

and only be kicked down the road, leaving millions of jobs behind. Even with the looming deadline, Republicans are showing no haste in forming a plan to address our Nation's crumbling roads, railroads, bridges, and transit systems.

We have one of the most unique makeups in one of our committees that this body has ever seen. We have one of the most liberal Members of the Senate, BARBARA BOXER, and her counterpart is one of the most conservative Members of this body, JIM INHOFE from Oklahoma. They know the importance. These two divergent political spectrums know that we have to do something about the highway system. They are going to put out a bill. They are going to authorize it. Then we need to figure out a way to fund that.

Republicans don't seem interested in that. Even with its looming deadline, Republicans are showing no haste in forming a plan or to develop one for this system that we have to do something about. Congressional Republicans see no urgency to schedule hearings, to mark up a bill, to take testimony in other ways or to make the highway trust fund solvent. With every day that passes, our Federal highway trust fund inches closer and closer to insolvency.

It is clear we will need to get to that reauthorization of the highway program either this week or next week. But we won't. Look at the schedule. It means we are left with July. Looking at the Senate calendar for July, assuming that the Republican leader will continue to keep the Senate out of session on Fridays, we will have, in reality, 15 days to reauthorize the Federal highway system—15 days. Fifteen session days is precious little time, especially when Republicans don't feel any urgency to solve this problem. Of course, we all know how this is going to play out. This is straight out of the Republican's playbook—the manufactured crisis playbook.

They have written the book, and they are adding chapters to it every week of this Congress. Republicans will drag their feet until the very last minute, refusing to work with us on a long-term solution to our Nation's infrastructure woes. Then, when the deadline is imminent, the Republican leader will offer yet another short-term extension to stave off another disaster of his own making.

This is and should be unacceptable to everyone here. We already have had 33 Republican short-term fixes. We do not need a 34th. But that is where we are headed. That is too bad. What we do need is a Republican Party that sees the value of a robust, long-term investment in our Nation's highways. We need a Republican Party that sees what President Eisenhower saw 50 years ago—half a century—that investing in our infrastructure is a shot in the arm to our economy.

There are hundreds of thousands of shovel-ready jobs just waiting for Congress to act. On the other hand, failing

to meet our country's infrastructure needs will be catastrophic. The American Society of Civil Engineers predicts that our economy would lose \$1 trillion unless we invest in surface transportation—\$1 trillion. Let's not forget the safety implications of sitting on our hands. Half of our roads are in poor condition. Tens of thousands of bridges across the country are structurally deficient. Railroads are without important, lifesaving braking systems. They need to be refurbished and some parts of them reinvented. Doing nothing is not and should not be an option.

The Republican leader should change course and abandon his policy of governing by crisis. We can get started on a long-term, bipartisan reauthorization of the Federal highway program today. All we need is for Republican Members of Congress and their leaders to focus on American jobs and the traveling American public's safety. They have not done that. This is too bad.

Mr. President, there are a number of Senators on the floor.

Will the Chair announce the business of the day.

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 for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein, with the time equally divided, with the Democrats controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half.

The Senator from Michigan.

MICHIGAN PRODUCTIVITY AND INNOVATION

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I am truly blessed to represent the people of Michigan in the Senate. My State was carved out in one era by the ice age and again 200 years ago by the Congress. It is comprised of more than just two beautiful peninsulas bordered by four Great Lakes.

Since our Nation's founding, Michigan has been at the frontier of America, helping to build a stronger and more secure country. The Northwest Ordinance, affirmed by the very first Congress, created the midwestern region from which the Michigan Territory would be born. In the 19th century, pioneers moved to what was then the western frontier to settle in Michigan and its neighboring States.

The Peters family was among them. My family made the long journey from New York and settled in Rochester, MI, in the early 1840s. They were among the earliest pioneers to settle in my State. From that time on, generations of Michiganders pioneered a State de-

voted to great public education. While the Northwest Ordinance made primary education a priority and stated that "schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged" in the new territory, higher education also had a place that made our State great very early. Twenty years before the founding of the State of Michigan, the University of Michigan was founded, one of the first public universities in the country. Later, Michigan State University would become one of the pioneer land grant universities. While the two schools may be rivals on the gridiron, they have long complimented each other to the benefit of our State.

Today, Michigan is home to 93 universities, colleges, and community colleges. Michigan grew rapidly as migrants from across the country and immigrants from around the world were drawn to our supplies of timber, ore, arable land, and abundant fresh water. As a new century dawned across America, Michigan continued to grow with the advent of industrialization and mass manufacturing, from mining and forestry at the western tip of the Upper Peninsula to the booming auto factories of Detroit. Michigan embodied the growing optimism, opportunity, and prosperity that would be America's crowning achievement in the 20th century.

Michigan factories would turn into the great arsenal of democracy, building the armadas that would defeat tyranny, win the Second World War, and, in the process, create America's middle class. During World War II, my father, Herb Peters, was a proud soldier in Eisenhower's Army, helping free France from Nazi occupation. It was there that he would meet my mother, Madeleine Vignier, a beautiful young French woman. They were married and raised me and my two sisters, Gigi and Jackie, in a typical middle-class home. A few years ago, with my late father, I joined the Sons of the American Revolution. My forefather, William Garrett, was a member of the Virginia militia and served alongside General George Washington at Valley Forge.

My great-grandfather, Julian Peters, served with the Michigan infantry during the Civil War. I am proud to follow earlier generations of patriots who served their country and were prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice in defense of freedom and liberty. But like millions of Americans, I am also the son of an immigrant. America's shores were new to my mother, but they provided an incredible expanse of opportunity that people across the globe continue to dream of. My mother worked long hours as a nurse's aide and fought for a better workplace for herself and her coworkers, helping to organize her workplace and later serving as a union steward.

Michigan's strong labor movement and our manufacturing sector helped build economic opportunities for millions of Americans. Standing together to call for fair wages, safer workplaces,