

are in disrepair. What are State legislatures around the country doing? Raising the speed limit.

There are a number of places in America where the speed limit is 80 miles an hour. That means that this weekend—Memorial Day weekend—as American families load up their cars and head to the beach or the lake or to visit loved ones, half of the highways they travel on are in dire need of repair.

If that were not troubling enough, 64,000 American bridges are structurally deficient. As each day goes by, these roads and bridges get a little worse—one big pothole.

It is not just our roads and our bridges. Our Nation's infrastructure affects every means of travel. We are all distraught by last week's Amtrak train derailment in Pennsylvania. Eight people were killed. Hundreds were injured. It has been reported that the horrible derailment might have been prevented if speed control safeguards had been installed on this particular section of track.

What we have here in this Congress—my Republican friend, the senior Senator from Kentucky, is talking about the Senate running better than ever. I think not.

The story of our Nation's infrastructure woes is very clear. We have the technology. This great country has the resources. But my friends will not appropriate any money to do this. Stunningly, time and again, we have failed to fix the problems—one big pothole. Fifty percent of our roads are deficient, and 64,000 bridges are structurally deficient. Specifically, Republicans in Congress have refused to work with Democrats in making an adequate long-term investment in our country's service transportation.

What we have here time after time are short-term extensions of the highway bill. Before the Republicans hit town here, we used to do long-term highway bills—they have stood in the way of doing that—so that the Department of Transportation and leaders in all 50 States could plan ahead. That is why we did these long-term bills. The way it is now, a 2-month extension or a 6-month extension does not work. It is terribly inefficient and very, very expensive.

The highway trust fund runs out in about 8 or 10 weeks. The authorization for the Federal highway program expires later this month. Later this month, if we have not extended the highway bill, there could be no money spent on highways.

The fact that these programs are expiring is no secret. Our Republican colleagues have known about this deadline for months and months. Yet here we are at the end of May, and Republicans are no closer to crafting a long-term investment in our roads, bridges, and railways. They have not had a markup in the four committees of jurisdiction. In fact, Republicans are trying to do the opposite. They are going

to the extreme of gutting our already inadequate transportation.

Look at what happened with Amtrak. The House Republicans chose to cut Amtrak in the hours just after the derailment by a quarter of a billion dollars. Who could help but be astonished by this act of carelessness?

Former Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell, who knows quite a bit about Pennsylvania, speaking of the Republicans in Congress said: "Normally, after a tragedy, a pipeline bursts, a bridge collapses, everyone for a couple of weeks says 'we've really got to do something.' Here, less than 12 hours after seven people died"—of course, now it is eight—"these Republicans in Congress didn't even have the decency to table the vote."

They went right ahead and did it, cutting a quarter of a billion dollars from Amtrak.

In addition to what it does and does not do to highways, our bridges, our dams, is the fact that it stops job creation. Every billion dollars we spend on highway construction, infrastructure development, we create 47,500 high-paying jobs. Instead of slashing Federal funding or putting critical transportation infrastructure on the back burner, we should be crafting a long-term plan to boost our Nation's investment and infrastructure.

With precious little time before the Federal highway program expires, there is no hope for anything but a short-term authorization longer than a few months. We understand that. We are not happy about it, but that is the reality of the situation that the Republicans have forced us to be in.

The U.S. highway system is crucial to our Nation's economic well-being. It is how we move goods and services. It is central to American families who use our roads and bridges every day.

The American Society of Civil Engineers predicts that our economy will lose \$1 trillion without adequate infrastructure investment. That is almost 3.5 million jobs, and some say more than that.

Congress must invest in working families and businesses by addressing our Nation's transportation needs. I invite congressional Republicans to work with us in building bipartisan consensus to ensure a strong and robust investment in our Nation's infrastructure. What is being done as we speak is that they are trying to patch together a 2-month extension. A 2-month extension or a 6-month extension, I think, is the wrong way to go. It is not good for our country.

Would the Chair announce the business before the Senate today.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be

in a period of morning business until 3 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Utah.

HIGHWAY BILL

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I wish to take just a few minutes today to talk about the ongoing effort to maintain funding for the highway trust fund.

As we all know, while the highway trust fund currently has a large enough balance in terms of funding to last another 2 months, contracting authority expires at the end of May. Therefore, unless this Congress acts before we break for the Memorial Day recess, we will start seeing work stoppages on transportation projects around the country.

No one wants to see that. There is bipartisan agreement on that basic point. There is similar agreement on the desire for a long-term highway bill. Members of both parties are tired of kicking the can down the road and want to see a real, long-term fix. The problem is that the bipartisan agreement tends to end there.

The gold standard for a future, long-term highway bill has been set at 6 years. That is what everyone apparently wants to see happen, though few have offered workable solutions on how to pay for it.

According to CBO, a 6-year highway bill would cost a little more than \$90 billion. That is not chump change, even by Congress's standards. It takes real work and significant policy changes to raise that kind of money. One party cannot do it alone. It takes cooperation and compromise, something that, unfortunately, has been lacking around here for some time.

As the chairman of the committee with jurisdiction over the funding for highways, I am committed to finding a solution that gets us as far into the future as possible before we have to revisit the issue again. Toward that end, I have been working with Chairman RYAN of the House Ways and Means Committee and others on a path forward.

Our initial plan was to pull together enough funding to get us through the end of 2015. That would have cost roughly \$11 billion—with a "b"—not an insignificant number, by any means, but very doable under the circumstances.

We had roughly \$5 billion in agreed-upon tax compliance offsets from the previous highway episode late last year. Chairman RYAN and I thought it seemed reasonable to couple that with an equal amount in spending reductions and reforms, getting us very close to what we would need to get the country through the rest of the year on highways.

For a time, it appeared as though at least some of our colleagues on the other side were willing to work with us on this general framework. Unfortunately, that cooperation did not last. In fact, it never really began.