

their renting or leasing practices or in the care of the vehicle. This provision is a common sense reform that holds vehicle operators accountable for their own actions and does not unfairly punish owners who have done nothing wrong.

Unfortunately, the Senate bill does not contain this important reform. I urge my colleagues to consider the merits of this provision and retain the House-passed language in the conference bill.

TRANSPORTATION EQUITY ACT

I-49 AND I-69

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss a matter of great importance to my State, one that I hear about every time I go home. Economic development and job creation is something that every Arkansan is concerned about. One surefire way to generate economic development and create jobs is through highway construction. The U.S. DOT estimates that for every \$1 billion of investment in highways, 47,500 jobs are created, but the benefits go far beyond that. It does Arkansans no good to have good health care, education, and jobs if they don't have the roads to get there. Furthermore, business investors do not want to place their companies anywhere that does not have ready access to interstate roads.

My State is in the process of building two new interstates that would jumpstart economic growth, relieve congestion, and provide two additional freight corridors between our two largest trading partners.

Future Interstate 49 connects Canada with New Orleans and would provide the only north-south corridor within 300 miles, cutting through Kansas City, MO and Western Arkansas. I-49 is extremely important to Arkansas, as it traverses the fastest growing part of my State, which is home to Wal-Mart, Tyson's, JB Hunt Transportation, and numerous other transportation companies. The potential for freight movement along this corridor is enormous. However, the State of Arkansas has lacked the funds to make significant progress along the most expensive part of the corridor.

Future Interstate 69 connects Canada with Mexico through Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Texas. It also has enormous potential for freight movement, but it also cuts across the poorest region of my State where economic development is vitally important to the future of local communities. The amount of jobs a project such as I-69 would create has the potential to lift these areas out of poverty.

During debate on the highway bill, I have requested amounts that would provide Arkansas with a sufficient amount of money to make significant progress on these two extremely important roadways.

Mr. BAUCUS. I want to first commend the Senator for his continued

work on transportation issues. He is a real leader in this area and I appreciate his hard work on behalf of the State of Arkansas. I am aware of the Senator's requests and I understand the importance of these projects to Arkansas and the country. My colleague has been very persistent and we have worked hard to include a formula in the bill that provides a significant increase in funding to Arkansas so that the State may be able to accomplish this task. Specifically, Arkansas stands to gain over \$550 million over the 5 years of this bill, a 30 percent increase from the levels they received under TEA-21. Would this amount be sufficient to make progress on the two important interstates Senator PRYOR has mentioned?

Mr. PRYOR. I thank the Senator from Montana for his question. My understanding is that this amount would be enough to make substantial progress on both projects until the next reauthorization. However, since this bill does not include references to specific projects, the difficulty would be to make sure these projects did indeed receive a large portion of this increase. Since the increases are largely through apportioned programs to the State, could my State use the increases to fund these interstate projects?

Mr. BAUCUS. The Senator is correct that the bill in the Senate does not have specific funding for projects. However, it is up to the State of Arkansas to make the decision on how to spend this increase in funding and the additional money to the State can certainly be used to make progress on these projects. I would expect that many States would consider projects such as the ones described in Arkansas that are nationally significant. It would be up to the State to set those priorities and move forward. I believe the projects in Arkansas, both I-49 and I-69, are in various stages of development and construction. It is my understanding that both projects are eligible for Federal funding under this reauthorization bill we have written.

Mr. PRYOR. I thank Senator BAUCUS for his hard work as a manager of this bill and the ranking member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee of EPW and ranking member of the Finance Committee, and I compliment him for this strong bill he has helped put together. The Senator always listens to my concerns, and I appreciate his willingness to include such robust funding for my home State.

DESIRE TO WITHDRAW S.J. RES. 13

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, several weeks ago I introduced a joint resolution which has been given the number S.J. Res. 13. This resolution is a one sentence amendment to the Constitution declaring that marriage is between a man and a woman. I would like the RECORD to reflect at this point that I would like to withdraw this resolution.

I understand that under the Senate rules, a unanimous consent withdrawing a joint resolution would not be in order. Thus, copies S.J. Res. 13 will remain available from the Government Printing Office. However, while it is my intent to continue to hold hearings on the important issue of traditional marriage, it is not my intent to advance S.J. Res. 13 through the legislative process.

ELLSWORTH AIR FORCE BASE

Mr. JOHNSON. Last week, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld sent his base closure recommendations to the Base Realignment and Closure Commission. I am deeply disappointed with his decision to include Ellsworth Air Force Base. This recommendation is short-sighted and harmful to our national security. I am confident that the BRAC Commission will recognize the invaluable contribution that Ellsworth makes to the defense of our homeland and will support removing it from the list.

Ellsworth is one of only two bases in the country where the B-1 is stationed. In the past decade, the B-1 has been invaluable to our national defense and it is truly the backbone of our bomber fleet. B-1 crews stationed at Ellsworth have flown missions in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq. During Operation Iraqi Freedom, B-1s were integral in liberating Iraq by dropping more than half the satellite guided munitions on critical targets including command and control facilities, bunkers, and surface-to-air missile sites.

In addition, Ellsworth is strategically located and has excellent access to B-1 training ranges. It is not threatened by urban encroachment or congested air space and has strong community support. During the past decade, I have used my position on the Military Construction Appropriations subcommittee to help direct funding to Ellsworth for critical upgrades including a new base operations building, a B-1 training facility, and military housing that ranks amongst the best in the country. Given its ideal location, as well as the long-term investment in the base's infrastructure, Ellsworth is capable of expanding and accepting new missions.

I emphatically disagree with the Secretary's recommendation to close Ellsworth, and I am eager to work with the Ellsworth Task Force, and the entire South Dakota Congressional delegation, to ensure Ellsworth remains a vital part of our national defense. Ellsworth is a premier installation that has proven it can be a competitive military base for decades to come.

To that end, I am cosponsoring legislation that will postpone this round of base closures. At a time when we are engaged in two military conflicts, as well as rotating soldiers back to the U.S. from overseas installations, we should not be closing bases at home. Simultaneously closing domestic and