

We have a number of committees that need to look this over in addition to the EPW Committee on which Senator BOXER is the lead Democrat. We have the Commerce Committee that we have to deal with. We have the Finance Committee that we have to deal with. We have the Banking Committee that we have to deal with.

I want a highway bill. I have had the good fortune of being chairman of the EPW Committee twice. I worked on a number of long-term highway bills back in the good old days when we did that, and I hope we can have a long-term bill again. But we can't move forward on a bill until we have read it and seen it and studied it. That doesn't mean study it for several days, but we need to look at this document. I need to have a caucus after we have this document so we can look at it.

So I hope my friend the Republican leader will be patient and wait until we get something we can study, and I will have a caucus with my caucus and we will sit down and decide how we should move forward on this matter.

I repeat, I admire all of the hard work that has been done by everybody up to this point, but we have to make sure we move forward with this in the right direction. I understand all the issues probably more than most about all the time involved in a bill such as this. There are all kinds of potential ways to stall this, but we are not going to do that on our side. We are going to be as expeditious as we can once we have something that we can read and understand and, as I said, study so we can understand it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, before my leader leaves the floor, I wish to thank him because he and Senator DURBIN, Senator SCHUMER, and the rest of the leadership team have been pushing hard for a bill. As my leader knows, I have been negotiating in good faith with the Republican team, headed by Leader MCCONNELL, for a long-term, robust bill.

I agree with Leader MCCONNELL that we have an agreement in principle. I also agree with my leader that we have to look at the details. So my work now turns to getting those agreements up on the Internet so people can read for themselves the various titles. It is my understanding that we will start to see that language momentarily. I know we are working hard with my Chairman INHOFE to make a couple of changes to EPW. But I have to say we have reached an agreement in principle on a 6-year bill with 3 years of funding, and the text will be printed shortly. I believe it is a breakthrough. The highway trust fund goes bust in 10 days.

This is what is happening across the country. It is unreal that in my State we would have this bridge collapse, I say to my friends, and now commerce can't move between California and Arizona because we have had this collapse on Interstate 10. How strange this

would be if this—thank God no one lost their life in this accident. But this bridge was rated structurally obsolete, so we knew it couldn't bear all the traffic. It is a huge amount of traffic. So this is my poster child for why I am working so hard on this.

I thank my Republican friends because they have really worked hard. Of course, I am looking at Bettina and Neil. I was talking to them at 11:30 last night, and in the leader's office we resolved the last couple of pressing issues, with his help. But we have to see the text. My friends on the other side want to see the text of the Iran agreement. This isn't exactly the same, but we do need to see the text. So I am urging everybody to get the text up as fast as possible so we can vote as soon as possible. This is a breakthrough, but we need to see the details.

I thank Leader MCCONNELL because this has been a difficult negotiation but I think one that is going to bear fruit in terms of millions of jobs and thousands of businesses in much better shape.

Thank you very much.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the cloture vote we were originally going to have at 2:15 p.m. will be pushed back several hours to 4 p.m.

I will just add—in addition to the comments of the Senator from California—I wish to thank Senator INHOFE, who I think was in the Chamber.

Mr. INHOFE. Right here.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Nobody has been a stronger advocate for a multiyear highway bill than the Senator from Oklahoma. In spite of the rather dramatic philosophical differences which exist between the Senator from California and the Senator from Oklahoma, when it comes to a transportation bill, they have been a remarkable team over the years. So I thank my chairman as well for an extraordinary contribution to all of this.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I appreciate that very much. I wish to say that working in concert with Senator BOXER has been a pleasure. A lot of times philosophically in this room here we disagree with each other, but then when it gets down to what we are supposed to be doing here—I have to remind people quite often that if you read the Constitution about what we are supposed to be doing here—I am talking about Members of the U.S. Senate—we are supposed to be defending America and roads and bridges. That is it. So this is by far the most important matter before us right now, now that we have the Defense bill behind us, and I look forward to making this a reality.

The idea of a 6-year bill is very significant because without that we can't do the big projects. This morning on

the floor with charts I showed all the different big, large structures, such as the Spence Bridge between Kentucky and Ohio. These are bridges and projects that have to be done, and there has to be a long-term bill in order to do that. I also shared this morning an experience that I had on the I-35 bridge that we put in through—the last major bill we had was in 2005. We put those repairs in there. That was in Oklahoma City. We actually had the death of a lady who was driving her three children under a bridge with concrete falling off. So we have to repair America, and this is the first step toward that repair.

It is very important that we proceed to the bill. I would suggest to people that if you don't like it and if you plan to vote against it, that is fine, but bring it out here so we can discuss the merits, the demerits, and we can also start working on amendments. I would encourage any Member who is listening right now to bring amendments to the floor because when we proceed to the bill, I am going to be down here on the floor as long as we are in session, and I will be wanting to get to these amendments. It doesn't do any good to wait until the last minute and then show up and say "I have an amendment" on the day of passage of the bill. We will have deadlines. In order to get germane and nongermane amendments up for consideration, we have to have them down here, and if Members miss a deadline, then Members won't have that opportunity. So it is really up to the Members now to make sure that happens, but before we can get to that, the one thing that has to happen is we have to proceed to the bill. That has to be passed at 4 o'clock today.

I yield the floor.

ORDER FOR RECESS

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess as under the previous order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:28 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

Mrs. ERNST. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.