Cal McCaghren, and INS inspectors Reynaldo DeLaGarza and Tammy Aamodt. The inspectors' names are engraved in the wall of the National Law Enforcement Memorial here in Washington, DC. Yes, I said the National Law Enforcement Memorial. Yet, as my colleague stated, while they lived and while they did their job, they were not considered law enforcement officers. Only when they died did they get that honor.

My bill, H.R. 1215, will finally grant the same status to U.S. INS and Customs inspectors as all other Federal law enforcement officers and firefighters.

These inspectors are the country's first line of defense against terrorism and the smuggling of drugs through our borders and our large international airports. My district is home to the busiest port of entry in the world: 200,000 people a day cross the border in San Ysidro, San Diego. The inspectors face daily dangerous felons and disarm people carrying every weapon imaginable. Shootouts with drug smugglers happen all too frequently.

Because of the current lopsided law, INS and Customs lose vigorous, trained professionals to other law enforcement agencies and also lose millions of dollars in training and revenues that experienced inspectors help generate.

It is time we value our INS inspectors and Customs inspectors, both living and dead. I urge the support of H.R. 1215 to correct the unequal treatment of these Federal law enforcement officers.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back to my colleague, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. REYES], who knows all too well the valor of these fine Federal employees.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honor and a privilege for me, knowing exactly what these men and women go through each and every day as they carry out their duties at the frontline of defense for this Nation.

I again would like to urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 1215. It is time we recognize the inspectors of the INS and Customs for the law enforcement officers that they truly are.

STEP 21—RESTRUCTURING OUR HIGHWAY FUNDING SYSTEM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. DELAY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise on an issue that is of great concern to the Nation this year, the restructuring of our system of highway funding.

Earlier this year, with the help of my colleagues, the gentleman from California [Mr. CONDIT], the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. BUYER], the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. HOSTETTLER], and many others, I introduced the ISTEA Integrity Restoration Act, H.R. 674, also known as the STEP 21 proposal.

Our bill has 101 cosponsors and it is very bipartisan. It has strong support in the Senate and has a bipartisan coalition of 20 State departments of transportation behind it. The Southern Governors Association has endorsed STEP 21, and many private sector industries and associations have mobilized behind our bill.

H.R. 674 accomplishes four primary objectives. First, it maintains a strong Federal role in transportation by funding the national highway system as the key responsibility. Under STEP 21, 40 percent of a State's funds must be spent on NHS roads or bridges.

Second, it simplifies and makes more flexible the Federal highway program by consolidating the myriad of existing highway programs into two, the national highway system program and the streamlined surface transportation program. Within these programs, Federal funds may still be spent on all ISTEA activities that are currently allowed. This means CMAQ enhancements, bridges, et cetera. However, removing the mandated Federal setasides gives States and local transportation officials the flexibility and responsibility to decide on what, when, where, and how much to spend to meet the individual and diverse transportation needs.

Third, our bill updates the antiquated Federal funding distribution formulas. Currently, outdated factors such as 1980 census figures and postal route mileage are used to determine each State's share of highway funds. We believe formulas should be based on need.

The Federal Highway Administration issued a scientific study that defines need in a statistically accurate manner to show what factors are related to road maintenance needs. The top three factors are: vehicle miles traveled, annual highway trust fund contributions, and lane miles. H.R. 674 uses these three factors, which demonstrate where highways are actually being used, in allocating resources to the States.

Fourth, our bill creates an objective, simple method of distributing highway funds among the States that strikes a more equitable balance between taxes paid and funds returned. We ensure that all States receive at least 95 percent return on the payments made to the Federal highway trust funds. States like Texas have been shortchanged for too long.

Over the life of ISTEA, Texas taxpayers received 77 cents back for every dollar they contributed to the highway trust fund. Clearly there is a need for greater equity where States like Massachusetts receive $2.41 back for every dollar they put in. However, in order to guarantee that we maintain a strong national road system, our bill also has provisions to ensure an adequate level of resources for highways in low population density States that do not have the tax base to support their needs.

This point leads me to one other issue. Many have characterized supporters of STEP 21 as a southern State coalition or a donor State coalition. Our provisions to protect the current highway funding levels of low population States were included specifically to reach out to nonsouthern and nondonor States such as Montana, Wyoming, and New Hampshire. Further, while the STEP 21 coalition includes many southern States, it also includes nonsouthern and nondonor States such as Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Nebraska.

In sum, we call our bill the ISTEA Integrity Restoration Act because we believe it restores the original intent of ISTEA to promote State flexibility and to direct dollars where the greatest need exists. It strikes the appropriate balance between the national interests in highways and the rights and responsibilities of each State.

I look forward to continue to work with the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the rest of my colleagues on this legislation as it develops.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my special order.

OFFICER BRIAN GIBSON TAX-FREE PENSION EQUITY ACT OF 1997

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia [Ms. NORTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, come tomorrow, we will be celebrating the 16th annual National Peace Officers Memorial Day, and the President of the United States is going to be here on the west front. I am sure, regardless of party, many of us are going to be out there to honor slain police officers. It is the culmination of National Police Week, and I come to the floor this afternoon to encourage my colleagues to do something more than mourn slain police officers.

I have sponsored the Officer Brian Gibson Tax-Free Pension Equity Act of 1997. This is a bill that has almost no fiscal consequences, but it would allow the families of officers killed in the line of duty to receive survivor benefits tax-free.

We already allow officers who retire on disability to receive their benefits tax-free. Surely we would want to this year erase the disparate treatment between officers who still live, but are disabled, and survivors of officers who have been killed in the line of duty. Is this small deed merely honorific, or is it necessary?

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I got the idea, Mr. Speaker, when Officer Brian Gibson was killed a few months ago. I learned that this officer was only 28 years old and had left infants behind. Then, right after that,