

MASS TRANSIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, there is a recent article in The New York Times about the Koch brothers and its stealth campaign to try to attack mass transit projects around the country. It was disturbing on several levels.

First and foremost, it is misguided in terms of the economic impact. Mr. Speaker, it is clear that there is \$4 of economic activity generated for every \$1 that is invested in transit. It increases business sales, and it results in higher real estate values and jobs created.

It is important to note that, right now, we have a road system that is heavily subsidized by the general fund. The road user charge has long since failed to pay for it. We have had to transfer \$140 billion just to keep the failing Surface Transportation Program afloat.

The Koch brothers argue, through their organization, that American cities really don't have the population density to support mass transit systems. That is false. It is clear that there are some very dense systems serving Chicago and New York, but there are very successful programs in Phoenix and Houston with much lower density that are providing essential services.

It is important to remember who gets that service, because transit is much less expensive for men and women to be able to have access to jobs and employment. The average vehicle costs almost \$10,000 a year to operate. In most families, it is the number two item in the family budget after housing. For many poor people, transportation is actually ahead of housing.

Transit provides access to jobs, so that people don't have to spend 42 hours a year trapped in traffic behind the wheel of a vehicle, as happens on average.

The notion that somehow we are going to be forced to look at a lack of density, well, communities across the country in the metropolitan areas are getting more and more dense. They are attracting young people, retired people, and more economic activity in the 49 largest metropolitan areas around the country. In those areas, transit is the most cost effective and environmentally sensitive way of providing that service, to say nothing of the fact that we kill almost 40,000 people a year on our roadways. Transit is amazingly safe by comparison.

One of the most disingenuous arguments is that transportation programs for mass transit are bad because they promote gentrification of our cities. Look at that argument for a moment. One of the things that is happening in cities across the country is that there is a new urban renaissance. Young millennials are moving back to the cit-

ies. Those are the engines of the economy. Aging baby boomers are finding it much more attractive to move into those urban cores than to be isolated out in the suburbs with a large-lot subdivision and forcing people to burn a gallon of gas to buy a gallon of milk.

Those urban areas are our future. Not everybody is going to do it, but the majority of people are. We ought to be investing in transportation systems for our future, not undermining them by limiting investments to transportation of the past.

We are in the process of a rapid revolution in transportation technology and people's approaches. More and more young people, actually, are choosing not to buy a car, which sits idle about 22½ hours a day and is very expensive. They are instead choosing transit, ride-share, bike-share, and being able to have transportation when they need it—Lyft and Uber—without having an anchor of an individual car bearing down on them.

Frankly, gentrification is a function of how we plan and develop our cities. That ought to be an invitation to think about how to do it better, as many cities are doing now, not to undermine progress by assaulding transit.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SMUCKER). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, it has been more than a year since the House of Representatives unanimously approved the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act.

I am proud to see that, this week, the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee will consider career and technical education legislation. It is welcome news that this important topic will be examined by our congressional colleagues in the United States Senate. Career and technical education, or CTE, has helped countless men and women acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in the workforce.

By empowering State and local leaders, improving alignment with in-demand jobs, increasing transparency and accountability, and ensuring a limited Federal role, we can modernize and strengthen career and technical education and help more individuals build successful and fulfilling careers.

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Career and technical education can help restore rungs on the ladder of opportunity. All Americans deserve a good-paying, family-sustaining job, and they might just need some new skills to get one.

America is still facing a widening skills gap that puts our workforce at a disadvantage to succeed in a 21st century economy. Today, there are an es-

timated 6.7 million jobs that are open and available in the United States.

While companies across the country have openings for high-paying jobs, and are anxious to hire, many workers lack the skills and adequate education needed to qualify and compete for these jobs, Mr. Speaker.

We have also seen students pushed down the college-for-all pathway. That just doesn't work for some students. There are many different pathways to success and life in this country.

One of the biggest challenges facing career and technical education is the stigma associated with it. Through the years, we have seen wrongheaded claims that students involved in the trades lacked ambition. Those misplaced assumptions are slowly subsiding, but not soon enough.

CTE has established itself as a path that many high-achieving students choose in pursuit of industry certifications and hands-on skills they can use right out of high school, in skills-based education programs or in college.

By modernizing the Federal investment in career and technical education programs, we will be able to connect more educators with industry stakeholders and close the skills gap in this country. There are good jobs out there, but people need to be qualified to get them.

I remain dedicated to working with my colleagues in the Senate on this effort. All education is career education and every American deserves a fair shot at learning the right skills to obtain a good-paying job.

WARRIORS TO WASHINGTON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Warriors to Washington, a praiseworthy nonprofit organization from Erie County, Pennsylvania.

Founded in 2013, Warriors to Washington was created to honor veterans from the northwest Pennsylvania region who were deployed and served our Nation in the Armed Forces as a result of the attacks on 9/11 by taking them to historical and national sites in Washington, D.C.

Warriors to Washington raises money to fund an annual trip to Washington, D.C., by which post-9/11 veterans are treated to an all-expense-paid experience, which includes visits to Arlington National Cemetery, the Vietnam Memorial, the World War II Memorial, the Flight 93 Memorial Park, and many other sites of national significance.

Warriors to Washington focuses on camaraderie and connection, while providing all attendees with a rewarding experience. The founder and president of Warriors to Washington, Joe Pfadt, believes it is important to give this opportunity to those who enlist and risk everything for our freedom.