

lose their jobs due to increased automation of services.

It is clear that due to COVID-19 and other pandemics that may occur, there will be more “contactless services” in the future and the transportation industry will indeed be impacted. My concern is for the employees who are at risk and on the front lines, who lack the training needed to both service and operate our future transportation systems. The Moving Forward Act includes a \$50 million Surface Transportation Workforce Training Grant Program that will help our current workers get ready and prepare themselves for these automated vehicles (AV) that will use artificial intelligence (AI) to operate and maintain our surface transportation systems.

It is encouraging to see that this bill contains provisions that support the development of high speed rail and its financing options. We have much work to do in the emerging development of high speed rail in the United States. We have been left behind by other countries in this much needed era of transporting people efficiently from one part of our nation to another. I am a strong supporter of the development of high-speed rail in the United States.

In my state, Texas Central is working to develop high-speed rail system connecting Dallas and Houston in less than 90 minutes and at speeds up to 205 mph. This high-speed train will provide a faster, safer and more environmentally friendly mode of transportation that will serve two of the top five largest metropolitan statistical areas in the United States, Dallas-Fort Worth and Houston, as well as the greater College Station area, through the Brazos Valley station.

One of the major issues that has arisen during the development of this major infrastructure project is the access to large scale of Capital Financing required to ensure the success of this project. While the project is estimated to cost \$32 billion, with the government of Japan expected to pay up to half the cost, financing a project at this scale is something that programs like the Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Funding (RRIF) program would have great difficulty in accomplishing due to the Credit Risk Premiums rules that would adversely impact the borrowers or such large scale projects. I am encouraged that my amendment to provide a workable option for Texas Central to meet the CRP was included in the bill.

Another area of importance that I am happy to see included in this legislation is the improvement of Amtrak’s cybersecurity capabilities.

Millions of Americans use Amtrak each year, the incorporation of technology in the Amtrak system has allowed the company to grow while providing a safer and more customer friendly experience for passengers. But technological advances continue, the risk of cybersecurity threats only rises. I am encouraged to see provisions included in this bill that allow Amtrak to procure the needed cybersecurity technology to combat attacks against the operation of its rail system.

To address Amtrak’s cybersecurity needs, my amendment directs the Secretary to establish a cybersecurity enhancement grant pro-

gram, which will permit Amtrak to acquire active cyber defense capabilities to implement cyber resiliency improvements for train control systems and other IT assets systemwide.

In my time serving in this chamber, I’ve learned that no single piece of legislation is perfect. I hope to continue working with the chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure committee to address issues related to strengthening our nation’s freight rail network and in particular Union Pacific and a number of issue raised with this bill.

I also want to say just a few words about the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise or DBE program. Over the almost 40 years since the DBE Program was first enacted, we have made progress—but not nearly enough. The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure has collected enormous amounts of evidence that illustrates just how stubborn and harmful institutionalized bias and systemic racism really are to people of color. The bottom line is that DBEs have to fight twice as hard and still usually end up getting far less money than goes to firms owned by non-minority males.

Not only that, but discrimination means that even starting a business is harder for minority and women owned firms. The recent disparity study conducted for Texas DOT used Census data to examine this issue. The study found that the business formation rate for white males was 5.4 percent, but the rate for African Americans was less than a third of that—1.6 percent. For Hispanic Americans it was 2 percent, for Native Americans it was 2.9 percent, and for white women it was 3.1 percent. For Asian/Pacific Islanders it was better—5.2 percent but still lower than for white males. Texas Department of Transportation Disparity Study 2019, Colette Holt & Associates, 2019, at 133. The disparities for firm formation in construction in Texas were even worse. White men formed construction firms at a rate of 10.3 percent, but for Asian/Pacific Islanders the rate was only 9.5 percent. For white women it was 8.9 percent. Shockingly the construction firm formation rates for Native Americans, Hispanic Americans and African Americans were 4.9 percent, 3.5 percent and 2.9 percent respectively. *Id.* at 135.

Think about what this means—as bad as the economic disparities are for firms owned by minorities and women, the current data actually understates the problem, since it doesn’t take into consideration all the firms that could never even get off the ground. How can minorities and women ever erase the gaps in business inequality if discrimination keeps them from even forming the businesses they need to compete? This is exactly what makes the DBE program so important—while it doesn’t fully level the playing field, it provides a demand for businesses owned by minorities and women and gives those businesses that do exist at least a fighting chance to compete.

Mr. Speaker, enactment of H.R. 2 will allow our nation to move forward with critical improvements to our nation’s roads, tunnels and bridges, our ports and harbors, airports, and rail systems. It will fund improvements in safe drinking water and wastewater systems, and create more affordable housing. The bill will help to modernize schools, invest in the postal service and provide high speed internet to un-

derlined areas. Most of these proposals are long overdue and we cannot wait any longer to move our country forward. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MR.  
STANLEY BALZEKAS, JR.

HON. DANIEL LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 1, 2020*

Mr. LIPINSKI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate and commemorate the life of Mr. Stanley Balzekas Jr., who passed away on June 18 at the age of 95. Stanley Balzekas was an American war hero, a tireless supporter of Lithuania and Lithuanian culture, and a pillar of Chicago’s Southwest Side.

Mr. Balzekas was an American patriot, having proudly served in the United States Army during World War II. He landed in Normandy and bravely fought in the Battle of the Hurtgen Forest, one of the longest and fiercest battles in Europe. He was eventually captured by the Nazis and spent the rest of the war as a POW. For heroically risking his life to rescue twelve wounded soldiers, Mr. Balzekas was awarded the Bronze Star as well as the Purple Heart.

Returning from the war, Stanley Balzekas earned his B.S. and M.S. degrees from DePaul University and then took the reins of his family’s car dealership, Balzekas Motor Sales, on Archer Avenue in Chicago. But Mr. Balzekas’ passion was preserving and spreading Lithuanian history and culture. In 1966, Stanley Balzekas founded the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture in Chicago. Through his dedicated leadership, the museum grew to become the largest repository of Lithuanian cultural artifacts outside of Lithuania. Mr. Balzekas’s tireless work enhanced America’s understanding of Lithuanian history and enriched the culture of the Chicagoland community.

I extend my heartfelt condolences to Mr. Balzekas’s family. Mr. Balzekas was the husband of the late Irene and is survived by his loving children Stanley III, Robert, Carol, and six grandchildren Irena, Stanley IV, Matthew, Margaret, Lucas, and Eva.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the life of Mr. Stanley Balzekas, Jr. His contributions to our country, Lithuania and Lithuanian culture, and the Southwest Side of Chicago will not be forgotten. He will be remembered as a great man.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN KATKO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 1, 2020*

Mr. KATKO. Madam Speaker, I was not present for the following votes due to a family emergency.

Had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 124, and NAY on Roll Call No. 126.