American people. Already, the Senate has taken up and passed nearly 40 pieces of bipartisan legislation, and our extensive efforts to restore confidence in the legislative branch are beginning to bear fruit. Consider our legislative accomplishments thus far.

At the beginning of this Congress, Republicans and Democrats came together to pass the Hoeven-Manchin bill to authorize the unreasonably delayed Keystone XL Pipeline.

We also passed my Amy and Vicki act, a bill I authored to create an effective, balanced restitution process for victims of child pornography. Others deserve lots of credit on that bill.

In a bipartisan manner, Republican leaders cooperated with Democrats to

repeal and replace Medicare's sustainable growth rate. Instead of resorting to patch after patch, year after year—that is what we had been doing here for so long; that is really a tremendous achievement—we came together to work out a balanced package that both protects seniors and includes important cost controls. It demonstrated the scope of what Congress can do when Members work together, and it represented an important step forward in reforming our Nation's entitlement programs. With regard to that, we paired it with the CHIP bill, which was the Hatch-Kennedy bill for young children who were left out of the health care system, and that passed too.

We built on this positive momentum when the Senate passed the Cornyn-Klobuchar human trafficking bill—a very important bill. With this legislation, Congress established a special fund providing victims of human trafficking the resources they need to repair their shattered lives.

This bill suffered a number of hiccups along the way. Yet ultimately we were able to come together in a collaborative fashion to overcome our differences.

We again bridged the partisan divide when we passed the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act—a monumental piece of legislation. This legislation ensures Congress's right to oversee any agreement the President reaches with Iranian leaders and reasserts the Senate's valuable role in approving international treaties. Despite our divergent opinions on the Obama administration's negotiation efforts, we were able to devise a compromise that earned the support of nearly every Senator.

These are not small achievements. It is amazing we have been able to do so many in these first 6 months. Just last week, we worked together, yet again, in a bipartisan fashion to pass the National Defense Authorization Act, reauthorizing important defense programs critical to our national security—a complex and very difficult bill to handle. And no less than our wonderful Senator from Arizona, Mr. McCAIN, handled that matter on the floor, along with the help of a lot of others.

In passing this legislation, our new majority did not run roughshod over the minority. Rather, we collaborated with our colleagues in the minority to draft legislation agreeable to both sides.

Our bipartisan work hasn't been limited to this Chamber. We have also worked closely with the White House to pass trade legislation critical to our country's economic future. In fact, just a short while ago, the President called me and thanked me. His top Chief of Staff Denis McDonough called me yesterday and thanked me—something that, frankly, I was very grateful for.

In fact, yesterday's passage of trade promotion authority might be the