

wrong debate. It turns out technology has passed us, and so have our demographics.

So what do we do to incentive participation in the economy, particularly when you have an economy with dramatically more jobs than we have available workers?

Here is this last slide. My hat is off to millennial females. They have begun entering the workforce in terrific numbers. If any of them happen to know a millennial male, could you please grab him by the hand and drag him into the workforce.

My wife blames video games. I still haven't seen actual data on this yet.

So my reason for taking some of this time tonight, I actually think there should be some joy out there. For those of us who get behind these microphones and we claim we care about people, there are really good things happening. How do we make more of it happen? How do we make this last as long as possible? Because we as a body, Democrats and Republicans, are in uncharted territory, and we have got to be brutally honest about this. We are in uncharted territory.

If you actually read some of the financial, economic articles over this weekend, lots of really smart economists and businesspeople are talking about having this type of economy with functionally full employment, with populations moving into the labor force at the same time our available workforce is starting to bend pretty dramatically because of baby boomers turning 65, and yet, functionally, no core inflation—if there was ever a time for us to functionally go after a number of societal ills with this type of opportunity to work.

And the last anecdote I am going to give after making fun of anecdotes—well, it is more than an anecdote; it is an observation.

A few months ago, I visited the homeless shelter in Phoenix. It is actually a fairly impressive facility. Over here is St. Joseph the Worker; over here is the dental clinic; over here is where we help you get ID; here is the 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week 12-step meeting.

You walked in and saw St. Joseph the Worker. It is a Catholic charity. I believe it has been around 100-plus years. Their job is to help the most disadvantaged of our population, of our world find work.

There was a stack of job posts, notes, on top of the desk. Their greatest difficulty was how do they get someone from the homeless campus to that dishwashing job or to the stocking job or these things to get them back into the labor force in our society to begin that nobility of work but also as becoming part of their rehab programs.

We came up with this idea of, well, if transportation is a fragility—we all walk around with these in our pockets, and there are these buttons that you hit and a ride sharing comes up, and many of those very companies will ac-

tually provide the service at a fraction of the cost as a societal good.

We need to start thinking through the types of technology that we all use in our lives. How do we make it so that the mother who might be on a Medicaid system can get to her prenatal appointment? the person who has just gone through Goodwill's job training actually can get to their job interview? the person at the homeless campus actually can get to that job?

If you are from Phoenix, Arizona, asking someone to stand out and wait for the bus when it is 110 degrees, you start to understand that maybe we need to come up with a better solution.

I make the argument that we already know the solution. We already use it for ourselves and our children. We now need to start thinking about, if labor force participation is one of our great fragilities for future economic growth and that economic growth helps us take care of our promises, how do we get the most marginalized of our society and make sure they have the same opportunities? So this is one of those moments.

I know I have covered a lot of things, but I get to come behind the microphone. Even with all the sourness that happens around this place, I think there should be some joy because we are seeing our brothers and sisters who had a really tough decade back with some optimism and some options and some hope. Our ethical obligation, I think, is: How do we do more of it?

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, for over 100 years, America's railways, roadways, runways, and rivers were the envy of the entire world. Now they are emblems of a past time that requires significant upgrades to support our current needs. They not only allow us to participate in a global economy, but allow us to dominate that economy.

First, let me note that American infrastructure is made up of the following: 4.1 million miles of public highways, over 600,000 bridges, 140,500 miles of railways, 11,300 miles of public transit systems, 25,000 miles of navigable waterways, 250 water ports, and 19,500 airports.

Much of that infrastructure is decades old and in dire need of repair. For too long, America has stood by and allowed our once world-leading infrastructure to crumble.

Our competitors have not only caught up with us, but, in many cases, have surpassed us. Countries like China and India spend billions on new roads, new rails, and ports, while we have allowed ours to decay.

America still has the most dynamic, innovative, and diversified economy in the entire world, but we must rebuild our Nation's infrastructure to remain competitive.

Our taxpayers already pay enough in taxes, so we have to find ways to pay for these infrastructure improvements. It is imperative that we do so without putting a heavier burden on our hardworking American taxpayers.

That is why I have worked on legislation over the years, with colleagues on both sides of the aisle, that uses a combination of public and private funds to fix our public works. By working together, we can rebuild our Nation's infrastructure by harnessing the private sector's capacity for innovation and investment, rather than raising taxes.

I would like to outline some of the legislation that I am talking about, which I believe is just the type of outside-the-box thinking we need to achieve those goals.

Today, EARL BLUMENAUER and I introduced the BUILD Act. This legislation raises the Federal statutory cap on private activity bonds that can be issued by or on behalf of State and local governments for qualified highway and freight improvement projects from \$15 billion to \$20.8 billion. In short, it allows State and local governments to enhance their capacity to finance surface transportation projects through private-public partnerships.

As more of our Nation's infrastructure requires critical investment and improvements, we must find ways to reinvest in our roads and rails without burdening our hardworking American taxpayers. This bill will help finance improvement projects at a minimal cost to taxpayers with a maximum impact on America's roads, bridges, and rails. This is a jobs bill.

I joined with Chairman DEFAZIO, Ranking Member GRAVES, Representative NAPOLITANO, and Representative WESTERMAN to introduce H.R. 2440, the Full Utilization of the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund Act. This bipartisan bill ensures the harbor maintenance trust fund is used for its intended purpose, and that is maintaining our federally authorized harbors.

Erie, Pennsylvania, knows that our airports badly need this support. The Port of Erie is part of our economic lifeblood. For decades, cargo ships have had to light load because of a lack of dredging, significantly increasing the cost per unit for shipped goods.

People ask: What do you mean by light load? What I mean by that is they cannot load to their full capacity. They are light loading so the ships can navigate through areas that have not been dredged in years.

Our Nation's 59 busiest ports are available less than 35 percent of the time. Conditions of our midsize and emerging harbors are far worse.

Currently, there is over \$9 billion sitting in the harbor maintenance trust fund. This money has come from the users of those assets. They have put that money in for the express purpose of thinking that it was going to be used to improve the ports that they used.

Over the next decade, there is going to be an additional \$24.5 billion in revenue that will be collected by the harbor maintenance tax. This bill provides for the investment of approximately \$34 billion for our Nation's coastal and inland harbors over the next decade without raising one dime in taxes for our hardworking American taxpayers. This money will provide for dredging of all Federal harbors to their constructed widths and depths.

Because of developments like the opening of the expanded Panama Canal in 2016, larger container ships will increasingly call upon our Nation's ports, and dredging is necessary if they are allowed to have access to these ports. Our goal is to guarantee that our Nation is competitive in the global economy of the 21st century.

Also with EARL BLUMENAUER, I introduced the Public Buildings Renewal Act. This bipartisan legislation will spur private investment in public building infrastructure throughout the United States by creating \$5 billion in private activity bonds for the improvement of government-owned public buildings.

In every small town or city in America, the conditions of our public schools, our public hospitals, our universities, and our police and fire stations are deteriorating because of delayed maintenance. We just haven't been able to afford to do it.

With State and local budgets becoming increasingly tight, capital investments in public buildings have fallen by the wayside. For example, the average public school building is at least 40 years old, and the current backlog of maintenance and repair projects adds up to more than \$45 billion, annually, in unmet funding needs.

□ 2015

The Public Building Renewal Act aims to unlock private sector capital for the public sector's benefit. The public buildings that house vital services for Americans must be maintained and improved.

We have also dropped the Building Rail Access for Customers and the Economy Act. Representative BLUMENAUER and I introduced this bill just recently.

The short line rail industry operates on nearly 50,000 miles of railroad track in 49 states. And is part of the origination or the termination of one out of every five cars, railroad cars, on the national railroad system.

Short line railroads serve the most vulnerable part of the rail network. Small towns and small businesses who would have otherwise been cut off from the national network, are now served by the short lines.

Unfortunately, though, as the freight rail industry has evolved, many short line railroads and smaller communities have been abandoned.

This removes a critical first- and last-mile link between producers, consumers, and export opportunities in large and small communities across America.

Since it was first enacted in 2005, the 1- or 2-year increment extensions of the Short Line Railroad Maintenance Credit provided limited certainty for short line railroads to make investments in their infrastructure.

Our legislation delivers confidence by making the short line railroad maintenance credit permanent while also applying it retroactively to tax year 2018.

The short line railroad maintenance tax credit is responsible for more than \$4 billion of investment in privately held short line railroads across America.

The tax credit requires the short line railroad to invest \$1 dollar for every 50 cents in credit up to a credit cap of \$3,500 per track mile.

In 2015 alone, 2,140 rail miles were improved.

5.27 million railroad ties were replaced; and the short line industry invested nearly 25 percent of their revenue on infrastructure improvements.

These investments ensure that more than 10,000 rail companies can rely on safe, efficiently and economically competitive transportation for their products.

Also, I would like to talk just a little bit about the GAIIN Act.

During the last Congress, I introduced a bipartisan bill with a broad coalition from the Republican Study Committee, the Congressional Black Caucus, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, and the House Freedom Caucus.

This legislation has the potential to help fund critical infrastructure projects in the Nation's poorest communities while simultaneously paying down on our national debt.

The poorest areas in our country have been routinely overlooked or are in dire need of infrastructure improvements that will facilitate economic growth and self-sustainability.

Reviving these forgotten cities and breathing life back into these towns throughout America is both a moral and economic imperative that uniquely unites all lawmakers on both sides of the aisle.

Selling some of the \$2 trillion of non-performing debt and lease assets held by Federal agencies on the open market would be a good strategy for a down payment on infrastructure improvements.

The GAIIN Act will do that and reduce our debt without asking taxpayers for one more penny of their money.

Half the proceeds from these sales will be put into projects and communities below the poverty line and directly lead to jobs and economic growth where it is most needed.

Also, the contractors doing this work in these communities would be required to hire people who actually live there, to help build these products and projects.

Imagine the generational pride that will be created when fathers and mothers and grandfathers and grandmothers tell their children and grandchildren, "We rebuilt this community for you." It lasts for generations, and it is a pride that you can't just stop thinking about how good it is for our country.

Now, the other half of the revenue we collect would go to debt reduction. And this is a private-sector solution to a public-sector problem, and another huge win for America.

It is time for us to come together as a Nation to keep America on its path of greatness.

This is not a red State or blue State issue. This is not a Republican or Democrat issue. This is a red, white, and blue American issue.

We must make sure American infrastructure allows our people to compete in the global economy now and in the future. In an economy that we not only participate in, but that we dominate, that America takes its rightful place in the world when it comes to what we are able to do.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act and the President's rescission of the onerous regulations unleashed our economy, and we are seeing the best job numbers that we have seen in over half a century.

Now, in order for that success to be sustained and long-term, it is incumbent that we upgrade our infrastructure.

So I call on all my colleagues to work together and come up with creative solutions to pay for these very necessary improvements and to support the bills I have outlined today.

America's best times lie in front of her, not behind her. And once again, it is Yankee ingenuity that will lead us to the top again and we will become that country that others long to belong to and become a part of.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

ISSUES OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, one of the things that occasionally happens here on the floor of the House late at night, when most everybody is doing something else, is an opportunity to hear what our Republican colleagues want to talk about, and I must commend them.

I actually sat through a very fascinating discussion on the American economy by Mr. SCHWEIKERT about jobs, about the development of the workforce and the way it relates to Social Security.