

deterioration of our federal highway system. A mechanism must be developed to ensure that, even while we strive to eliminate our annual budget deficit, we begin to stem the tide of federal disinvestment in our transportation infrastructure.

Toward that end, I look forward to working with Chairman DOMENICI of the Budget Committee and its Ranking Member, Senator LAUTENBERG, along with the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the Environment and Public Works Committee and the Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee to seek a way to ensure substantially increased authorizations and obligational authority for our federal highway responsibilities. We cannot be responsible stewards of federal tax dollars and, at the same time, pass a steadily deteriorating transportation infrastructure on to our children and grandchildren.

Now Mr. President, I did not seek to hold up consideration of H.R. 668 yesterday evening by proposing amendments to address our highway infrastructure needs. I recognized the urgency of renewing the aviation ticket tax. The Airport and Airways Trust Fund is on the verge of bankruptcy and, absent the renewal of the ticket tax, our nation's airport construction enterprise, as well as the procurement of critically needed air traffic control equipment, will be at risk. Indeed, airports are also a critical element of our transportation infrastructure. And, as in the case of highways, our airport infrastructure needs continue to grow while federal investment continues to fall precipitously. The current funding level for the Airport Improvement Program has fallen more than 30 percent in just the last five years. And the president's budget for the coming fiscal year asks us to cut the program an additional 32 percent. The last thing I wanted to do yesterday evening was endanger necessary investments in our aviation infrastructure in the hopes of addressing the needs of our highway infrastructure.

However, I rise today to state my intention and commitment to work with the Senate leadership as well as the leadership of all the relevant committees to ensure that we put policies in place this year to adequately address the need for increased highway investment. I invite all members to join me in this cause.

#### THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Thursday, February 27, the federal debt stood at \$5,349,402,692,025.14.

One year ago, February 27, 1996, the federal debt stood at \$5,016,697,000,000.

Five years ago, February 27, 1992, the federal debt stood at \$3,823,779,000,000 which reflects a debt increase of more than \$1 trillion (\$1,525,623,692,025.14) during the past 5 years.

#### MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following measure was read the second time and placed on the calendar:

S. 378. A bill to provide additional funding for the Committee on Governmental Affairs of the Senate.

#### EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, which were referred as indicated:

EC-1232. A communication from the Congressional Review Coordinator of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule relative to a change in disease status, received on February 26, 1997; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-1233. A communication from the Chairman of the Surface Transportation Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, a rule entitled "Exemption of Freight Forwarders" received on February 26, 1997; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-1234. A communication from the Chairman of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report on the nondisclosure of safeguards information for the period October 1 through December 31, 1996; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1235. A communication from the Chairman of the Advisory Committee On Reactor Safeguards, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the NRC's Safety Research Program; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1236. A communication from the Board Members of the Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the annual report for calendar year 1996; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-1237. A communication from the Acting General Counsel of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, a rule entitled "Indemnification of Department of Housing and Urban Development Employees (FR 4143) received on February 24, 1997; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-1238. A communication from the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on monetary policy; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-1239. A communication from the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the annual report on the system of internal accounting and financial controls in effect during fiscal year 1996; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-1240. A communication from the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, copies of D.C. Act 11-527 adopted by the Council on January 7, 1997; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-1241. A communication from the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, copies of D.C. Act 11-528 adopted by the Council on January 7, 1997; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-1242. A communication from the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, copies of D.C. Act 11-529

adopted by the Council on January 7, 1997; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-1243. A communication from the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, copies of D.C. Act 11-530 adopted by the Council on January 7, 1997; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-1244. A communication from the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, copies of D.C. Act 11-531 adopted by the Council on January 7, 1997; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-1245. A communication from the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, copies of D.C. Act 11-532 adopted by the Council on January 7, 1997; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-1246. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of State (Legislative Affairs), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the International Atomic Energy Agency; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-1247. A communication from the Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs, U.S. Agency for International Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to Egypt; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-1248. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, the report of the texts of international agreements, other than treaties, and background statements; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second time by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. AKAKA (for himself and Mr. INOUE):

S. 382. A bill to amend chapter 3 of title 28, United States Code, to provide for the appointment in each Federal judicial circuit Court of Appeals, of at least one resident of each State in such circuit, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. D'AMATO:

S. 383. A bill to require the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to provide funds for compensation for expenses incurred by the State of New York, Nassau County and Suffolk County, New York, and New York City, New York, as a result of the crash of flight 800 of Trans World Airlines; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. CONRAD:

S. 384. A bill to amend the Solid Waste Disposal Act to allow States to regulate the disposal of municipal solid waste generated outside the State; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

#### STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. AKAKA (for himself and Mr. INOUE):

S. 382. A bill to amend chapter 3 of title 28, United States Code, to provide for the appointment in each Federal judicial circuit court of appeals, of at least one resident of each State in such circuit, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

THE JUDICIARY APPOINTMENTS ACT OF 1997

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I am pleased to reintroduce the Fairness in