

Start funding and the 80% federal funding allowed under the law.

H.R. 3763 does two things that harm New Starts projects. It codifies a reduction in the transit New Start federal share to 50%, and it prohibits the use of other federal transportation dollars to fill the gap.

Nothing in the bill reduces the amount these states and localities will receive, so this provision does not reduce the cost of the bill, or shift funding from one state to another. It simply ties the hands of local agencies and makes it harder, and potentially more expensive, to complete transit projects.

The amendment we are offering today will restore the ability of local agencies to use CMAQ and TIFIA funding for New Starts. The amendment will also restore an 80% federal share for Small Starts and Core Capacity projects, which can continue to use CMAQ, STP and TIFIA funding toward project costs.

This amendment is a compromise that is the result of Chairman SHUSTER's commitment to work with us after we raised it during markup in committee. Under this compromise, New Starts remain at 50%, and will not be able to use STP funds. We still object to these restrictions, but the use of CMAQ and TIFIA to fill the gap is restored. We will continue to fight in conference to restore STP funding for New Starts, and to ensure that highway and transit projects are treated equally.

I thank the Chairman for working with us on this compromise, and for agreeing to correct at least part of the problem. I urge all of my colleagues to support the amendment, and to join with us in continuing to address this issue in the final product enacted into law.

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#### CONGRATULATING MIKE BIEDIGER

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### HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 5, 2015*

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to congratulate Mike Biediger on his retirement as CEO of Lexington Medical Center after over 25 years of dedicated service.

During his tenure as CEO of Lexington Medical Center, he has led the hospital through an unprecedented period of growth. Lexington Medical Center has grown from 292 beds into a 414-bed modern medical complex with six community-based medical and urgent care centers and more than 600 physicians and 60 medical practices conveniently located throughout Lexington County. Under his leadership, the hospital also established an innovative, nationally certified heart program. On May 8, 2015, Clemson University awarded Mike Biediger an honorary doctorate for his achievements in improving the quality of health of the citizens of South Carolina. I am grateful for his admirable service to the community and his commitment to quality healthcare.

#### RECOGNIZING STANISLAUS FARM SUPPLY

### HON. JEFF DENHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 5, 2015*

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Stanislaus Farm Supply, who will be inducted as a member of the Stanislaus County Ag Hall of Fame "Legends in Agriculture" during a ceremony in Modesto, California, on November 12, 2015.

Stanislaus Farm Supply, a farmer-owned company, dedicated to being the best farm supply organization in the industry, provides services to farms in California and Nevada. They have three retail locations in California: Modesto, Merced, Susanville, and one in Yerington, Nevada. They offer products of the utmost quality in spreading, spraying, planting, equipment repair, crop consulting and scouting.

It all began in 1949 when the steel work strikes contributed to a shrinking supply of bailing wire. Area farmers were forced to pool their resources to secure wire. By the generosity of many including Fred Thiemann who donated office space or Joe Souza who worked for free for the first 6 months, the Stanislaus Farm Supply was born. The County Farm bureau supplied the bulk of the early financing and within five years of business, Stanislaus Farm Supply accomplished an impressive goal of \$500,000 in annual sales. They outgrew their current location on 8th and Washington and acquired a new warehouse on E. Service all located in Modesto. This new facility allowed room for the company to expand and grow in the future.

Sam Bettencourt became General Manager of the growing company in 1978. In Sam's 37 years he built a legacy around the company. He was active in supporting local youth through junior livestock events and scholarships for students pursuing agricultural related degrees. Sam reinvented the company to be a voice for its member owners which had been decreasing over time before he started with the company. Many of the employees still with Stanislaus Farm Supply were hired by Sam Bettencourt. He was an asset to the company and helped form it into the successful business today. In 2015, Nick Biscay took over as General Manager of Farm Supply.

Stanislaus Farm Supply has not only survived but thrived since its official opening in 1949. They contribute this to their ability to adapt with change as there have been many technological advances, climate and environmental changes and more since their opening.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in praising and commending Stanislaus Farm Supply, for their significant contributions to agriculture and to the farmers, students, and people of our local community.

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#### HONORING WORLD STROKE DAY

### HON. RICHARD B. NUGENT

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 5, 2015*

Mr. NUGENT. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following:

Whereas, stroke kills almost 130,000 Americans every year and it is responsible for one out of every twenty deaths, some of which could have been prevented; and

Whereas, the CDC estimates that the cost of stroke to the United States is approximately, \$34 billion each year; and

Whereas, stroke reduces mobility in the majority of survivors and it is a leading cause of disability; and

Whereas, stroke awareness is extremely important and early detection and treatment of stroke can vastly improve outcomes;

Therefore, I, RICHARD B. NUGENT, Member of Congress representing the Eleventh Congressional District of Florida, am proud to honor the victims of stroke and their families by recognizing October 29th as World Stroke Day.

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#### HIRE MORE HEROES ACT OF 2015

SPEECH OF

### HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 4, 2015*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 22) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of determining the employers to which the employer mandate applies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act:

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Madam Chair, I rise today in support of the amendment.

Today, the United States is awash in domestically produced natural gas.

The Energy Information Agency (ETA) estimates that the U.S. has more than 354 trillion cubic feet of proven natural gas reserves.

In Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia and most importantly, Texas, we increased production by more than 4.2 billion cubic feet per day.

While I am a big supporter of LNG exports, I also firmly believe we should consume as much natural gas here at home as possible.

Natural gas has transformed our power sector.

Today, for the first time in history, we use more natural gas for power production than coal.

Natural gas is expected to fulfill almost 40% of our power needs in the coming decades.

Our producers have become so efficient, Henry Hub prices sit at approximately \$2.89 per BCF.

We should drive demand for natural gas by encouraging natural gas vehicles.

Our corporate and government fleets as well as our public transportation vehicles all run on natural gas but the largest segment of the market resides in personal vehicles.

If we increase demand, we will resolve any environmental issues related to natural gas production.

First, producers will reduce natural gas flaring because that product will have a market.

Second, natural gas burns cleaner than gasoline which reduces carbon emissions.