

By Mr. COVERDELL (for himself and Mr. CLELAND):

S. 669. A bill to provide for the acquisition of the Plains Railroad Depot at the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. ABRAHAM (for himself, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. HATCH, Mr. DEWINE, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 670. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Technical Corrections Act of 1994 to eliminate the special transition rule for issuance of a certificate of citizenship for certain children born outside the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. WELLSTONE (for himself and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 671. A bill to clarify the family violence option under the temporary assistance to needy families program; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. STEVENS:

S. 672. An original bill making supplemental appropriations and rescissions for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1997, and for other purposes; from the Committee on Appropriations; placed on the calendar.

By Mr. BREAUX (for himself and Mr. HATCH):

S. 673. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 in order to promote and improve employee stock ownership plans; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CHAFEE (for himself, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. JEFFORDS, Mr. BREAUX, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. HATCH, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. KERREY, Mr. DODD, Mr. KERRY, Mr. D'AMATO, Mr. BRYAN, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. ROBB, Mr. HUTCHINSON, Mr. INOUE, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. DASCHLE, Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN, and Mr. MOYNIHAN):

S. 674. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to encourage States to expand health coverage of low income children and pregnant women and to provide funds to promote outreach efforts to enroll eligible children under health insurance programs; to the Committee on Finance.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. FEINGOLD (for himself and Mr. KOHL):

S. Res. 80. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding Department of Defense plans to carry out three new tactical fighter aircraft programs concurrently; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. CAMPBELL:

S. Res. 81. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the political and economic importance of the Denver Summit of Eight and commending the State of Colorado for its outstanding efforts toward ensuring the success of this historic event; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. MACK (for himself, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. NICKLES, Mr. THURMOND, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. COATS, Mr. KYL, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. ABRAHAM, and Mr. DEWINE):

S. 667. A bill to empower States with authority for most taxing and spending

for highway programs and mass transit programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

THE TRANSPORTATION EMPOWERMENT ACT

• Mr. MACK. Mr. President, today I am introducing bipartisan legislation which would allow States to keep almost all of their gas tax revenues for their own transportation projects without interference from Washington.

The Transportation Empowerment Act—which being re-introduced in the House by Representative JOHN KASICH—would replace the current law governing the Federal highways program, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act [ISTEA].

Under ISTEA, Washington currently collects about \$25 billion each year in dedicated transportation taxes, skims money off the top for demonstration projects, skims more off the top to fund its highway bureaucracy, runs the remainder through a maze of formulas, and then returns what's left to the States to fund their transportation programs.

However, this circle of waste, has shortchanged our Nation's transportation infrastructure. Today, notwithstanding the tremendous growth in spending, our Nation's transportation investment backlog is estimated to be at least \$200 billion. This backlog includes the following deficiencies: 25 percent of our highways are in poor/mediocre condition; 24 to 28 percent of bridges are structurally deficient/functionally obsolete; 24 percent of rail transit facilities are in substandard/poor condition; and 20 to 24 percent of transit buses need to be replaced.

The fact is that our country is getting less from our transportation dollars. Part of the reason for this is reflected in the growth of administrative costs. These costs, as a function of Federal highway construction dollars, have risen from 7 percent in 1956 to over 21 percent today.

The history of the Federal program has shown us that the current system [ISTEA] of collecting and distributing gas tax dollars needed by States to implement their own transportation needs is too inefficient, too costly, and too bureaucratic. Washington simply can't meet the challenges facing the Nation's infrastructure.

Simply put: The era of big Government is over. And in this era, the highway system is a perfect example of a program that ought to be returned to the States. It's a simple formula for success—less Washington, more roads. In fact, transportation economists and State officials estimate that if States weren't hamstrung by Washington's arcane formulas and mandates, they could get 20 percent more highways and transit systems for every dollar collected.

I have introduced the Transportation Empowerment Act because I believe we can better serve our Nation's transportation needs primarily through State run transportation programs, without Federal micromanagement and with-

out laundering gas tax dollars through Washington.

KEY PROVISIONS OF THE TRANSPORTATION EMPOWERMENT ACT

The legislation continues a streamlined "core" Federal program. This core Federal transportation program will include the maintenance of the current Interstate System, Federal lands programs—Indian reservation roads, public lands, parkways and park roads—highway safety programs and emergency disaster relief. Also included is continued general fund support for transit programs.

The bill authorizes States to establish multistate compacts for planning, financing, and establishing safety and construction standards, and encourages innovative approaches on the part of the States, such as use of infrastructure banks and privatization. The bill repeals the requirement that States repay Federal grants associated with transportation infrastructure which is slated for privatization.

The legislation provides a 4-year transition period, beginning in fiscal year 1998, during which time the existing 14 cents gas tax dedicated to transportation purposes would remain in place. After funding the new streamlined core program and paying off outstanding bills, the remainder is returned to States in a block grant.

At the end of the transition period, beginning in fiscal year 2002, the Federal gas tax would be reduced to 2 cents—that amount necessary to fund the core Federal programs.

Under the bill each State would be free to replace the Federal gas tax and to keep those dollars within the State to use as each sees fit.

The bottom line is this—for far too long Washington has had a stranglehold on States' transportation needs. It's time for Washington to let go and re-empower the States to make their own decisions.

More information about the Transportation Empowerment Act is available via the Internet at www.senate.gov/~mack/tea2.html. •

By Mr. MURKOWSKI:

S. 668. A bill to increase economic benefits to the United States from the activities of cruise ships visiting Alaska; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

BENEFITS FROM CRUISE SHIPS VISITING ALASKA LEGISLATION

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Today, Mr. President, I am reintroducing a very important measure—one that will unlock and open a door that Congress has kept barred for over 100 years.

Opening that door will create a path to thousands of new jobs, to hundreds of millions of dollars in new economic activity, and to millions in new Federal, State, and local government revenues. Furthermore, Mr. President, that door can be opened with no adverse impact on any existing U.S. industry, labor interest, or on the environment, and it will cost the Government virtually nothing.