than 40 hours a week on the job, they should be paid fairly for it. That is just the bottom line.

I have heard from some of my Republican colleagues that they do not want to update overtime rules. But if the Republicans want to take away this basic worker protection—basic worker protection—they are going to have to answer to millions of hard-working Americans who are putting in overtime without receiving a dime in extra pay. They can try, but I know I and many others are going to be right here fighting back for the workers and families we represent.

Boosting wages and expanding economic stability and security is good for families, and it is good for our economy. And, by the way, that is exactly what we should be focused on here in Congress—to help grow our economy from the middle out, not just the top down.

This isn't the only action we need to take to raise wages and expand economic stability for our families today. In the coming weeks and months, I am going to be working closely with Senate Democrats to continue our efforts to raise the minimum wage, to expand access to paid sick leave and fair and predictable work schedules, and to ensure women get equal pay for equal work.

But restoring overtime protections is a critical part of our work to make sure more families get much needed economic stability. Enacting these policies would be strong steps in the right direction to bring back the American dream of economic security and a stable middle-class life for millions of families.

For workers such as Paul, who just want fair pay for a fair day's work, for the parents who have sacrificed family time for overtime and not seen a dime in extra pay, and for families who are looking for some much needed economic security, I urge all of my colleagues to support restoring overtime protections.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 3038

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3038) to provide an extension of Federal-aid highway, highway safety, motor carrier safety, transit, and other programs funded out of the Highway Trust Fund, and for other purposes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

SCHEDULE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, let me indicate to all Members that discussions continue on a way forward on a multiyear highway bill, and we will have more to say about that later in the day.

HONORING THE SERVICEMEMBERS WHO WERE KILLED IN THE CHATTANOOGA TRAGEDY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, at dawn, with Congress returning to session, we lowered the flag at the U.S. Capitol to half-staff in honor of the servicemembers who were killed in Chattanooga. What we saw there was a tragedy for our country. It was a terrible blow to everyone who loved these brave Americans. We will never forget their sacrifice, and we will continue to keep their families and their memories in our thoughts today.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROUNDS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

DRIVE ACT

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, we are going to be moving to the highway bill. In fact, we are going to have the motion to proceed today at 2:15 p.m., and I think it is important that people realize the significance of this.

We do a lot of work around here that is not really critical. There are some issues that are. If you would like to read the Constitution sometime when you have nothing else to do, it will tell you that what we are supposed to be doing are two things: defending America and roads and bridges. That is what it says in Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution. So anytime you are sitting around with nothing to do, you ought to read it, and you will realize that what we are going to do at 2:15 today is very significant.

Passing a long-term transportation reauthorization bill has been my top priority since I resumed the office of the chairmanship of the Environment and Public Works Committee. It is probably the second most important thing we do, second only to the Defense authorization bill.

In the first hearing we had in January, we had Secretary Foxx, the Secretary of Transportation, who is an outstanding Secretary. He is just as concerned about this as we are. Senator BOXER and I brought in Secretary Foxx as well as local government leaders to share the importance of ongoing Federal and State partnerships in maintaining the modern surface infrastructure system. Since that time, my committee has put forward a bipartisan bill called the DRIVE Act. It is significant, and it is not partisan. There is no such thing as a Democratic bridge or a Republican bridge or a Democratic road or a Republican road.

Historically, Republicans have been recognized as leading in this area, from way back in the days when President Lincoln spearheaded the Transcontinental Railroad; Teddy Roosevelt and the Panama Canal; and, of course, the Interstate Highway System, created by President Eisenhower.

President Eisenhower recognized that weakened defense and interstate commerce made our Nation vulnerable to the world. In 1952, when he proposed the Interstate Highway System, he commented that this was every bit as much about defending America as it was about the economy and being able to transport commerce around the States. In laying out the full interstate system, he envisioned it to be the physical backbone of the economy, fueling the growth of our GDP, our cities, and the competitiveness of our exports. This vision and certainty maximized the economic and mobility benefits of the system. Businesses and individuals knew that they could locate somewhere on the future interstate system and be connected to not just the rest of the country but the rest of the world.

This legacy system, which was built over 50 years ago, had a design life of 50 years, and it has actually been over 60 years—close to 70 years since it was built. We are beyond our warranty period, and we are in serious danger of eroding half a century of investments without proper maintenance, modernization, and reconstruction. We are on borrowed time with a system that is in full need of restoration. Our national interstate system currently has a maintenance backlog of $185 billion on about 47,000 miles of interstate, and that is just to bring it back to the design it was in 1956.

Maintaining Eisenhower's vision of economic opportunity and strength in defense requires a continued partnership between the Federal Government and the States, which is the hallmark of the DRIVE Act. Yet, due to 33 short-term patches since 2005—I have to say this because this is significant. We

should be operating on a transportation reauthorization system all the time. The last one we did was in 2005. I was the author of it, in fact. That was a 5-year bill. Since that time, we have gone through some 30 different short-term extensions. A short-term extension doesn't do any good. A transportation reauthorization bill is needed in order to accomplish all the reforms that are necessary and to have time to handle the major, large problems we have to deal with.

Passing a long-term bill is crucial to many aspects of day-to-day life in America. More than 250 million vehicles and 18 billion tons—valued at $17 trillion—in goods traverse across the country every year. Yet every day 20,000 miles of our highways slow below the posted speed limits or experience stop-and-go conditions. The National Highway System is only 5.5 percent of the Nation's total roads, but it carries 55 percent of all vehicle traffic and 97 percent of the truck-borne freight. We are talking about 97 percent of the freight on only 5 percent of the highways.

Congress just passed a 2-month extension. Now we have a responsibility to pass a long-term bill.

The highway trust fund currently needs $15 billion a year to maintain the current spending. When we started out with the highway trust fund, that was a percentage every year. When someone would drive up and pay a tax when buying gas, that was supposed to be for taking care of the highways—and it did.

I can remember when I was serving in the House. The biggest problem we had at that time was we had too much money in the highway trust fund. We had more than we needed. I remember when President Clinton came in. He wanted to rob the highway trust fund for all of his programs. He got by with it for a while. That is not the problem anymore. The problem now is there is not enough money.

The situation has changed. People are not using as much fuel. So we have fallen short by $15 billion a year of having the amount of money necessary to continue today's spending level. That is $15 billion a year. This is a 6-year bill. That means about $90 billion is needed in excess of the amount of money, revenue, that is derived from the highway trust fund.

The DRIVE Act—that is what we call this—will put America back on the map as the best place to do business. The DRIVE Act has several key components that position America's transportation system to support our growing economy. It prioritizes funding for core transportation formula programs to provide States and local governments with a strong Federal partner. It prioritizes the Interstate Highway System, that national highway system, and the bridges at risk for funding shortfalls.

It creates a new multibillion-dollar-per-year freight program to help States deliver projects and promotes the safe and efficient transportation of goods. It targets funds for major projects in the community, such as shown right here. This is a picture of the Brent Spence Bridge I have in the Chamber. This goes from Kentucky to Ohio and actually takes transportation also to Indiana. This is a very old bridge. You can see it is going to have to be replaced.

These are the huge things you cannot do with short-term extensions. You are going to have to have a major bill, such as the one we are having right now.

Lastly, the DRIVE Act provides greater efficiency in the project delivery process, reforms that put DOT in the driver's seat during the NEPA process by requiring agencies to bring all the issues to the table, keeping them under a deadline, and eliminating duplication.

One of the problems we have with the environmental requirements is they end up delaying projects. So this bill gives exceptions. Let me say that I was very proud of Senator BOXER. Senator BOXER is a very proud liberal. I am a very proud conservative. One of the few things we agree on is the highway bill. It does require some changes that allow them to go ahead and keep working in spite of some of the NEPA requirements or the environmental requirements. This gives bridge projects special consideration, with new exemptions from section 4(f), the historic property reviews for concrete and steel bridges—a new exemption from the Migratory Bird Treaty Act for bridges in serious condition.

Now, this sounds kind of off the wall, but one of the problems is the swallows. The swallows go in there and they block—they nest in there. So we are supposed to be repairing bridges. The swallow is not an endangered species. It is not listed, but the Migratory Bird Treaty Act does give them protection, and this waives that in the case of bridge construction. It also enforces greater transparency for Federal funds to show the taxpayers where the money is being spent.

This is just a brief overview of the bill. As the DRIVE Act progresses on the floor, I intend to address the significance of each program in more detail. The most important point I must address about the DRIVE Act is that our bill sets funding levels for the next 6 years.

There is, at the very least, what the Federal Government should provide, so States, local officials, and the construction industry can gear up for the large $500 million to $2 billion major highway projects and bridge projects so we can get them off the ground. They have to get ready for it. That is what this bill does. Thousands of projects across the Nation are currently in jeopardy, and construction will come to a halt unless legislation becomes a reality.

Future projects like—let's go back. You saw already the Brent Spence Bridge in Kentucky. There is also the $2.6 billion Mobile River Bridge in Alabama. This is a projection of what it will look like. This is as it is today. This would be impossible without something like a 6-year bill. In DC, the Memorial Bridge is literally crumbling into the Potomac. People do not understand what happens to these bridges. You can see—in our case in Oklahoma, we had a bridge over I–35. In the year 2005, as a part of that bill, that legislation, we were able to repair it. In 2004, right before that took place, one of the chunks came off—just like you are seeing here on the bridge—and actually killed a young lady who was driving under it with her three children. That is how serious this is. This is the Arlington Memorial Bridge. It was built in 1932. Something has to be done with that. We will be able to do projects like this.

More than just a small part of the economic success enjoyed by the United States over the past 50 years has been the Interstate System. Today, we literally sit at the crossroads of its future. The solution is urgent. This is why Senator BOXER and I are bringing the DRIVE Act to the Senate floor as a solution. It will ensure that States have the tools and the certainty to make the necessary new investments to rebuild Eisenhower's vision, to fight growing congestion, to maintain the mobility of goods and services necessary to keep the economy going. By passing the DRIVE Act, Congress will be able to take pave the way for the next 50 years of American excellence in infrastructure.

I have to say this. The importance of this is that the only alternative is to have short-term extensions. I am talking about 1- and 2-month extensions, of which you cannot organize your labor. The cost of that—and by the way, I say this to my conservative friends—they will be friends, and I can say this, since I have been ranked as the most conservative Member of this body many times—that the conservative position is not to oppose this massive highway bill that we are going to have but to oppose the short-term extensions. It costs about 30 percent more for a short-term extension than it does for a highway reauthorization bill. That is why this is so important.

Later on, I am going to go over many of the other bridges and structures around that are going to have to be addressed. In the meantime, this is something we are supposed to do. I kind of will end up where we started off; that is, there is an old document that nobody reads anymore called the Constitution. You go back and read that, you will find out what we in this body are supposed to be doing. It is defending America and it is providing bridges and roads.

So as we progress on this, there will not be time to go into any more detail now because we have Members wanting to come down and use both the Republican and Democratic time between

now and the noon hour, but at 2:15 we are going to have a motion we will be voting on to move to the consideration of this bill. It doesn't say you have to be for it or against it or you want to change it.

If you want to have amendments, you have to get to the bill before you can have amendments. So a motion-to-proceed vote will take place at 2:15. Now, I want to tell all of the Members who are out there that if you have amendments—we are going to try to knock this thing out in 2 weeks. We are going to be down here talking about it for 2 weeks. But if you have amendments, if you want a chance to offer your amendments, you can offer them, but bring them down, file your amendments. If you do not do that, we will pass a deadline and you will not be able to do that. So I encourage our Members to do that. I look forward to the next 2 weeks of discussing and passing the second most significant bill we will consider this year.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

WASHINGTON EXEMPTION FROM OBAMACARE

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to again bring up a very important issue. It is important because it impacts a major part of our lives, a major law that Congress passed several years ago. It is important because it goes to a fundamental principle—what should be a fundamental principle of American democracy—that what Washington passes for the rest of the country it should live with itself. I am talking about the Washington exemption from ObamaCare and my effort, with others, to end that double standard.

As the Presiding Officer remembers, during the ObamaCare debate several years ago, this issue came up. It came up in the context of a floor amendment. It was an important floor amendment, one of the very few that conservatives in the Senate passed on the Senate floor.

That amendment to the ObamaCare bill said that all Members of Congress and our staff would get our health care through the so-called ObamaCare exchange, just as millions of other Americans would under this plan—no special rules, no special treatment, no special exemption or special subsidy. That was important to say that Congress would live under whatever law passed for the rest of America, and that amendment was passed on the Senate floor. It became part of the broader bill, and it was eventually passed into law. Obviously, as you know, I opposed—strongly opposed—and continue to oppose the ObamaCare bill and the law, but that amendment was made a part of it.

Well, after it was passed into law, it was sort of one of those cases of which NANCY PELOSI said that we have to pass the law to figure out what is in it. After the fact, lots of folks on Capitol Hill in Washington started reading the law more carefully, read that provision, and said: Oh, you know what. How are we going to deal with this? Surely, surely we aren't going to be subjected to the ObamaCare exchanges the same as millions upon millions of other Americans—even though that is exactly what the statute said.

Well, at that point a very determined lobbying campaign got under way—a lobbying campaign of many Members on Capitol Hill—of the President. And the campaign was simple. People rushed to the administration, rushed to President Obama and said: Oh, you need to change this. We can't live with the statute and the significant section of the statute that says all Members of Congress need to go to the exchange for their health insurance, just as millions of other Americans do.

Sure enough, after months of that very determined and, sadly, bipartisan lobbying campaign, President Obama issued one of his countless Executive orders and edicts to essentially change, with the stroke of his pen, contrary to statute, a significant part of the ObamaCare statute.

He has done that dozens—if not hundreds—of times, and this is one significant example of that. He changed what the statute said and took a lot of the sting out of that provision of the law for Members of Congress.

Through an OPM rule, he said two things. First, Members of Congress, when you go to the exchange, which is mandated, don't worry; you are going to have a big taxpayer-funded subsidy follow you to the exchange—unavailable to every other American at our income level and completely unique to Members of Congress. No other American going to the ObamaCare exchanges enjoys this. But out of thin air, we are going to give you a big, taxpayer-funded subsidy that is nowhere in the statute.

Then the second significant thing President Obama did through that OPM rule was to say this: Members of Congress, this doesn't have to apply to your staff even though it says it does. You can designate whomever you want on your staff as ''nonofficial'' and they don't have to go to the ObamaCare exchange at all.

Well, virtually all of my Republican colleagues regularly come to the floor and rightly complain about President Obama changing statutory law with the stroke of his pen, acting beyond his authority. This is a crystal-clear example of that. If we complain about it in other context, I think we should speak up and complain about it even when it benefits us. So that is what I am doing.

We should not stand for this Washington exemption from ObamaCare. We should not stand for this complete, complete double standard. We should insist that we live by that clear language of the ObamaCare statute so that every Member of Congress gets his or her health care on the so-called ObamaCare exchange, just as millions of other Americans do—no exemption, no special subsidy, and no special treatment in any way, shape or form.

I have been fighting since that OPM rule to make sure we do exactly that. There will be a floor amendment this week to pursue that end, and I urge my colleagues to do the right thing, to support that important floor amendment. It is important to do that for two reasons—one, focused on principle and one focused on real practicality.

First, as to the principle, I think it is a basic fundamental principle of American democracy—it certainly should be—that what Washington passes on the rest of the country it lives with itself. That should be a fundamental principle of American democracy.

So my legislation, the No Exemption for Washington from Obamacare Act, the floor amendment which embodies exactly that legislation, would say that every Member of Congress, the President, the Vice President, and their political appointees get their health care from the ObamaCare exchanges just like millions of other Americans—no special exemption, no special subsidy, no special treatment, no special insider deal.

The second reason we should support that is a lot more practical, and that is that when you make the cook eat his own cooking, it often improves dramatically. When you force the chef to have every meal out of his own kitchen, the product often improves dramatically.

So that is what I want to do in a simple, straightforward way, abiding by the clear language of the ObamaCare statute itself. All of official Washington—every Member of Congress, the President, the Vice President, and all of their political appointees—should have to go to the exchanges for their health care, just like millions of other Americans who have to as their fallback option. And we should do it in the same way—no special exemption, no special subsidy, no special treatment, and no special insider deal.

It is important we say this, and it is important we do it. We have an opportunity do it on the floor as we debate the bill before us.

I urge my colleagues to support this important floor amendment and to lend support to the free-standing bill that I have introduced.

As I travel to Louisiana, I have regular townhall meetings, and I have regular telephone townhalls when I am stuck here in Washington and voting. Probably, the biggest single complaint I hear that really and rightly gets under the skin of my fellow Louisiana citizens goes to the heart of this discussion.