

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 2410, THE "GENERATING RENEWAL, OPPORTUNITY, AND WORK WITH ACCELERATED MOBILITY, EFFICIENCY, AND REBUILDING OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT AMERICA ACT" (GROW AMERICA ACT)

HON. PETER A. DeFAZIO

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 19, 2015

Mr. DeFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, today I, along with many of my colleagues on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, are introducing H.R. 2410, the "Generating Renewal, Opportunity, and Work with Accelerated Mobility, Efficiency, and Rebuilding of Infrastructure and Communities throughout America Act" (GROW AMERICA Act).

This legislation represents the Administration's six-year surface reauthorization proposal. We introduce this legislation by request, as it is the policy work of the Administration. By introducing it, we are putting our stamp of approval on the vision that this proposal offers—robust funding levels in a long-term bill to provide sustainable solutions to our Nation's infrastructure crisis.

Today, the House voted on a two-month short-term extension of highway, transit, and highway safety programs. Congress has had 10 months since the enactment of the last extension in July 2014 to produce a long-term bill, or at least to make significant progress in identifying sustainable revenues to shore up the Highway Trust Fund. The Republican Leadership has produced neither. The Committee on Ways and Means could not so much as hold a hearing on this topic in the past 10 months.

It is no surprise, therefore, that this House cannot come to agreement on \$11 billion in offsets to keep surface transportation programs afloat through the end of this year, which would provide certainty to the construction industry and its workers during their busiest season. Here we are, in the middle of another construction season, and Congress is unable—or unwilling—to consider more than a short-term patch.

We can't kick the can down the road anymore. There is no road left. The revenues we collect are insufficient to meet our needs. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that the shortfall in the Highway Trust Fund is \$172 billion over the next 10 years just to maintain current funding levels. If Congress passes a six-year bill, the gap is \$92 billion.

This gap only accounts for status quo funding. Finding an additional \$92 billion will not provide enough funds to make substantial improvements to our infrastructure or address the ballooning backlog in highway, bridge, and transit state of good repair. It does not provide new investments in freight.

H.R. 2410 goes beyond the status quo and will move our Nation into the 21st century. The bill provides a total of \$478 billion over six years, a 45 percent increase for highways, bridges, public transportation, highway safety, and rail programs. Over six years, the GROW AMERICA Act makes significant investments in:

Highways—provides \$317 billion for programs under the Federal Highway Administra-

tion (FHWA), an increase of 29 percent over current levels.

Freight—dedicates \$18 billion for a new dedicated multi-modal freight program.

Transit—provides \$115 billion for programs under the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), an increase of 76 percent over current levels, and significantly boosts New Starts funding.

Rail—provides \$28.6 billion for programs under the Federal Rail Administration (FRA).

Safety—provides \$6 billion for vehicle safety programs under the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), \$4.7 billion for truck and bus safety programs under the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), and \$16 billion for the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP).

Competitive Grants—provides \$7.5 billion for TIGER grants and \$6 billion for TIFIA that could support \$60 billion in loans.

Research and Innovation—provides \$3.4 billion to leverage research and innovation to move people and goods more safely and efficiently, while minimizing impacts on the environment.

Federal lands—provides \$150 million for a Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Projects program, to address project needs on Federal lands.

In addition to these critical investments in the Nation's intermodal surface transportation network, H.R. 2410 also includes a number of important policy provisions that ensure that surface transportation investments create good paying American jobs. These include tightening Buy America loopholes, funding workforce development, allowing local hire, and strengthening wage and hour laws for truck and bus drivers.

There are provisions in this proposal that I do not support, and may give some of my colleagues pause. Specifically, I strongly oppose eliminating the prohibition on tolling of existing free Interstate highways for reconstruction of an existing facility. The proposal also extends the deadline for Positive Train Control implementation. Given last week's tragic Amtrak crash, Congress should be coming together to find ways to fund expedited PTC implementation, not pushing the compliance date farther into the future. Other provisions, such as Buy America waivers for rail rolling stock, and elimination of statutory hours of service provisions for rail workers, also cause concern.

Nevertheless, the Administration's bill provides a great starting point—an opportunity for this Congress to come together to significantly increase infrastructure investment over the long term. I look forward to working in a bipartisan manner with Chairman SHUSTER and our colleagues on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure as we develop new surface transportation legislation.

IN HONOR OF ISSAC ROBINSON, JR. ON HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE WEST PALM BEACH CITY COMMISSION

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 19, 2015

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to rise today to recognize my good friend, Mr.

Issac "Ike" Robinson, Jr., on the occasion of his retirement from the West Palm Beach City Commission for District 2. Ike served with distinction as City Commissioner since 1999. He additionally served as President of the Commission from 2001–2002 and from 2006–2007. During his tenure on the Commission, he was on several key committees including the Small Business Advisory Committee and the Education Advisory Committee. His work led him to represent the City as a member and President of the Palm Beach County League of Cities. Ike eventually served as a member of the Florida League of Cities, meanwhile serving on the Governor's Taskforce for the Eradication of Methamphetamine Drug Labs. On a national level, Ike served on the National League of Cities and the National Black Caucus of elected officials.

A U.S. Army Veteran, husband to his wife Ernestine, and proud father and grandfather, Ike has dedicated his life to serving the West Palm Beach community with excellence. He also served and retired after 30 years in the Palm Beach County School District, and served 6 years with the West Palm Beach Police department as a Case Manager and a Crisis Counselor.

His dedication to the City of West Palm Beach is undeniable when looking and recognizing his contributions as an elected official and upstanding citizen. His service on the Commission for 16 years has earned him a record position as the longest serving commissioner in the history of West Palm Beach, and no doubt a legacy to be proud of. I am grateful for his honorable work, and wish Ike the best of luck and good health in the next journey in his life.

Mr. Speaker, once again, I am honored to congratulate Mr. Issac "Ike" Robinson on his retirement and for his years of service to the West Palm Beach community.

CONGRATULATING ANTHONY BRUTTO

HON. DAVID B. MCKINLEY

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 19, 2015

Mr. MCKINLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Mr. Anthony Brutto, a 94-year-old West Virginia University Class of 2015 graduate. A passionate designer and craftsman from a young age, Mr. Brutto began his collegiate career in 1939 seeking an engineering degree.

In 1942, his studies came to an abrupt halt when he was drafted into the Army Air Corps, where he served for three and a half years. He was primarily stationed in Venice, Florida and worked on the P39 and P49 bombers. After the war, family demands and changing careers kept him from completing his degree.

Mr. Brutto never lost his passion for education, however, and he received his bachelor's degree this past weekend during WVU's Commencement.

At a time when more young people are questioning the value of a college degree, it is encouraging to witness his perseverance in attaining a degree. Young West Virginians should follow in his footsteps and equip themselves for a lifetime of prosperity, no matter what setbacks come their way. As Mr. Brutto