

Mr. DAVID P. ROE of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, just for the record, a lieutenant general, in case there are those who don't know what that is, has three stars. I salute this marine. Even though I was in the Army, I have to salute the general over here.

Before I close in support of this bill, Madam Speaker, I want to express my disappointment that we are not considering another bill, S. 3084, this afternoon as well.

S. 3084 would correct a technical error in current law that unless swiftly addressed will jeopardize the financial security of certain current and former senior leaders across the VA healthcare system and make it harder for VA to recruit and retain the necessary talent to serve our Nation's veterans.

In short, a provision of the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010—and I remember that—is intended to raise the salary cap for employees serving our senior executive services-equivalent positions in the Veterans Health Administration. However, due to a recently realized error in the law, VA will have to cut pay and issue debts for 30 current and 10 former senior leaders in those positions unless Congress acts to make the necessary corrections which S. 3084 will do.

This was no fault of the Members. All of the employees who are impacted by this technical error serve in high-level, mission-critical leadership positions working on issues like suicide prevention, mental health, women's health, and more. We should be encouraging and supporting these leaders, not leaving them in limbo.

What is more, our failure to address this issue in a timely manner is actively making it harder for VA to recruit candidates to fill important vacancies across the country.

Madam Speaker, S. 3084 passed the Senate on January 16. We could have taken it up and passed it many times over by now. If we had, those leaders would be resting a lot easier, and those vacancies could have been filled. I urge Speaker PELOSI and Chairman TAKANO not to delay any longer and to schedule S. 3084 for floor time as soon as possible.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank Chairman TAKANO for his leadership on all these bills we brought here. They are all very needed, and I appreciate the gentleman bringing them up in a timely fashion. I absolutely endorse all of those today, and I encourage my colleagues to support H.R. 561, as amended.

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

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, in closing, I want to reiterate my support for H.R. 561. I want to appreciate the work with the minority. We have worked together to pass these five pieces of legislation on the floor. It is another demonstration of our commitment to put veterans above partisanship and to put the interests of America above partisanship.

Madam Speaker, I can't tell you what a privilege it is to chair this committee. I urge all my colleagues to pass H.R. 561, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 561, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO UKRAINE—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 116-102)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days before the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13660 of March 6, 2014, with respect to Ukraine is to continue in effect beyond March 6, 2020.

The actions and policies of persons that undermine democratic processes and institutions in Ukraine; threaten its peace, security, stability, sovereignty, and territorial integrity; and contribute to the misappropriation of its assets, and the actions and policies of the Government of the Russian Federation, including its purported annexation of Crimea and its use of force in Ukraine, continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13660 with respect to Ukraine.

DONALD J. TRUMP.
THE WHITE HOUSE, February 25, 2020.

CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO CUBA AND OF THE EMERGENCY AUTHORITY RELATING TO THE REGULATION OF THE ANCHORAGE AND MOVEMENT OF VESSELS—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 116-103)

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. GARCIA of Texas) laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days before the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to Cuba that was declared on March 1, 1996, in Proclamation 6867, as amended by Proclamation 7757 on February 26, 2004, Proclamation 9398 on February 24, 2016, and Proclamation 9699 on February 22, 2018, is to continue in effect beyond March 1, 2020.

It continues to be United States policy that a mass migration from Cuba would endanger the security of the United States by posing a disturbance or threatened disturbance of the international relations of the United States. The Cuban government has not demonstrated that it will refrain from the use of excessive force against United States vessels or aircraft that may engage in memorial activities or peaceful protest north of Cuba. Further, the unauthorized entry of United States-registered vessels into Cuban territorial waters continues to be detrimental to United States foreign policy and counter to the purpose of Executive Order 12807 of May 24, 1992, which is to ensure, among other things, safe, orderly, and legal migration. The possibility of large-scale unauthorized entries of United States-registered vessels would disturb the international relations of the United States by facilitating a possible mass migration of Cuban nationals. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared with respect to Cuba and the emergency authority relating to the regulation of the anchorage and movement of vessels set out in Proclamation 6867, as amended by Proclamation 7757, Proclamation 9398, and Proclamation 9699.

DONALD J. TRUMP.
THE WHITE HOUSE, February 25, 2020.

INFRASTRUCTURE

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

Mr. GALLAGHER. Madam Speaker, I want to talk today about infrastructure, and I start with the confession that I was lied to as a child. In fact, my whole generation was lied to. We were told time and again by nearly every futuristic TV show or movie that by now we would all be traveling around on jetpacks and hoverboards. But we are still waiting.

And while we wait, we have to grapple with the fact that we need to use roads wherever we are going and that our outdated infrastructure is nowhere near where it needs to be.

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Few issues we debate here in Washington, D.C., impact the day-to-day lives of our constituents more directly than infrastructure. Yet, fixing our infrastructure has become a running joke, with seemingly every week derisively dubbed infrastructure week.

It may be infrastructure week this week. We don't know. But infrastructure should not be an afterthought or a back-burner priority we deal with only when we have more money—which we don't—or when we are in a true infrastructure crisis. Even in December's \$1.4 trillion spending deal, in which seemingly every lobbyist in D.C. got a Christmas present, infrastructure was largely ignored.

Yet, infrastructure should not be impossible to tackle. Even as progress on a comprehensive package has eluded Congress in recent years, we have generated important bipartisan wins, like the 2-year Coast Guard reauthorization and reforms to better utilize the harbor maintenance trust fund to support critical projects at ports nationwide. There are plenty more easy bipartisan wins waiting on the sidelines—such as the Safe Routes Act, the Motorcyclist Advisory Council Reauthorization Act, and the Promoting Women in Trucking Workforce Act—that we could pass in the House tomorrow and make our roads safer and grow our workforce in key industries.

I know these are small fixes that will not solve all of America's infrastructure needs, but they would represent tangible progress in a divided Congress that would improve transportation in communities like mine in northeast Wisconsin. But we can't be content to stop there.

Even though now, in the midst of the craziness that comes with the Presidential election cycle, it is hard to imagine a comprehensive infrastructure bill passing both the House and the Senate, I think we should all agree that does not mean we should punt on thinking through more systemic infrastructure issues.

As we consider how the Federal Government can best support States, set

national standards, and promote infrastructure, there are three principles that we should keep in mind.

First, we need to better understand where Federal money goes. Before spending \$1 trillion on infrastructure, Congress needs to understand where and how Federal money is being spent. You may ask yourself: Don't we already know that? No, unfortunately, we have shockingly little definitive information about America's infrastructure needs and how much they cost.

Given this opacity, it is no wonder that we often see huge, exorbitant figures quoted for infrastructure costs. For instance, right now, there is no definitive estimate of the cost difference in building a highway with Federal as opposed to non-Federal dollars. This should not be difficult to determine. All it takes is finding projects of similar design and geography and comparing them.

Any Wisconsin family would compare relative costs before a big construction project. Why should the Federal Government be any different?

The problem is that what little top-line information we have on highways is based on data from 2007 to 2014. Now, the Federal Highway Administration reports only on what Congress has asked them to report. Up until now, that has not included cost analysis on highway projects. This has to change.

Congress should require the Department of Transportation to compare the costs of projects that use Federal funds and those that don't. We should know the breakdown of costs for planning and design, materials, labor, and compliance to understand how to better protect taxpayer money.

We should also require the Department to compare States so we can see which States are more efficient and figure out why they are more efficient.

What is more, we need up-to-date data on the comparative health of infrastructure across the country. Outside groups can provide a valuable perspective, but it is our responsibility as Congress to ensure we have validated, independent data from the States themselves.

For instance, we frequently hear that America has earned a D-plus grade on infrastructure. That is pretty bad. That is a failing grade on infrastructure, but compared to what standard and to what other country? We should have quantifiable comparisons to other developed nations. Are we getting relative bang for our buck compared to the U.K. or Canada? It is an open question. The answers might help us find efficiencies and new ideas for infrastructure partnerships.

China may have high-speed trains in its coastal cities, but they built them without respect to property rights or the environment. What is their return on investment? Does China have a plan to maintain their system as it decays in coming decades?

Unless we have reliable comparisons with peer nations, ratings that find

America has a D-plus in infrastructure lack context, lack meaning, and, therefore, lack all analytical value.

Before we try to prescribe solutions to our infrastructure challenges, we need to get useful, validated data to help us diagnose our problems.

Data is coming to define the modern economy—not jet packs, but data. Therefore, we should be able to fix this stuff. Yet, when it comes to the very engine that literally helps drive our economy from one location to another, we are stuck in the 20th century or even earlier when it comes to measuring need, progress, and required resources.

We have to do better before we sign up for potentially hundreds of billions of dollars in projects.

The second principle is that we need to recognize it is not how much money we spend on infrastructure but how that money is spent. One of the fundamental flaws in our infrastructure policy is that we tend to be enamored with shiny new projects while paying less attention to how we maintain existing roads, bridges, and ports.

The incentives make sense, right? Everyone wants to be there at the ribbon-cutting for a brand-new project, building something new. No one wants to be there at the much less exciting and non-ribbon-cutting ceremony for maintenance we are doing on roads every single day.

But the Department of Transportation's 2019 report to Congress on the status of the Nation's highways, bridges, and transit noted that nearly 60 percent of Federal money spent on highway infrastructure goes to rehabilitating our existing system. Although that sounds substantial, we should remember that the siren call of infrastructure spending in Washington is predicated on fixing our crumbling infrastructure.

If this is the case, then why is Congress not dedicating more resources to maintenance? If we truly want to fix our crumbling infrastructure, then any future infrastructure package must consider the long-term effect of deferring maintenance of existing projects for new construction.

For example, the foundations underneath many of Wisconsin's roads were laid in the 1960s and 1970s and are nearing the end of their lifespans. That means that, in some cases, the foundation of Wisconsin's roads predates Vince Lombardi's victories in Super Bowl I and II.

So why hasn't this been addressed over the years, particularly in the 2009 stimulus, which spent over \$100 billion on infrastructure? Rather than focusing on renewing existing roads, the stimulus bill prioritized Federal dollars for "shovel-ready projects," which tend to be new highways, interchanges, and frontage roads. So, despite receiving almost \$400 million in highway funds from the 2009 stimulus, Wisconsin's roads are still limping along with aging foundations.