

wanted to know where you lived, and if the color of your skin wasn't just right when you were brought to the hospital, you went on your way. Today the disparity in hospitalization rates between minorities and White Americans has decreased significantly.

Medicare and Medicaid have protected the health and well-being of millions of seniors, individuals with disabilities, low-income individuals, and millions of children.

In the past 50 years, Medicaid has grown to be the Nation's primary health insurance program for low-income individuals and families. Medicaid has grown to cover nearly 70 million Americans, including more than 40 million children.

Today Medicaid covers nearly half of all births in the United States and ensures that children receive the health care they desperately need in the early stages of their lives. By providing early childhood health care to millions, Medicaid has improved the long-term health of children and contributed to their overall quality of life.

Medicaid has also provided health care and long-term services to 16 million low-income seniors and individuals with disabilities. Medicaid pays for services that Medicare does not cover. It ensures that low-income seniors and individuals with disabilities have access to a wide variety of services. These options allow them to remain in their communities rather than relocate to nursing homes. But when they do have to go to a nursing home, the vast majority of people in convalescent centers in America are Medicaid recipients.

Sadly, 22 States have chosen not to expand Medicaid coverage, and this decision has hurt millions of people who can't afford health care any other way. Why do States and the Republican Governors of those States oppose this? Because it is part of ObamaCare.

To his credit, the conservative Republican Governor from the State of Nevada, Brian Sandoval, was one of the first Governors to sign on to this program. He didn't care if it was a Democratic program or a Republican program; it helped people in Nevada who needed help. I truly admire him for doing that. The expansion of Medicaid in States throughout the country would boost States' economic activity—and Brian Sandoval knows that—and create job growth, in addition to providing quality, affordable health care to vulnerable Americans. The State of Nevada is a relatively sparsely populated State. Almost 200,000 people are receiving the health care they need and would not have but for ObamaCare and Governor Brian Sandoval.

Medicaid expansion would benefit every State. The Affordable Care Act transformed Medicaid into a true safety net for vulnerable Americans. We should be expanding this coverage, not restricting it for partisan gain.

Medicare and Medicaid have protected Americans for 50 years, and our

Nation is healthier and stronger because of its existence. But despite 50 years of undeniable Medicare and Medicaid success, Republicans remain committed to ending access to health care for those who need it the most.

We will be celebrating ObamaCare's success 50 years from now while Republicans call for the Affordable Care Act to be phased out, like Jeb Bush wants. In 50 years, will there be a Republican Presidential wanna-be out there saying "Let's get rid of ObamaCare; let's phase it out"? I hope not.

Republicans have repeatedly engaged in politically motivated attacks designed to undermine the law that transformed our Nation's health care system. The Affordable Care Act has helped millions of Americans to gain access to quality health care. Since the Affordable Care Act was signed into law, 16.4 million Americans have gotten quality health care—many of them for the first time in their lives. The United States has seen the largest decline in the uninsured rate in decades, if not forever. In the last 18 months, the uninsured rate for nonelderly adults has fallen by 35 percent. Health care costs have grown at their slowest rate in 50 years. Patient safety initiatives are keeping Americans safe.

The Affordable Care Act is working. It is the law of the land, and that is not going to change. There have been more than 50 votes to repeal or undermine the Affordable Care Act and there have been repeated challenges to this law before the courts, but we have won on every level. The American people have won twice with the stamp of approval by the Supreme Court. Last month we witnessed the Supreme Court rule, as I have indicated, again for the second time in favor of the Affordable Care Act. It is here to stay. It is here to stay because the American people want affordable health care.

American seniors need affordable, accessible health care coverage, and they need it right now.

Five decades ago—50 years ago—President Johnson said:

No longer will older Americans be denied the healing miracle of modern medicine. No longer will illness crush and destroy the savings they have so carefully put away over a lifetime so that they might enjoy dignity in their later years. No longer will young families see their own incomes, and their own hopes eaten away simply because they are carrying out their deep moral obligations to their parents, and to their uncles, and their aunts.

The Republicans have spent the last five decades fighting against President Johnson's dream. The Republicans are determined to roll back access to health care for Americans. It is hard to believe, but it is true. Just this week the Senate held a vote on whether to repeal this lifesaving program—again. It is clear that after 50 years, the Republicans have learned nothing.

We should be building on the success of Medicare, Medicaid, and the Affordable Care Act. We need to be expanding coverage to all Americans. We should

be encouraging States to expand Medicaid access. Democrats are committed—just as President Johnson was half a century ago—to giving Americans the health care they need and deserve.

Will the Chair announce the schedule for today.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### HIRE MORE HEROES ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 22, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 22) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of determining the employers to which the employer mandate applies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 12 p.m. will be equally divided in the usual form.

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, soon we will vote on final passage of a bill that will provide a long-term solution to the shortfalls of the highway trust fund. If enacted, this bill will provide the longest paid-for authorization of highway and transportation spending in nearly a decade.

This bill is the result of an incredible amount of work by a number of Senators, including our distinguished majority leader as well as the chairman and ranking member of the Environment and Public Works Committee. I commend them for setting aside partisan differences to find a solution despite the cynicism and naysaying from some of our colleagues and others here in Washington.

I am also pleased to have been able to play a part in these efforts, working with Leader MCCONNELL to identify suitable offsets to pay for the reauthorization of the highway and transit programs. While the Finance Committee, which I chair, has jurisdiction over the funding stream for the highway trust fund, we had to cull together offsets from other areas and other committees in order to pay for this multiyear highway bill. This required the cooperation of multiple chairmen and committees, all working together toward a common goal.

One of the most remarkable things about this bill is that it provides 3 full years of highway funding without raising taxes or adding to the deficit. We have heard time and again that a long-term highway bill would only be possible if we included a big tax increase. With the upcoming final vote on this

bill, the Senate is about to prove otherwise, and it will do so with bipartisan support. This is how the Senate should operate, particularly when we are dealing with something as big and important as highway funding.

As I said last week, this bill represents a victory for good government and is yet another bipartisan win for the Senate under the current leadership. Like many of my colleagues, my hope is that eventually the House of Representatives will follow suit and work toward passage of a similar long-term highway bill so that we can come together, reconcile differences, and finish the job. While I know there are some divisions on the other side of the Capitol about the Senate's overall strategy and maybe even some of the particulars in our bill, I think we have shown that a long-term bill is a realistic goal and a preferable option to yet another short-term highway patch.

Once again, I am well aware of the desire of some in Congress and in the administration to marry long-term highway funding to some kind of tax reform. As the chairman of the Senate's tax-writing committee and its most outspoken supporter of tax reform, I think that idea has a lot of merit. I commend those who are thinking in those terms. Fortunately, this bill will provide just that opportunity while giving added certainty to our States as they plan their highway projects and to our builders and job creators looking to expand and hire more workers.

Put simply, the Senate's highway approach is a win for everyone. The House should consider our approach, and I hope they will.

Long story short, today is a good day. Today the Senate will accomplish something few thought possible. While the process has been a bit more difficult and divisive than many of us would have liked, I personally am very pleased to see the Senate function properly and govern responsibly.

There are a lot of things we can fight over here in Congress, but I think we can—or at least should—all agree on the need to come together to pay for our Nation's infrastructure. I am pleased to join with my colleagues—Senators from both parties—in taking a major step toward that goal today.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak as in morning business for no more than 10 minutes.

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. I thank the Presiding Officer.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF MEDICARE

Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Medicare. Fifty years ago, on July 30, 1965, President Lyndon Johnson signed into law the legislation to create Medicare. I say thank God for Medicare. It

was a great idea 50 years ago, 50 months ago, 50 weeks ago, and 50 minutes ago.

I stand on the Senate floor to say that we must keep Medicare as Medicare and keep the integrity and solvency of Medicare. We cannot turn Medicare into a voucher; we cannot dilute it, phase it out, or eliminate it. And until my last vote is cast in the Senate, I will defend Medicare.

I saw what it meant. In the summer of 1965, I had just graduated from the University of Maryland School of Social Work. Change was in the air. The civil rights movement was making its progress toward history and moving forward. There were beginning doubts about the Vietnam war, and the Nation was recovering from the assassination of President Kennedy. President Johnson wanted to lead in a bold way, having had a landslide victory, and he said he wanted to create a great society. He knew that a great society meant that we had to have a great heart.

What we knew then, as we know today, is that people feared financial bankruptcy because of health care costs. They were terrified that a heart attack that resulted in hospitalization would bankrupt the family. They delayed the idea of getting cataract surgery, which then needed to be done in the hospital, not because they were afraid of the surgery but because they were afraid of the cost of surgery. If you were a small, independent business person over 65, you often had no health insurance. It didn't matter whether you were in agriculture or an urban small business.

Medicare changed all of that. Medicare protected people from two things. No. 1, it protected them so that they could go to a doctor when they needed to and have health care when they needed it. No. 2, it protected them from financial disaster.

Today, 55 million Americans—nearly every senior—have access to Medicare, including 1 million seniors.

What was so significant about that bill is that it provided universal access to doctors.

No. 2, it had no barriers because of preexisting conditions.

No. 3, it was portable because it was national. Whether a person was in Maryland or Utah or whatever State, Medicare was the national program, and it was viewed as an earned benefit.

America at that time had many things going for it. One was that we had a sense of self-confidence that we could really solve problems and meet the compelling needs of our country, and the other was that we had compassion.

One of my guiding principles, which I believed then as well, and that guided the Nation at that time was the guiding principle of honor thy father and mother. We knew that it was not only a great commandment to live by, but it was a good policy to live by. Therefore, we ensured that all Americans had access to health care, regardless of their income.

As I said, in the 1960s—1965 was the year that I actually graduated from the school of social work. I worked for a program called “responding to the elderly's abilities and sicknesses otherwise neglected.” It was called Operation Reason. Our job—a social worker and a nurse, one of my oldest friends from school—was to help elderly people know about the program and sign up for the program and help them use the program. It was the joy—the sheer joy—people experienced when they heard about this program, knowing that simply because they were American citizens, their needs would be taken care of, with a modest premium.

Part A was hospitalization—a safety net. In those days, care for significant illnesses had to be done in the hospital. The advances of medicine and medical technology has allowed us now to do less in the hospital, such as cataract surgery and other surgeries being done on an outpatient basis. Those advances weren't there in the 1960s. So people no longer had to fear the cost of hospitalization.

Then there was this program called Part B. That meant seniors had access to see a doctor, to see if they had diabetes, to see if they had high blood pressure, to see why they couldn't see those grandchildren or do their work on the family farm, the small business or in the factories that we had in those days. What they needed was maybe better eyesight—that cataract surgery. Maybe they were feeling old and slow not because of age but because they had diabetes or other issues. Then, of course, there was the cost of the dreaded “c” word—cancer.

My colleague and I worked in the neighborhoods to make sure we took care of how people could get to the facilities, know about those services, and know about those barriers. In those days, Baltimore seniors were struggling. When they retired, it was often the end of health insurance. It meant nearly half of the seniors were uninsured. They went to clinics, standing in very long lines, often shuttled back and forth from one clinic to another. They got their blood work here, they looked at their kidneys there, and they looked at their eyes here. Their concept of primary care was fragmented.

Before Medicare, millions of seniors, as I have said, were just one heart attack away from bankruptcy or one cancer diagnosis away from destitution. That was before Medicare.

Many were skeptical about Medicare. Once again, the other party fought it. They were wondering what it would mean. People were skeptical. Was this a big government move or was it a big opportunity? My job was to show them that this program was not about big government, but about government with a big heart.

After four months of operation, we had enrolled hundreds of people into this much needed program. And what

has it meant? Before Medicare, 48 percent of seniors had no health insurance. Today, only 2 percent are uninsured. Out-of-pocket costs have decreased. Before Medicare, seniors paid 56 percent of health care costs out of their pocket. Imagine what that meant if you were hospitalized in those days. Life expectancy is now 5 years longer. Death from heart disease has dropped. Our elderly poverty rate has declined. Seniors have access to more affordable drugs.

This isn't about numbers, and it isn't about statistics. It is about people. It is about the compelling needs of human beings. It is about government that says: I am on your side and at your side, and we are going to use our national resources, our national brain power, our national know-how to be able to create a program that you can participate in and that at the end of the day, your life will be better and our society will be improved.

I am really proud of what the Congress and the President did 50 years ago. I hope we have that same attitude again. It is not about big government; it is about government with a big heart.

I will say this: There are those who continue to talk about ending Medicare. Most recently, a Presidential candidate who I think has incredible ability—Jeb Bush—said he wanted to phase out Medicare. I don't get it. How do we phase out Medicare? Do we start first with age? Do we phase out 90-year-olds, and then the next year we phase out 80-year-olds? How do we phase it out? Do we phase it out by disease? OK, this year, no more diabetics; OK, this year, no more cancer patients—they really cost a lot of money. What does it mean to phase it out, and what are we phasing it out to?

Medicare cannot be privatized. We must continue it as a guaranteed benefit. Do we need to reform it, take a look at it, refresh it? The answer is yes. We have done that, such as when we added Part B. But I will say this: No matter what, thank God for Medicare.

When we go around this country, no matter how they feel about government or about Congress, people love Social Security and they love Medicare. We have to defend it. We have to make sure it is there as we need it.

So on this 50th anniversary of Medicare, let's come together to make sure we continue to be focused not on big government but on a sense of self-confidence and a belief in our country to solve big problems and that we continue to act like a country with a big heart. We can do it because we have done it in the past.

I will conclude by saying: Thank God for Medicare, and I thank God for the ability to be here on the floor of the Senate to defend it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE  
CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I have a unanimous consent request, but I am waiting for Senator GRASSLEY from Iowa, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, to propound it, so I will speak first and then do the request.

I rise today to address the growing crisis of judicial vacancies in our Federal and district courts.

There are no values more American than the speedy application of justice and the right to petition the government for a redress of grievances. Frankly, neither of those can be achieved without justices and judges on the bench.

It is the job of the Senate to responsibly keep up with the need to confirm judges. Yet we have a 10-percent vacancy in judicial positions throughout the United States. We have 28 districts that are considered "judicial emergencies." In my home State of New York, in the Western District, there is not a single active district judge—zero. The Western District has one of the busiest caseloads in the country. It handles more criminal cases than Washington, DC, or Boston or Cleveland. The delays for civil trials are by far the worst in the country. Yet they don't have a single active Federal district judge. If not for the efforts of two judges on senior status who are volunteering to hear cases in their retirement, the Western District would be at a full judicial standstill.

How have we gotten to this point? My friends on the other side of the aisle slowed the pace of confirmations when the Senate was under Democratic leadership, creating these backlogs, but we still pushed as many through as we could. Now, under the new Republican Senate, more than half the year into this new Congress, the Republican leadership has scheduled votes on only five Federal judges. It is July. They have scheduled votes on five Federal judges. That is a disgrace.

For context, in the seventh year of President Bush's Presidency, the Democratic Senate—we were in charge then—approved 25, compared to 5 here. That is a direct one-to-one comparison, apples to apples. At this point in President Bush's term, Democrats had confirmed five times the amount of judges that this Republican Congress—this Republican Senate—has confirmed. That is unacceptable.

Right now, there are 14 non-controversial judges on the Executive Calendar, including 3 highly qualified judges for New York. I know these nominees. They are brilliant legal minds, experienced jurists and, above all, they are moderate.

Larry Vilardo and Ann Donnelly are two whom I have recommended, and LaShann DeArcy Hall was recommended by my good friend, the junior Senator from New York, KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND. They should all be confirmed, but we don't know if they will ever come up for a vote.

I wish to spend a moment telling my colleagues about these qualified judges.

Mr. Vilardo is a true Buffalonian and will be a credit to the bench in his hometown. He went to Canisius College, Harvard Law School, and was a clerk on the Fifth Circuit. He is fundamentally and classically a Buffalonian—salt of the Earth, honest, and grounded. Buffalo is in his bones; it is part of who he is. As with so many other people from the region, the city has made him tough, levelheaded, fair, and decent. As the first in his family to graduate from college, he adds an important element of socioeconomic diversity to the court. The people of the Western District of New York will be incredibly lucky to have him on the bench.

As perfect as Larry Vilardo is for the bench in Buffalo, so are Ann Donnelly and LaShann DeArcy Hall perfect for the bench in Brooklyn.

Judge Donnelly has dedicated her life to public service. She spent a quarter decade as a prosecutor in the prestigious Office of the District Attorney of New York County under DA Morgenthal. I could tick off more of her accomplishments. The list would be long. She is more than a brilliant resume. She is at her core a kind, thoughtful, and compassionate person.

Let me say a word about LaShann DeArcy Hall. I can't take credit for her nomination to the Eastern District of New York. That goes to Senator GILLIBRAND. But I am proud to offer my strong support. She too has accumulated extensive and impressive legal experience as a partner in the international law firm of Morrison & Foerster. She is a veteran, having proudly served in the Air Force. She is a graduate of Howard University School of Law, and she is member of the board of visitors there.

Now, all of these nominees meet and even exceed my standard for judicial nominations in his or her own way. My standards are three: excellence—legally excellent, no political hacks; moderation—not too far right but not too far left; and diversity. Whenever we can get diversity on the bench, we should.

But they are not the only outstanding nominees we have on the floor. We have judges pending—candidates—for Missouri, California, represented by Republican Senators as much as by Democrats who are experiencing the same judicial emergencies and heavy backlog caseloads. Yet we have no indication they will ever be moved off the calendar.

This is about governing. In January, the distinguished and newly minted majority leader came before this body and said it was time to govern. We would do the budget by regular order. Things would return to normal in the Senate. We wouldn't fill the tree. Yet here we are, 7 months later, and we have approved five judges. That is it—five. Ten percent of the Federal and district judgeships across the country are vacant.

Confirming judges is part of the business of government, and right now the majority party is failing that responsibility to the American people. It has real consequences. In the Western District of New York, Judge Skretny, on senior status, has admitted that he is encouraging all cases to settle in pre-trial mediation to lower caseloads. Criminal trials are prioritized while civil trials languish. The two retired judges in western New York are the only ones reading cases at the moment and spending far less time on each individual case than they would under normal circumstances. And defendants may be inclined to settle, admit guilt, and take plea deals rather than wait out a lengthy trial process. The same story line is playing out throughout the country. That is not how our justice system is supposed to work. As many of my colleagues have said so eloquently, the harsh truth of the matter is that for these petitioners, companies, and communities, justice is being delayed and thus denied.

In the Senate, we often invoke the principles upon which our country was founded: principles of individual liberty, justice, and equality in the eyes of the law. These words have to mean something. There shouldn't be political games standing in their way. The equal and fair application of justice is necessarily tarnished by a courtroom without a judge. It is as simple as that.

In conclusion, Democrats will not stand to watch our judicial system brought to its knees by the death of a thousand cuts. We have one week of legislative session before a month-long recess. I submit that we should not—cannot leave town having confirmed only five judges in what would be 8 months of this Congress.

Today I rise to request we move to New York's pending judicial nominations, but I also hope we will move the other Justices before and after New York's on the calendar. I would like to make this request, but I know my colleague from Iowa would like to answer it.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations: Calendar Nos. 139, 140, and 141; that the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nominations in the order listed; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nominations; that any related statements be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Before I speak about reserving the right to object, I

would like to have the floor immediately after the Senator from New York gives up the floor, if I could. Is there any objection to that?

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

Mr. GRASSLEY. OK. I want to reserve the right to object, and I will object.

I would like to make a few comments on the pace of judicial nominations. First of all, during President Obama's Presidency thus far the Senate has confirmed 313 judicial nominees. In contrast to that, there were 283 judicial nominees that the Senate had confirmed at this very same point of the previous Presidency. That is 30 more judicial nominees confirmed at this point than in the year 2007.

Concerning this year's pace, the Senate is simply following the standard that my colleagues on the other side established in that year, 2007. By this point in 2007, the committee had held six hearings for a total of 20 judicial nominees. So far we have held 7 hearings for a total of 21 nominees, 5 executive nominees, and 16 judicial nominees, including hearings on both the Attorney General and the Deputy Attorney General.

I would like to remind my colleagues that the Attorney General and Deputy Attorney General nominees took significantly more time to process on both staff and Members. So we are doing a little bit better than the pace that was set on the other side during the last 2 years of the previous Presidency. And I am trying to compare to the last 2 years of that Presidency to this Presidency.

I would also note that the nominees from New York are below other Article III judges on the Executive Calendar. As I understand it, our side has agreed to vote on the next judge on the calendar when we return.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, would my colleague yield for a brief question?

Mr. GRASSLEY. I will yield. Of course, I will yield.

Mr. SCHUMER. I very much appreciate his courtesy.

I understand my colleague has talked about what has been done in the Judiciary Committee which he chairs. Does my colleague deny the fact that confirmed on the floor of the Senate in the year 2007, which he referred to, there were 25 at this time and only 5 have been confirmed by this Senate? Does my colleague deny that fact?

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I would agree to that, and I will speak to that point right now. It is very appropriate that my colleague would know exactly what I was going to say to answer his question.

Mr. SCHUMER. Great minds think alike.

Mr. GRASSLEY. With respect to the judges on the Executive Calendar, everybody knows at the end of last year the Senate rammed through 11 judges, which under regular order—and regular order is very important in the U.S.

Senate—should have been considered at the beginning of this Congress. That is what happened in 2006 when 13 nominations were returned to the President instead of being returned to the U.S. Senate in the next Congress. The end of 2006 is comparable to what was done at the end of 2014. Had we not confirmed those 11 judicial nominees during the lame duck last year, we would be roughly at the same pace for judicial confirmations this year compared to 2007. So put that in your pipe and smoke it, Senator SCHUMER.

We are moving at a reasonable pace. Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. SCHUMER. Without smoking, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

#### GOVERNING IN THE SENATE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, the Senator from New York gave very good words that I want to follow up on. He said that we were promised when Republicans took over we said things would be different in governing. They are different. I would just like to show the Senator from New York that promises made are promises kept. I think the best example of promises made was a January 2014 speech by the leadership of the Republicans where a speech was given that if there were Republican control of the United States Senate, then we would govern.

I think the best way to show that Republicans are governing is this: there were 370 House bills that died in the U.S. Senate under the leadership of the Democrat majority. We had 15 amendments with rollcall votes. So far this year, we have had over 160 rollcall votes on amendments.

We have passed over 40 bipartisan bills, reported over 160 bills out of committee, had 29 bills signed into law, and balanced the first budget for over a decade. Under Republican leadership, we had a budget agreement for the first time in 6 years, whereas under the Democratic majority we had one budget in 6 years. The law requires that we adopt a budget every year, and we have done that.

We made a promise that the Senate was going to function as a deliberative body, unlike the way it was run under the Democratic majority for the 6 years of this Presidency. From that standpoint, we have done that with the statistics that I just gave you.

The Senator from New York says we were promised a Senate that would govern, but the only metric he is using is whether judges are moving at the same pace as they did when they took over the U.S. Senate in 2007. And that is an inadequate way to measure how well the Senate is governing. We must look at all the work the Senate is doing. And the Senate is doing the good work we promised we'd do before the election. We have delivered.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, thank you.

We have had some interesting back-and-forth here this morning. We had a great message from our good Senator from Maryland, and we had the colloquy we just saw here on judicial nominees. I want to move in a little different direction to something I think is important.

As the previous speaker talked about, the current majority is getting things done. I want to talk about for the first time in 10 years what is going to happen on this floor today, and that is for the first time in 10 years we are going to pass a multiyear transportation bill without raising taxes.

Keep in mind, we have done short-term transportation efforts 33 times before we finally got to the next multiyear bill that will be passed on this floor today. I believe one of the core constitutional functions of the Federal government is to create the infrastructure necessary to conduct commerce, trade, and allow general transportation. I sit on three of the four Senate committees tasked with developing this highway bill that we will vote on today—the Finance Committee, the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, and the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee. Because of this, infrastructure development is one of my top priorities while here in this Congress.

It has been a pleasure to work with Chairman INHOFE, to work with Chairmen THUNE, SHELBY, and HATCH over the past several months on this highway bill. I am very appreciative of our leadership team, particularly that of Leader MCCONNELL and Senator CORNYN for working to advance it before the authorities expire and the Congress adjourns for the August recess.

Moving forward with a highway bill that invests in our Nation's crumbling infrastructure, reduces congestion, and increases safety without adding to the national debt will create short-term jobs and long-term economic growth.

Western States like Nevada, which have experienced an unprecedented amount of growth over the past couple of decades, have the most to gain from this highway bill. Nevada is one of the fastest growing States in our Nation, adding nearly 850,000 people to that State in the last 15 years. In fact, the Silver State was the fastest growing State in the Nation in the decade of the 2000s, experiencing a 35-percent population increase. This growth, while exciting for the State, has posed additional strains on our transportation infrastructure system. From 1990 to 2013, vehicle travel on Nevada's highways has increased 141 percent.

It is also important to note that the Silver State's economy relies heavily on tourism. Travel spending adds nearly \$60 billion to Nevada's economy annually, accounting for about 13 percent of the State's GDP. Safe and reliable roads and bridges in our State and throughout the country are crucial to growing our economy.

Our rapidly expanding State has a long list of infrastructure priorities to address. A multiyear highway bill will provide the resources and tools that will benefit high priority projects such as the Boulder City Bypass, the Carson City Freeway, and the I-15 widening in Las Vegas—which, by the way, is Nevada's busiest freeway. Under Nevada's most conservative budgetary plans, our Department of Transportation has identified over \$9 billion of capital improvement projects over the next 20 years. Short-term patches will not put a dent in that work plan. Additionally, it is important to cut bureaucratic red tape that will speed up permitting and ensure that our Nation gets more roads, more bridges, more rail projects and other infrastructure developments for every dollar that we invest.

Over the past couple of months, I have worked diligently on my committees and with the Environment and Public Works Committee in a bipartisan manner to include a variety of Nevada and national safety priorities in the highway bill, which are included in the Senate bill that we will vote on today.

First and foremost of those priorities is the expansion of Interstate 11 to northern Nevada. I have been working for years with my colleagues in both the Nevada and Arizona delegations on Capitol Hill to move I-11 forward. In the 112th Congress, we were successful in including language in the last highway bill, MAP-21, to officially designate an interstate route connecting Phoenix and Las Vegas. These are the two largest cities that are not connected by an interstate highway system.

Let me say that again, Mr. President. Phoenix and Las Vegas are the two largest cities in America that are not connected with an interstate highway system.

I have been working diligently to extend the proposed highway to I-80 in northern Nevada. Earlier this year, I introduced the bipartisan, bicameral Intermountain West Corridor Development Act to extend the route north and worked with Chairman INHOFE to include it in the DRIVE Act. This full north-to-south, Canada-to-Mexico interstate system is a project of national significance, critical for our Nation's mobility, economy, and national defense. This extension will open even more markets for tourism and trade, create jobs and improve the economy for the entire Western United States.

I have also worked to include policies in the bill that will greatly benefit the Lake Tahoe region's transportation efforts. The Tahoe Basin is a unique area, shared by the States of Nevada and California but also heavily controlled by the Federal Government. In fact, the Feds are the largest land managers of the Lake Tahoe Basin, controlling 77 percent of the land. Under current law, Tahoe is not considered as one area, from a transportation perspective, because the size of Lake

Tahoe separates the individual communities that surround the lake.

The growing tourism industry greatly benefits the local economy but also poses additional strains on the region's transportation system. The language included in both the EPW and banking titles ensures the population of California and Nevada communities surrounding the lake is considered a singular entity. This will greatly benefit local leaders as they seek additional resources to implement the Basin's innovative 21st century highway and transit plans.

As a member of the commerce committee, I also worked with Chairman THUNE on the Comprehensive Transportation and Consumer Protection Act, which was approved earlier this month in our committee and is also part of this bill. It includes important reforms that will enhance the safety of our roads and our railways.

I am pleased legislation I introduced with my friend from Massachusetts Senator MARKEY, Safety Through Informed Consumers Act, commonly referred to as the STICRS Act, was included in the commerce bill. This policy promotes the purchase of safer cars by requiring the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to integrate crash avoidance technology information, such as active braking and lane tracking technology, onto the safety ratings listed on your car's stickers.

Consumers have a right to the most accurate and up-to-date information possible when making decisions on what cars to purchase. A separate five-star rating for crash avoidance technologies or an adjustment to the current rating system that would preclude a new car from getting five stars unless it has at least one of these new crash avoidance technologies will make it clear to every buyer whether the vehicle they are considering has the latest and the best in safety technology.

Senator SCHATZ and I have also teamed up on a safe streets amendment, aimed at improving pedestrian safety. Threats to pedestrian safety are increasingly becoming a problem in my State. The number of pedestrian fatalities has nearly doubled in the Silver State in just the last 3 years. In total, pedestrian fatalities are nearly one-quarter of our overall traffic fatalities. Nevada is the sixth most dangerous for pedestrians over the age of 65 years. I know our State regional transportation organizations are working diligently to address the pedestrian safety concerns. I hope our initiative will spur innovative transportation planning throughout the Nation that aims to improve bike and pedestrian safety.

Finally, I had a provision included in the bill that restores some sanity to the Department of Transportation's hours of service regulation. Under the existing rule, drivers of commercial motor vehicles are required to take a 30-minute break after most 8 hours of consecutive work. Industries such as

the ready mixed concrete industry, whose products are perishable, find it difficult to implement the HOS regulation given the unique conditions of their work.

Concrete is needed on a just-in-time basis. Once a delivery is started, it must be completed or the concrete may harden in the truck, causing thousands of dollars of damage in that vehicle. Concrete delivery often takes more than 2½ hours to complete. Mixer drivers are also unique in the commercial truckdriving industry, in that they typically spend only 40 percent of their time on duty actually driving. The other 60 percent is spent at the plant waiting to be dispatched, at the job site waiting on the contractor to receive the concrete or unloading the concrete itself. This one-size-fits-all regulation does not make sense. I am pleased my provision making this existing administrative exemption for perishable goods permanent has been included in the commerce bill.

I would be remiss if I did not mention some important rail infrastructure policies also included in the commerce bill. Freight rail plays a major role in Nevada's economy. The Silver State has 1,192 miles of rail track, and nearly 43 million tons of freight moves through the State each year via rail, supporting over 700 high-paying jobs. I was proud to team up with my friends Senator BLUNT and Senator BOOKER on two stand-alone proposals that are in the rail title.

First, the Track, Railroad, and Infrastructure Network Act, which streamlines permitting for the development of new railroad structure, is critical to ensure scant infrastructure dollars are spent efficiently and spent wisely. Additionally, the Railroad Infrastructure Financing Improvement Act implements a variety of good government reforms to the revolving loan program utilized to spur development of railroad infrastructure. The program is notoriously underutilized. I believe it is important that we ensure this valuable tool is reworked so it can be used for new freight and passenger rail development.

I strongly supported the rail reform title when it was approved by the commerce committee and believe it is important that we include rail as part of the surface transportation bill. Improving rail safety, expanding both passenger and freight rail infrastructure are critical components of Nevada's and our Nation's long-term economic development plans. A long-term surface and transportation bill is extremely important to the State of Nevada and also to our Nation.

Transportation efficiency and reliability is critical for our Nation's economic competitiveness, and the policies in the bill will help address the need to maintain, repair, and expand the national transportation system, but none of these important policies will get done if Congress kicks the can down the road.

Passing a strong multiyear bill in the Senate sends an important message to our colleagues in the House. I urge my colleagues to support the DRIVE Act. Again, I thank Leader MCCONNELL and Chairmen INHOFE, Senators THUNE, SHELBY, and HATCH for working with me on my priorities. They know how important it is that we enact policies that increase infrastructure efficiency, improve safety, and create jobs throughout the Nation. By passing this bill, we show the American people the Senate is back to work supporting policies to create jobs and spur economic development across our Nation.

I yield the floor.

PRIVATE SECTOR ENGINEERING AND DESIGN SERVICES

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to engage in a colloquy with the distinguished chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee on an amendment that I have filed to H.R. 22, the DRIVE Act.

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

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, as the chairman of the committee is well aware, private sector engineering and design services can play an important role in the development and maintenance of our Nation's transportation infrastructure. By supplementing the capabilities of engineers at State DOTs, private sector engineering and design services enable State and local governments to deliver projects more efficiently and with long-term cost savings.

In order to make better use of these private sector resources, I have introduced an amendment which will provide incentives to States that make use of innovative engineering and design approaches by bringing in the expertise of private sector companies. This amendment is intended to streamline and improve the efficient delivery of highway and bridge projects and would not increase Federal spending. In the last Congress, working with Senators BOXER and VITTER, the committee included this identical provision in the highway authorization bill that was unanimously approved by the Environment and Public Works Committee.

The language has not been included in the bill we are debating today, and while I recognize that many hard decisions have had to be made in order to achieve a bipartisan consensus on this bill, I ask for Chairman INHOFE's commitment to work with us as the DRIVE Act progresses to conference.

Mr. INHOFE. I thank the Senator for raising this issue and for his commitment to helping to pass a long-term surface transportation bill. The Senator is correct about the time constraints the Senate is under, as we must pass this bill before July 31. Unfortunately, that means we have been unable to include many worthy provisions in the DRIVE Act, such as his amendment, which I support as a means of improving the efficient delivery of Federal taxpayer dollars.

I share the Senator's enthusiasm for fostering the use of private sector expertise in transportation construction. While this expertise is useful at all times, it is particularly useful in the aftermath of natural disasters, when a State must act quickly to rebuild its infrastructure. This is something we are very familiar with in my home State of Oklahoma.

I thank the Senator from Arkansas for his leadership on this issue and he has my commitment that I will work with the Senator on this matter during our bipartisan conference negotiations with the House.

Mr. BOOZMAN. I thank the distinguished chairman for taking a moment to discuss this issue and I look forward to working with him on this bill.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today the Senate will approve a comprehensive, 6-year authorization for our Nation's transportation systems. It will give our States and local communities the ability to plan for investments in the critical infrastructure that supports our cities and towns, enables inter- and intrastate commerce, and creates jobs for American workers.

This bill is far from perfect; I have strong concerns about the lack of safety measures in this bill. The battle on whether to allow mammoth tractor trailer trucks—the equivalent of wheeled eight-story buildings—to drive alongside all the other motorists on some of our roads will come up again in the fall and so I will continue to fight to put safety first. I am concerned that this bill will undermine the goals of the National Environmental Policy Act. And I am concerned that, while we have before us a needed 6-year authorization, this transportation bill is funded only through 2018. I hope that as the Senate and the House conference a long-term transportation authorization bill, these concerns will be adequately addressed.

It is regrettable that some in Congress, for several years now, have done their utmost to undermine what used to be strong bipartisan support for responsible and timely reauthorizations and funding of the highway trust fund and our transportation infrastructure. The result has been a continuing era of stop-gap, short-term fixes, which hobble State and local transportation planning and which impose unending uncertainty on their vital work. How short-sighted, and how irresponsible. We must get back to that kind of consensus, and that kind of forward-thinking action.

A series of short-term patches do not provide States like Vermont—where the construction season is short, and the infrastructure needs are many—with the certainty they need to make needed repairs to the bridges, roads and byways that keep business moving and connect our rural towns and villages. This legislation, however, is the result of compromise on all sides. This bill protects the MAP-21 funding formula, which will benefit Vermont and maintain a level stream of Federal funding

for Vermont. I am also pleased the bill includes a 20 percent revenue provision dedicated to highway and transit growth, despite previous attempts to decrease it to 6 percent. I am also gratified that, in working with the relevant committee chairs, we were able in this final bill to remove unnecessary and harmful exemptions to the Freedom of Information Act, which remains the public's first line of defense in the right to know what their government is doing. Nowhere is the free flow of information more important than when the safety and wellbeing of every Vermonter—of every American—is at stake.

The House of Representatives now has an opportunity. They can kick the can down the road, beyond this year, or they can get to work, to devise a meaningful, reasonable long-term transportation authorization bill. Short-term authorizations will not adequately address our Nation's crumbling infrastructure. After investing billions of dollars in infrastructure development overseas, it is well past time to invest right here at home, in our own people and their communities, and in our own country. We need this certainty, and we need it now.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I support the bipartisan DRIVE Act because we can't make the perfect the enemy of the good. This bill will provide 3 years of funding and stability to States that want to plan major multiyear construction projects. This means badly needed jobs in construction for labor unions, contractors, engineers, and manufacturers of transportation materials. This is good news.

According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, Maryland's infrastructure has a C- rating. Our roads and transit have a C- rating and our bridges a B- rating. Nearly a quarter of Maryland's major roadways are in poor condition and 317 of our 5,291 bridges are structurally deficient.

In addition, Marylanders face some of the worst traffic congestion in the Nation. I commute every day from Baltimore to Washington and know how bad it has become. The Washington region is the No. 1 most congested area in the Nation and the Baltimore region is the fifth. These conditions cost Maryland's commuters between \$1,200 and \$1,500 per year.

We need at least \$4 billion to replace the B&P and Howard Street tunnels in Baltimore. If we want to double stack these major rail arteries for the Port of Baltimore, we need \$8 billion.

In 2013, the State of Maryland was forced to pass a gas tax. Sadly, today our statewide transportation needs still remain unmet. If we add up every Maryland county's No. 1 transportation priority, it equals \$20 billion. Yet, we still have competing job corridor needs in the urban and rural parts of the State.

That is why I was hoping for a more substantial bill—a true shot in the arm to tackle our aging infrastructure and

ease congestion. But I will vote for the DRIVE Act because doing nothing is unacceptable and short-term extensions do not provide the planning and funding certainty States need to put millions of workers on the job. These are jobs in construction, engineering, and manufacturing right here in the United States.

Bright spots in this bill for Maryland include the new formula-based freight program. These additional dollars will help the class I railroads in Maryland, CSX and Norfolk Southern, and our short line railroads. It also is good news for the operations at the Port of Baltimore.

I also appreciate the strengthened transit safety oversight role of the U.S. Department of Transportation for the Nation's metro systems. While I would have liked the Metro Senators' stronger amendment to be debated and adopted, the underlying bill is a good step in the right direction for safety. Safety is our collective No. 1 priority for the riders and workers of the Washington Metro system.

The bill gives the Secretary of Transportation the authority to establish minimum safety standards for the safe operations of metro systems. This builds upon what I was able to accomplish in MAP-21 working with Senators DODD, SHELBY, and MENENDEZ. We gave the department new authority to establish and enforce Federal safety standards focusing on railcars.

The bill also requires the Secretary to review the existing safety standards and protocols of metro systems. It requires a report to Congress with the findings, list of recommendations, needed legislative changes, and the action the Secretary will take to establish Federal safety standards.

Before I conclude, I would like to voice my disappointment that the DRIVE Act is not stronger on safety. I am a cosponsor of the Feinstein-Wicker amendment on double 33 truck trailers. Because of the parliamentary procedures to prevent consideration of amendments, including germane amendments, this amendment was not considered.

I am opposed to extending the length of double truck trailers. The State of Maryland prohibits operation of these trucks. I have heard from Maryland families who have lost loved ones in truck crashes. The Slattery family lost Mrs. Slattery and the crash left their son, Matthew, with severe brain damage. Mr. Slattery and Matthew came to the Appropriations Committee markup of the fiscal year 2016 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill. Sadly, this same amendment failed by a tie vote of 15 to 15.

I also heard from Don Bowman, owner of D.M. Bowman, Incorporated, a family-owned trucking company in Williamsport, MD, and our State's fire service community. They all think double 33 truck trailers are a dangerous idea.

I commend Senator BOXER for her hard work on this bill. Passing this bill is the right thing to do for jobs and our economy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FLAKE). The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I do appreciate the comments from the Senator from Nevada. It is a reminder that a lot of people think almost all of this act is from the Environment and Public Works Committee. About 75 percent is, but we do have the commerce committee, we have the banking committee, and the other provisions. A lot of people have been working on this, not just our committee.

I am glad we got a good vote yesterday. I think it is important that we have a strong vote because we certainly want to encourage the House—and I think the House will be taking up our bill. In fact, I think a lot of the staff people are working on that right now over on the other side. Anyway, the importance of this is significant. If we do not pass the DRIVE Act out of this Chamber, then what we are doing is reinforcing current law.

What is current law? Current law is short-term extensions. That means it is the worst possible outcome. It means no big projects, for one thing. We spent yesterday—most of the day yesterday, our comments were on the big projects, the big bridges, and those things that need to be done.

But the big projects—normally you are talking about between \$700 million and \$1.4 billion. They can't be done on short-term extensions. Logically, everybody knows that. They are not done. Our problem is, the last bill we passed was in 2005. It ran out in 2009. Since that time, it has been short-term extensions. So we have not gotten into any of the projects that have to be done.

The tendency, I guess, to do the hard things, is to wait until something collapses and a bunch of people die, such as happened in Minnesota. That could have been done before. That was done in the 2005 act in my State of Oklahoma, however, not until after a young lady was driving her car under one of our bridges and a bunch of concrete fell off and killed her, the mother of three children.

Why wait until a disaster occurs? The current law fails to provide the long-term certainties the States and cities are going to have to have on their big projects to get them off the ground. Current law funding has no growth, not even for inflation. The DRIVE Act provides growth in highway and transit programs to each State. The current law gives States and local governments no certainty. There have been 33 short-term extensions since the SAFETEA-LU bill was passed—that is 33. When you pass those extensions, as I said, it takes 30 percent off the top. Clearly, the conservative position is to have a long-term bill. You would not have the project delivery. The DRIVE Act eliminates the duplicative review

and expands categorical exclusions. We cannot do that with short-term extensions.

Transparency. That was a lot of work. What we don't want is, as we are spending money as the years go by and the months go by and the weeks go by—we have transparency built into this so people can have faith and know exactly what programs there are.

Innovation. The DRIVE Act prepares our Nation's transportation system for the future by promoting innovation across all aspects of the program. The transportation system will be stuck in reverse if we stick with the current law. The current law, now this is what we have been doing since 2009.

I think it is also worthwhile for us to keep in mind that there are some things I wanted in the bill that we could not get in. I wanted to change this 80–20 Federal match program. First of all, we had 60–40—that was not acceptable—and 70–30. I have to admit it was not the Democrats; it was the Republicans who objected to that. Consequentially, we had to go ahead and go back to 80–20. If this legislation does not pass, then it is still going to be 80–20 because that is current law. So that would not change.

Anyway, the freight section of this directs new funding toward freight transportation projects that provide the platform for our businesses to compete globally. The freight program sometimes does not get the attention. One of the good things about a transportation bill and the way we do this, and have done it historically, is we go to the States.

I can assure you that the Arizona Transportation Department knows a lot more about what their needs are than we do in our infinite wisdom here in Washington. So they don't get as concerned about freight programs and freight expenditures because they do not directly benefit the particular State it goes through, but they benefit the entire country.

We actually have a freight section in this that is very good. It hasn't been done before. I will go into greater detail about the new National Freight Program and what it means to America's economy. Today, the National Highway System carries more than 55 percent of the Nation's highway traffic and 97 percent of the truck freight traffic. Of the 4 million miles of public roads, the National Highway System represents only 5.5 percent. So what we are saying is, 5 percent of the roads out there transport 55 percent of the highway traffic and 97 percent of the freight traffic.

Americans depend on the well-maintained National Highway System that provides a critical connection between the urban areas and the rural areas. American businesses pay and estimate \$27 billion a year in extra freight transportation costs due to the poor condition of the public roads, which increases shipping delays and raises prices on everyday products. Recognizing that this is the foundation for the Nation's economy and the key to the national ability to compete in a global economy, it is essential that we focus efforts to improve freight movement on the National Highway System.

The DRIVE Act includes two new programs to help the States deliver projects and promote the safety in that delivery. The bipartisan freight program levies its Federal investment by encouraging public-private partnerships and other creative financing approaches.

It also will create the first-ever freight-specific investment program, prioritizing investment in our commerce-moving network. The first new program is the National Freight Program. It is distributed by a formula that will provide funds to all States to enhance the movement of goods that go through their State.

This is something, as I have said, that has not been done before, and I haven't heard any objection. In fact, this isn't just State specific because this goes to the whole Nation, and so it is very popular. The program expands the flexibility for both rural and urban areas to designate key freight corridors, and it will help identify projects with a higher return on investment.

The second program that is new is the Assistance for Major Projects Program. It creates a competitive grant program to provide funds for the major projects. This is what we have been talking about the past several days, the very large projects that can't be done with short-term extensions. They are just neglected.

These new freight programs will only exist with the passage of the DRIVE Act, when it is enacted by Congress. It is time for us to become innovative and forward-thinking in how the Federal Government is using taxpayer dollars.

In talking about this type of program for States to improve the National Highway System, the DRIVE Act is the answer. It directly helps to relieve the freight bottlenecks around the country.

This is a chart of Chicago I-290, I-90, and I-94, the three intersections. This goes between those three. Look at it. It is all of these. I haven't even counted the lanes. Traffic is stopped, and it is just one of the congestions. When this happens, the average speed in this case is 29 miles an hour. In the morning and evening rush hour, it is 20 miles an hour. Then it talks about all of the pollution that is there. People are idling their engines while they are waiting in traffic.

There is a very similar situation in Houston, TX, the I-45. I have been on this one quite often, quite a few times. It is I-45 at U.S. 59. If you look at the chart, it is home to five of the top freight bottlenecks in the Nation. Texas is home to nine of them. The overall cost in conjunction with this to individuals in Texas is \$671 million annually and 8.8 million hours of delay. The I-45 is ranked third by the congestion index.

We have an index, and people know how bad it is and how it compares to other States. That is why this has been so popular.

I-45 at U.S. 610 is ranked 15th. The average speed is below 39 miles an hour. For morning and evening traffic, of course, it is much less than that.

Fort Lee, NJ, I-95. Anyone who is in Washington and wants to go anyplace on the north coast—New York, Connecticut, and on up—they have to go all the way up on I-95. This particular intersection, which is in Fort Lee—this is the George Washington Bridge. It connects Fort Lee, NJ, to New York City. By congestion index, it is the second worst freight bottleneck in the Nation. The average speed is 29 miles an hour. I have been on that one before, and it is a very old bridge. When you drive over it, you worry about whether you are going to make it. The George Washington Bridge is the world's busiest motor vehicle bridge, carrying over 106 million cars a year.

The DRIVE Act, with the newly formed freight program, will make targeted investments in the infrastructure critical to moving commerce and alleviating these bottlenecks I just mentioned. These new programs invest in the infrastructure needed to move goods across the Nation.

When you look at the corridors and you look at the bridges—we actually had one presentation where we went over the 20 busiest of all the traffic-congested areas in the country.

We are going to have a vote in 40 minutes. It is going to be one of the most critical votes of the year. I have no doubt that it is going to pass. But I wanted to send the signal across America, to the House of Representatives, and to everyone else that we really care about infrastructure.

I repeat—I feel compelled to do so—there are a lot of people who don't realize that the conservative position is to vote for a long-term infrastructure bill because it costs about 30 percent off the top—and that is a figure no one has debated, no one has talked about—if you do it piecemeal with short-term extensions, along with not getting this.

The other thing is, we have that old document nobody reads anymore; it is called the Constitution. If you look up article I, section 8, it says—you know, we do a lot of things around this Chamber that our forefathers never envisioned. They said what we ought to be doing—and it says so right in the Constitution—is two things: defend America, and roads and bridges.

Well, that was foreseen by Dwight Eisenhower. I have here in the Chamber a picture of Dwight Eisenhower. Many of us who are old enough to remember or those of us who have studied World War II know what a hero this guy was when he came in as President of the United States. He wanted the first national system to be primarily for defense, for defending our Nation. He said: Yes, it will help the economy. Here is the quote he makes. He talks



about how this will be helpful to the economy. We all know that. There will be jobs, and people will be put back to work. But he also said—this was after World War II—that we have to move our goods and services around this country to defend this Nation.

I kind of have a dual role in this. The two major committees that I have—and I have served as the ranking member on both of them—are the defense committee, the Senate Armed Services Committee—and so I am very sensitive to the fact that there is a defense component to this bill we are going to be voting on today—as well as chairing the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

This is what he said back then. He said it is for defense purposes and it is something we have to have so that it goes in a uniform way across the Nation, not just for defense but for our economy. I would make one comment. You hear people say, and I used to say it myself—they talk about the program called devolution. Devolution is what a lot of people have looked at, and it sounds so good on the stump. Confession is good for the soul. I remember when I was the father of devolution, along with Connie Mack from Florida when we were both serving in the House. What that says is you repeal the Federal highway taxes and then you make them local taxes, you make them State taxes so the States are participating.

But there are two problems with that. One is, how do you get a uniform program across the country? Take Wyoming, for example. If they repeal their Federal tax, in order to make up for it, since there are very few people in Wyoming but there are a lot of roads, they would have to pass a 48-cent tax increase. That is not going to happen. Devolution is based on the assumption that all States will pass a tax increase, and that isn't going to happen.

So that is the other reason we really need to have this, and we will. We are going to pass this bill. I think in the final analysis the House will too.

I will share with you, I say to the Presiding Officer, that when we had our last bill, it wasn't all that good. It was only a 27-month bill.

I can remember going over there, after we passed that on the floor of the Senate, and I requested an audience with the members of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee at the House, with the Republicans because there were a lot of them who were tea party Republicans, a lot of conservatives. I explained to them the same thing I just went over—the constitutional aspect of it as well as the cost of it and the fact that you cannot get projects done if you continue to do short-term extensions. When this came up in the House, every one of the 33 Republicans—all 33 of them—voted for it. I think that is what gives me confidence that when they see that there is a bill that we have passed out of this Chamber—you know, I was dis-

appointed that the House was only going to be in session until Thursday; that is today. But they left last night; they moved it up a day. And I am not saying they did that so they wouldn't have to make a decision on this bill, but nonetheless that did happen.

I understand there are other Senators who wish to speak before the vote, and I certainly want to give them the opportunity. So I will conclude by saying that this is arguably one of the most important votes we will have. We are doing what the Constitution tells us to do. We are going to pass it, and it is going to happen.

I know there are two Members—one from the majority and one from the minority—who wish to speak. I think the majority leader will be coming in a matter of minutes too. So we do have several who want to be heard on this bill.

I think it is worth stating that 75 percent of the bill is in the Committee on Environment and Public Works. That is the committee I chair. When we developed this bill, we developed it over a period of time. They took about 4 months, and we worked on it. We took amendments, and we had major changes. In fact, I can remember going to the Republican conference and saying: If you have amendments, before this is passed out of our committee and goes to the floor, I think it is important for you to get your amendments in so we can make them a part of the bill and then later on part of the managers' package. Well, the managers' package didn't work as we wanted it to, and everyone knows there are problems that caused that.

But we argued. We discussed this bill. We put it together for about 4 months in the committee. On June 24, we passed that out of the committee unanimously. All 20 members of the Environment and Public Works Committee—all Democrats, all Republicans—all voted for it. That doesn't happen very often.

The ranking member, the ranking Democrat on the committee is Senator BOXER from California. Senator BOXER and I don't agree on very much, but we do agree on this. I mean, she is a very proud liberal, and I am a very proud conservative. What we have in common is this bill; that is about it. As soon as this bill is over—I was joking with a group this morning—I said then we will go back to fighting again. Maybe that is more fun.

But with all of the problems we have in this country right now, a lot of people don't realize that one of the greatest problems is the overregulation by the bureaucracies, the unelected bureaucracies. We have watched that coming. We have seen it particularly in this administration. Just look at what the EPA is doing to harm businesses that are trying to do the American thing and hire people out there. We have all of these regulations that are coming online. We have the water regulations.

This is kind of interesting because historically the regulations over water have always been a State function, with the exception of navigable waters. Well, I understand that. I think everyone else understands that. But there are always the collectivists, the liberals who want to bring all of that power into Washington and take it away from the States. In my State of Oklahoma, we do a lot better job than the Federal Government does, so we have been in a position to be able to continue to have that regulation of water as a State function.

About 5 years ago, Senator Feingold in the Senate and Congressman Oberstar—they are from Wisconsin and Minnesota—introduced a bill to take the word "navigable" out, which means then the Federal Government would have regulation over all the waters. We have areas in Oklahoma that are very arid. The other day, I was out in the panhandle, Boise City. You don't get anyplace drier than Boise City, OK. I was out there and I told them that if the Federal Government were doing this, they would probably find the time after a rain to declare the panhandle of Oklahoma a wetland because that is what they do. They want power. They want to expand their authority.

Anyway, they had this bill, and not only did we defeat the legislation to take the word "navigable" out, but we also defeated both the Senator and the House Member who were the sponsors.

I see my good friend from New York has arrived.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

#### PLANNED PARENTHOOD

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I rise to strongly oppose this cynical and opportunistic ploy to fulfill a longtime ideological goal to defund Planned Parenthood.

Let's talk facts, not rhetoric. The fact is no Federal funds can be used for an abortion. No Federal funds can be used for an abortion, except in the dire circumstances of rape, incest or the life of the mother.

Here is another fact. Only 3 percent of Planned Parenthood's work is dedicated to abortion services. The other 97 percent of their work is dedicated to preventive women's health services, such as STD testing and screenings, contraception, Pap tests, breast exams, cancer screenings, and other services, such as adoption referrals, pediatric care, and immunizations. So when someone says let's defund Planned Parenthood because they never liked that it ever existed, what they are saying to women, particularly low-income women, women in low-income communities, and many women of color is that they won't have access to a wide range of essential services because of an ideological desire to control what choices are being made by women and their doctors.

I fail to see the logic here. This exploitative movement, advanced by special interests, would effectively tell a

half million American women: Sorry, you can't have a breast exam this year. Of all the issues that we are going to debate on the floor right now, why are we debating this? Why are we telling 400,000 American women: Sorry, you won't be able to have a lifesaving screening for cervical cancer.

We have kids in all 50 States who are going hungry during summer vacation because their parents can't afford to have that extra lunch they normally got from school. We have college graduates who can't afford to start their lives, buy a home, get married, and have kids because they are drowning in student debt. We have men and women in this country who work 40 hours a week, with no vacation days, no sick days, and are still stuck in poverty. That is not my vision of the American Dream.

We have millions of hard-working Americans who have to quit their jobs and lose paychecks every time they have a family emergency. It doesn't matter if it is a new baby. It doesn't matter if their husband is dying of cancer. It doesn't matter if their mother is on her deathbed. They don't have access to paid family and medical leave. We are literally the only industrialized country that doesn't have paid leave.

This makes no sense in a country that believes if you work hard every day, you will be able to get into the middle class. That is simply not true for low-wage workers who are working 40 hours a week and are still below the poverty line and cannot meet those family needs because they have no paid leave.

But the issue this body wants to debate is defunding Planned Parenthood. This body wants to make sure that millions of women don't get basic access to health care. Whether or not to maliciously hurt an organization that provides vital health services to millions of American women—this is the issue our colleagues are using to threaten yet another government shutdown—controlling women's choices about their health, about their families, about their reproductive health care.

It is clear that some of my colleagues just want to roll back *Roe v. Wade*. That is their goal. That is their mission in life. It is ideologically driven and funded by special interests. That is their mission. But we should not return to the days when women had no medical independence.

Some of my colleagues will use any excuse they can to overreact and force this same tired old Planned Parenthood debate on us. But here is the fundamental truth about Planned Parenthood. Millions of women in this country—women in low-income communities, women of color, women in every State—rely on Planned Parenthood for basic health care—mammograms, cervical screenings, access to contraception, and family planning. They rely on it to prevent disease. They rely on it to detect disease. They rely on it to treat

disease. We cannot and will not defund Planned Parenthood.

I yielded the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, over the last couple of weeks we have been discussing some pretty basic and important work that we need to do when it comes to our Nation's infrastructure—specifically, the highway bill that we will vote on and pass out of the Senate today.

I am very encouraged by the fact that the House of Representatives has now taken up the challenge of coming up with their own highway bill, and we are going to pass a 3-month temporary extension to give them the chance to do that and then to give all of us a chance to get to a conference committee and come up, hopefully, with an even better bill.

That is the way the Senate and the House are supposed to work, and that is why I am encouraged. I think the debate we have had over the highway bill is a good one, and I am glad to see, as I say, that we are on the right track.

In my State of Texas we know that good infrastructure and a working highway system are important for a number of reasons. First, it is important for public safety. Second, it is important for the environment. Third, it is important for the economy because when goods can flow freely across the roads and the highways and the freight lines in our State, it helps improve our economy and creates a more favorable condition for jobs.

When you come from a State such as mine, which is a fast-growing State, that growth requires the improvements, repairs, and modernization of our roadways to accommodate the visitors who come to our State, as well as those who move there—some 1,000 more each day. So that is why I am pleased this legislation will include resources that will make the lives of everyday Texans better.

Resources in this bill—which I should stress involves no tax increases—invest in interstates and freight routes and provide for much-needed border infrastructure projects to promote legitimate trade and travel flowing across our international border, while supporting economic development and improved quality of life.

#### WORK IN THE SENATE

This bill is just another reminder of the Senate's progress we have made in the 114th Congress under new management. This year, the Senate has made a lot of progress on key pieces of legislation. The fact is we are finally back working again in a bipartisan manner that provides real solutions for the American people.

I am proud to say that work includes things on a wide spectrum of priorities, including passing a budget for the first time since 2009, legislation that fights the scourge of human trafficking, a trade bill that will open up new markets for American-made products, and

of course earlier this year, the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act, which was signed into law and freezes the administration's ability to lift sanctions on Iran until representatives of the American people have had a chance to carefully examine President Obama's deal.

As I mentioned a number of times, I have many concerns about this deal, and I will continue to remind the President of his own words when he said that no deal is better than a bad deal. I couldn't agree more, even though he and the rest of the administration are actively suggesting that the only real alternative to this deal is war—a statement which is demonstrably false.

I think, unfortunately, that is a scare tactic. I hope people of goodwill will be persuaded by the facts and not scare tactics, and I hope we will have that debate in September after all the Members of the Senate and the House have had a chance to thoroughly immerse themselves in the terms of this deal and are prepared to debate that on the floor of the Senate and on the floor of the House.

But our work is not over. Earlier this week, I cosponsored legislation, along with a number of my colleagues, which would provide additional money for women's primary health care services while at the same time defunding Planned Parenthood. I know I speak for many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle when I say I was shocked, saddened, and disgusted at the several recent videos that depicted human life being reduced to spare parts for sale. This is a heartbreaking practice, and we cannot let it stand. We must stand up to protect the most vulnerable.

This bill does that by defunding Planned Parenthood, which has made a practice of taking aborted children and then selling the body parts for compensation. The one reason why this is so important is that, beyond the immediate disgust at these videos in the way that somehow this trafficking in human body parts has become a commercialized practice that Planned Parenthood engages in, since 1976 there has actually been a prohibition in U.S. law against the use of tax dollars to pay for abortion, except in some rare circumstances, and that is known as the Hyde amendment, named after Congressman Henry Hyde. This has been part of the law of the land since 1976.

What Planned Parenthood has done is taken tax dollars and claimed they have separated those tax dollars from the privately raised money they use that then finances abortion. They say: Well, we use the tax dollars for women's health services, and we don't use any tax dollars to pay for abortions. Well, we all know that is a convenient fiction, because money is fungible. The tax dollars paid by you, me, and all of us in the United States who are taxpayers goes into a single fund that

pays for the operation of Planned Parenthood—the largest abortion provider in America.

So this legislation is very important because it does take care of the primary care women's health services, but it defunds Planned Parenthood's abortion practice, consistent with the Hyde amendment, which has been the law of the land since 1976.

By doing it in this way, I would say that we are actually improving and increasing access for women to health care services through places such as our community health clinics. In my State alone, there are almost eight times more community health centers that could provide these primary care services to women than there are Planned Parenthood outlets. So this actually will increase access to primary care for women, while defunding Planned Parenthood's abortion practice, consistent with the Hyde amendment.

I hope this is legislation we can all unite behind. I would implore all of our colleagues, when we vote on this next Monday afternoon, to join us in getting on the bill by voting for cloture and then debating it and passing it.

While I am glad Congress has a clear way forward to meet our Nation's infrastructure needs on this bill, we have a lot more we need to do to protect and serve the American people.

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. INHOFE. 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. INHOFE. Mr. President, just one quick comment before Senator BOXER makes some remarks.

We have talked about this. We have talked about the significance of the upcoming vote. I just want to reemphasize to my conservative colleagues on the Republican side that this is something which is a conservative position. The only alternative to this is short-term extensions, which cost about 30 percent off the top.

So let's do in this vote what the Constitution tells us to do and take care of one of the two assignments that are given to us in article I, section 8 of the Constitution; that is, roads and highways.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I am very pleased to be here today. This has been a long and winding road to get to the point where we can pass a transportation bill which is a very good bill and which is very bipartisan. According to a formula, each and every one of our States will get more than they have in the past.

This is what our States are facing. This is a bridge between Arizona and

California. I am sure my friend knows what happened. People commuting between our States have had to go 400 miles out of their way.

We cannot turn away from this vote today. I know and my friend from Oklahoma knows that each one of us would have written a different bill, but the process means we have to come together. This person says "I don't like the process" and this one says "I don't like the pay-fors." Well, I am sure Senator INHOFE and I feel the same way, but we know that if we run into a construction worker who is unemployed and we say "Well, we didn't vote for this because we didn't like the process," they would say "I need a paycheck."

So I am going to ask our colleagues to vote aye for three reasons.

First, let's get our construction workers back to work. We have so many of them—hundreds of thousands—who are out of work. The general contractors told us last week that in 25 States they are seeing layoffs of construction workers because we are not doing a long-term bill. So let's help our construction workers get back to work.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD three letters of support from the Nation's leading construction unions and additional letters of support I received from the Transportation Construction Coalition and the Highway Materials Group.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the National Infrastructure Alliance,  
July 22, 2015]

H.R. 22—SENATE CLOTURE VOTE  
(By Raymond J. Poupore, Executive Vice  
President)

The leading construction unions building our country's surface transportation infrastructure strongly urge a "YES" vote on the Motion to Proceed to debate H.R. 22—The DRIVE Act.

As persistent high unemployment still plagues the construction industry, we need a well funded, multi-year infrastructure bill to put hundreds of thousands of our members to work building critical highway and transit projects. It is our understanding that the transit title in this bill actually exceeds its traditional 20 percent share, despite rumors to the contrary.

Through this legislation, we can begin to address the most pressing needs facing our transportation infrastructure. Please support your constituent construction workers by voting to proceed on the DRIVE Act.

LABORERS' INTERNATIONAL UNION  
OF NORTH AMERICA,  
Washington, DC, July 21, 2015.

U.S. SENATE,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR: On behalf of the 500,000 members of the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA), I urge you to support the motion to proceed to consideration of a long term reauthorization of the federal highway and transit programs.

Last month, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee unanimously approved S. 1647, the Developing a Reliable and

Innovative Vision for the Economy (DRIVE) Act. Now is the time for the rest of the U.S. Senate to join together and embrace a bipartisan effort to invest in this Nation and reject the politics of division.

A long term highway bill will help provide necessary funds to improve America's crumbling transportation infrastructure. Our economy requires a functioning transportation network and with bridges literally falling apart and highways unable to handle current traffic volumes, America's transportation infrastructure is in dire need of a robust and sustainable investment.

Under the current extensions, the Highway Trust Fund is unable to fully fund these necessary repairs, making our highways and bridges more susceptible to further deterioration. A long term federal commitment to invest in the Nation's infrastructure and safety needs is essential.

I urge you to end the delays on political games and pass a long term highway bill before Congress leaves for vacation.

With kind regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

TERRY O'SULLIVAN,  
General President.

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF  
OPERATING ENGINEERS,  
Washington, DC, July 21, 2015.

Hon. HARRY REID,  
Hart Senate Office Building,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. CHARLES E. SCHUMER,  
Hart Senate Office Building,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. DICK DURBIN,  
Hart Senate Office Building,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. PATTY MURRAY,  
Russell Senate Office Building,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATORS REID, DURBIN, SCHUMER, AND MURRAY: At this critical moment for America's transportation infrastructure, the International Union of Operating Engineers respectfully requests the support of Senate Democratic Leadership for immediate passage of a long-term highway and transit bill. Passage of the cloture vote today is a necessary step in order to have a debate on revenue options to fund the nation's biggest, most important infrastructure programs.

The model developed by the Environment and Public Works Committee in the DRIVE Act (Developing a Reliable and Innovative Vision for the Economy Act), both procedurally and substantively, should serve as the framework for Senate floor consideration. The bipartisan process led to a consensus and unanimous committee vote. The substance of the policy issues ensured that extreme measures from both the left and the right were rejected.

Aspects of the Commerce Committee markup were a serious disappointment, as you know. Similarly, consistent references to partisan revenue-raisers understandably make policymakers reluctant to engage in serious debate. While the sensitive nature of negotiations and legislative strategy leaves us with precious few details, we are assured that "real revenue" could be available to the program with bipartisan support. Serious revenue options must be on the table, and egregious, partisan provisions must be off the table. It is that simple, if we have any chance of success.

The DRIVE Act addresses what is perhaps the most pressing domestic economic issue of our time: reauthorization of a multiyear highway and transit program. The Act's legislative framework provides a six-year certainty to transportation planners, the construction industry, and its supply chain. It builds on important successes in MAP-21 by

expediting project delivery and making the approval process more transparent. Additionally, it creates a new, national emphasis on freight movement, and it targets resources at projects of national and regional significance.

As you know, we need a long-term solution. We cannot afford to wait. Thousands of Operating Engineers depend on these investments for their livelihoods. We cannot rely on “aspirational thinking” about comprehensive agreements that could include funding for this essential program.

The transportation advocacy community believes wholeheartedly that now is the time to build on the bipartisan momentum generated in the Environment and Public Works Committee to move a robust, long-term bill through the Senate before the summer break. We look forward to working with you to enact such a long-term highway and transit bill as soon as possible.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

JAMES T. CALLAHAN,  
General President.

JULY 29, 2015.

DEAR SENATOR: The 31 national associations and construction trade unions of the Transportation Construction Coalition (TCC) urge you to support passage of the “Developing a Reliable and Innovative Vision for the Economy (DRIVE) Act.” The bipartisan surface transportation reauthorization bill would guarantee three years of increased highway and public transportation investment and provide further certainty to states by distributing six years of contract authority.

The Highway Trust Fund has suffered five cash flow crises requiring \$65 billion in temporary cash infusions since 2008. With a sixth trust fund revenue shortfall less than a month away, seven states have delayed or canceled projects valued at \$1.6 billion. Furthermore, the Congressional Budget Office projects the trust fund will be unable to support any new highway or transit spending in FY 2016 without remedial action.

This repeating cycle of uncertainty and piecemeal management undermines the ability of state transportation departments to implement multi-year transportation plans and discourages the private sector from making investments in new capital and personnel. By supporting the DRIVE Act, senators not only have an opportunity to stabilize surface transportation investment, but to do so as part of legislation that would enact a series of meaningful policy reforms to help grow the economy and promote improved mobility for all Americans.

The DRIVE Act includes provisions that would streamline the transportation project review process to expedite the delivery of needed highway and bridge improvements. The measure would also create a dedicated freight program and a major projects assistance program—both of which would help enhance U.S. economic competitiveness.

The members of the TCC remain concerned about the need to enact a permanent solution to stabilize and grow Highway Trust Fund revenue. The Senate surface transportation reauthorization construct would provide ample time to develop and enact such a plan while federal highway and transit investment is unthreatened over the next three years.

We strongly urge all senators to support the DRIVE Act to provide your states with the stable and growing resources they need to help them deliver the highway and public transportation improvements the U.S. economy and all Americans need.

Sincerely,

THE TRANSPORTATION CONSTRUCTION  
COALITION.

JULY 29, 2015.

STATEMENT OF THE HIGHWAY MATERIALS GROUP (HMG) AS THE DEADLINE NEARS ON HIGHWAY FUNDING REAUTHORIZATION

The Highway Materials Group applauds the efforts by all Senators—notably Majority Leader McConnell, Chairman Inhofe and Ranking Member Boxer and their staffs—in support of a long term reauthorization bill that increases funding for the nation’s highways and transit systems.

We fully support final Senate passage this week and urge a YES vote on the bipartisan, multi-year Developing a Reliable and Innovative Vision for the Economy (DRIVE) Act which offers great hope to the modernization of our nation’s infrastructure.

We urge House Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman Shuster and House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Ryan to utilize the hours of hearings, site visits and stakeholder input they have held and bring together their Committees soon after the August recess to produce a multiyear, fully-funded bill that warrants House support.

Most importantly, before departing for the August recess, we urge House and Senate leadership to unequivocally state their commitment to send to the President a well-funded, multiyear highway bill by the end of October.

The Highway Materials Group (HMG), comprised of nine national associations listed below, represent companies that provide the construction materials and equipment essential to building America’s roads, highways, and bridges. We employ tens of thousands of men and women in well-paying American jobs, and we stand in support of this important legislative action.

American Coal Ash Association, American Concrete Pavement Association, Association of Equipment Manufacturers, Associated Equipment Distributors, Concrete Reinforcing Steel Institute, National Asphalt Pavement Association, National Ready Mixed Concrete Association, National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association, Portland Cement Association.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, it is rare to have the National Association of Manufacturers and the Chamber of Commerce in agreement with the entire structure of the construction industry workers, all of those unions. I put their names into the RECORD. It is unique to have Mothers Against Drunk Driving in that coalition and to have the National Governors Association in that coalition and to have the mayors organization in that coalition.

My friend from Oklahoma and my friend from Illinois, Senator DURBIN, whom I thank from the bottom of my heart—we were kind of smiling the other day because we had the mayor of Oklahoma City and the mayor of New York ask us for a long-term bill; no more short-term extensions. That is the kind of coalition building we are seeing out in the country and one that I think we are living proof of here today.

So I will close with where I started. To me, this is the poster child for why we have to act today. There are more than 60,000 bridges that are obsolete or deficient. If we don’t pass this bill today and the House doesn’t take it up and pass it or something else similar to it or get to conference, we are back to,

I think it is, the 34th short extension. That is doomsday—doomsday.

I am sad the House went out for a 5½-week break. It is the first time in 10 years they went out for an August break before August. I find it ironic that they went out even a day earlier so they are not there if we do, in fact, pass our legislation and send it over.

Why are they doing this? They need to act. I am encouraged that Speaker BOEHNER said that he has asked his committee to act. If we can do it over here, they can do it over there.

I will close with this: I am very pleased that we have reached this point. It has taken a lot of work and a lot of compromise. We had to give some ground, but we found common ground. We all believe this bill is so important for our Nation.

I urge everyone, regardless of how we voted before, to understand this is not what we want to see in America. We can’t have more of these bridge collapses, and we can’t have more of these streets falling apart. Now, 50 percent are in disrepair. This is the day.

I thank Senator INHOFE. I thank Senator DURBIN. I thank Senator MCCONNELL. I thank Senator NELSON. And later, when we finish with this, I will thank many others. The staffs have been unbelievable. We were working into the wee hours of the morning for the last week.

I also thank you, Madam President, for your role in this and your help in this. I am proud that I serve on the committee with you. We have worked well together. I hope we have a good vote, a solid vote for this bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). All postcloture time is expired.

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed, and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 65, nays 34, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 260 Leg.]

YEAS—65

Alexander	Boozman	Cassidy
Ayotte	Boxer	Coats
Baldwin	Burr	Cochran
Barrasso	Cantwell	Collins
Bennet	Capito	Coons
Blunt	Cardin	Cornyn

Daines	Johnson	Portman
Durbin	Kaine	Roberts
Enzi	King	Rounds
Ernst	Kirk	Sanders
Feinstein	Klobuchar	Schatz
Fischer	Leahy	Sessions
Franken	Manchin	Shaheen
Gardner	McCain	Stabenow
Grassley	McCaskill	Sullivan
Hatch	McConnell	Tester
Heitkamp	Mikulski	Thune
Heller	Moran	Tillis
Hirono	Murkowski	Vitter
Hoeven	Murray	Whitehouse
Inhofe	Nelson	Wicker
Isakson	Peters	

## NAYS—34

Blumenthal	Heinrich	Rubio
Booker	Lankford	Sasse
Brown	Lee	Schumer
Carper	Markey	Scott
Casey	Menendez	Shelby
Corker	Merkley	Toomey
Cotton	Murphy	Udall
Crapo	Paul	Warner
Cruz	Perdue	Warren
Donnelly	Reed	Wyden
Flake	Reid	
Gillibrand	Risch	

## NOT VOTING—1

Graham

The bill (H.R. 22), as amended, was passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

PROHIBITING FEDERAL FUNDING OF PLANNED PARENTHOOD FEDERATION OF AMERICA—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 169, S. 1881.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 169, S. 1881, a bill to prohibit Federal funding of Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

## CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

## CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to S. 1881, a bill to prohibit Federal funding of Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

Mitch McConnell, James M. Inhofe, Rand Paul, Pat Roberts, Ben Sasse, James Lankford, Joni Ernst, Daniel Coats, Cory Gardner, Steve Daines, Roger F. Wicker, Johnny Isakson, Lindsey Graham, Michael B. Enzi, Jerry Moran, Tim Scott, John Cornyn.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

## THE HIGHWAY BILL

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I know the Senator from California, Mrs. BOXER, and I both want to thank a lot of people who worked very hard. People don't realize how many people are involved. Quite frankly, a little bit of guilt always comes to me, because this

is my sixth highway reauthorization bill, and it always ends up that I don't work as long as all the staff works. They are up many nights until midnight and many nights all night long.

This was a good bill. It was tough doing it. From this point forward, we have the opportunity to send it to the House. I have already had communication with some of the House Members who do want a multiyear bill. The staffs are working together as we speak to pull it together so we can pass one and get out of this long string of short-term extensions. They don't serve any useful purpose.

I wish to mention the names and to get them in the RECORD of those people who really put in the long hours. In my office is Alex Herrgott. He has been with me—we have been together, I guess—over a dozen years. He is the leader on our side. He put together a great team, including Shant Boyajian, who is the guy who was the transportation expert on our end, and he did a great job. We have had others just about as good as he is in the past, but they all sweat. This guy doesn't do it. He does it with a smile on his face. We have Chaya Koffman. She came with incredible experience. We couldn't have done it without her. It is equally important to thank David Napoliello and Andrew Dohrman. David and Andrew work for Senator BOXER and are experts within the office, working on this alongside our staff.

It is kind of interesting because Senator BOXER and I can't get any further apart philosophically. She is a very proud liberal, and I am a very proud conservative. We would be fighting like cats and dogs over these regulations that are putting Americans out of business. But, today, we think alike, and we are working together. I am so proud of her staff working with my staff.

Bettina. There is Bettina, and she is probably the No. 1 hard working person, sitting in the back here on that side, and whom we really appreciate. Some days I don't appreciate her, but I have all during this process.

So many others have made contributions to the success today. It is important to thank on my staff Susan Bodine, for her work on environmental provisions, and also Jennie Wright and Andrew Neely. I wish to thank my communications team, including Donelle Harder, Daisy Letendre, and Kristina Baum. They have to get the message out as to what we are doing, how significant it is.

People who are witnessing this today are witnessing the most popular bill of this entire year. We can go back to any of the 50 States, and they are all going to say the one thing we want is a transportation system. It is not just that they want this bill. This is what the Constitution says we are supposed to be doing. Article I, section 8 of the Constitution says to defend America and provide for roads and bridges, and that is what we accomplished today.

There are some others outside of our committee I want to thank: Chairman

HATCH, Chairman THUNE, Chairman SHELBY, and their staffs, including Chris Campbell, Mark Prater, David Schweitzer, Shannon Hines, and Jen Deci. I want to thank our leader, MITCH MCCONNELL, who really came through to put this at top priority. Without that priority, we couldn't have done it. I know Sharon Soderstrom, Hazen Marshall, Neil Chatterjee, Jonathan Burks, and Brendan Dunn were all involved.

If my colleagues would just permit me, 10 years ago today is the last time we passed a significant, multiyear bill. I remember standing right here at this podium, right when this moment came, and it was time to thank all of these people who worked so hard. All of a sudden the sirens went off and the buzzers—evacuate, evacuate; bomb, bomb. Everyone left, but I hadn't made my speech yet. So I stood there and made it longer than I probably should have. There is nothing more eerie than standing here in the Chamber when nobody else is here and everybody else is gone. After a while, I thought that I had better get out of here.

As I walked out the front door and down the long steps—they had already shut off the elevators and all of that; it was dark—I saw a bulk of a man walking away very slowly. I saw that it was Ted Kennedy. I said: Ted, we better get out of here; this place might blow up.

He said: Well, these old legs don't work like they used to.

So I said: Here, put your arm around my shoulders. And I put my arm out to steady him. Someone took our picture. It was in a magazine, and it said: Who said that Republicans are not compassionate.

I always think of that when I think of these bills. I say to my friend, Senator BOXER, with whom I have worked so closely during this time—and I actually enjoyed it: Any time we get a coalition between your philosophy and my philosophy, it has to be right. It was, and it is over.

I yield the floor to Senator BOXER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, my friend and I have long worked together on infrastructure, and we did it this time under very difficult conditions. I would say to him that with his leadership on EPW, going to a markup, proving to the rest of the Senate that, in fact, our committee could work together, we got a 20-to-nothing vote. As a result of that, and as my friend has often said, our committee is really responsible for about 70 to 75 percent of the funding. So we were the key committee, and we proved that we could work together.

It was a little tougher on the other committees. That is when it took Leader MCCONNELL's leadership, Senator DURBIN's leadership, and we came together.

But I must say that those top staffers from Senator INHOFE's team, McConnell's team, Boxer's team, including Bettina Poirier, Neil Chatterjee, and