

Mr. President, I want to be sure everyone understands what we are talking about when we discuss TVA's nonpower programs. We are talking about flood control and navigation on the Tennessee River, our Nation's fifth-largest river system. We are talking about the operation and maintenance of 14 navigational locks and 54 dams—to which the TVA power system contributes its proportionate share of funding. And we are talking about the management of 480,000 acres of recreational lakes, nearly 11,000 miles of shoreline, and 435,000 acres of public land—including such unique national resources as the Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area in Tennessee and Kentucky.

During the debate on this legislation, some have claimed that the residents of the seven-State TVA region are receiving an unfair Federal subsidy that no one else in the country receives. Madam President, that is simply not true. In every other region of the country, these types of natural resource and infrastructure management activities are performed by some Federal agency, whether it is the Army Corps of Engineers, the National Park Service, the National Forest Service, or the Bureau of Reclamation. In the southeast region, they have traditionally been carried out by the TVA. But if the TVA does not perform them next year, someone else will have to. There is no question that these are Federal responsibilities.

Perhaps the most disturbing suggestion that has been made in recent weeks is that the TVA power program should pick up the cost of these Federal land and water stewardship responsibilities. That is nothing less than an unfair tax on TVA ratepayers. As I said before, these are Federal responsibilities that are paid for by the Federal Government in every other region of the country. Nowhere else are utility ratepayers expected to assume the costs of these types of Federal responsibilities by paying more for their electricity.

So while I appreciate the fact that the conferees agreed to provide funding for TVA to meet its Federal obligations this year, I am very concerned about what they have proposed for the future. And I want to be clear about one thing: it is not acceptable for Congress to walk away from its Federal responsibilities in one region of the country while continuing to provide for them everywhere else. Over the course of the coming year, I plan to work very hard with my colleagues to come up with a solution that is fair and equitable for the people of the Tennessee Valley.

Mr. DOMENICI. Madam President, we yield back any time we have remaining on the bill.

Mr. REID. I yield back any time the minority has.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the conference report.

Mr. DOMENICI. Have the yeas and nays been ordered?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. They have not.

Mr. DOMENICI. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the conference report. On this question, the yeas and nays have been ordered, and the clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. FORD. I announce that the Senator from Vermont [Mr. LEAHY] is absent due to a death in the family.

The result was announced—yeas 99, nays 0, as follows:

{Rollcall Vote No. 262 Leg.}

YEAS—99

Abraham	Faircloth	Lott
Akaka	Feingold	Lugar
Allard	Feinstein	Mack
Ashcroft	Ford	McCain
Baucus	Frist	McConnell
Bennett	Glenn	Mikulski
Biden	Gorton	Moseley-Braun
Bingaman	Graham	Moynihan
Bond	Gramm	Murkowski
Boxer	Grams	Murray
Breaux	Grassley	Nickles
Brownback	Gregg	Reed
Bryan	Hagel	Reid
Bumpers	Harkin	Robb
Burns	Hatch	Roberts
Byrd	Helms	Rockefeller
Campbell	Hollings	Roth
Chafee	Hutchinson	Santorum
Cleland	Hutchison	Sarbanes
Coats	Inhofe	Sessions
Cochran	Inouye	Shelby
Collins	Jeffords	Smith (NH)
Conrad	Johnson	Smith (OR)
Coverdell	Kempthorne	Snowe
Craig	Kennedy	Specter
D'Amato	Kerrey	Stevens
Daschle	Kerry	Thomas
DeWine	Kohl	Thompson
Dodd	Kyl	Thurmond
Domenici	Landrieu	Torricelli
Dorgan	Lautenberg	Warner
Durbin	Levin	Wellstone
Enzi	Lieberman	Wyden

NOT VOTING—1

Leahy

The conference report was agreed to. Mr. DOMENICI. Madam President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. GRAMM. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. DOMENICI. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FAIRCLOTH. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1998

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

VOTE ON AMENDMENTS NOS. 1267, 1268, 1269, EN BLOC

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now vote en bloc on amendments Nos. 1267, 1268, 1269, offered by the Senator from West Virginia [Mr. BYRD].

The yeas and nays have been ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. MCCAIN (when his name was called). Present.

Mr. FORD. I announce that the Senator from Delaware [Mr. BIDEN] and the Senator from Louisiana [Ms. LANDRIEU] are necessarily absent.

I also announce that the Senator from Vermont [Mr. LEAHY] is absent due to a death in the family.

The result was announced, yeas 69, nays 27, as follows:

The result was announced—yeas 69, nays 27, as follows:

{Rollcall Vote No. 263 Leg.}

YEAS—69

Abraham	Ford	McConnell
Akaka	Frist	Mikulski
Baucus	Glenn	Moseley-Braun
Bennett	Graham	Moynihan
Bingaman	Grams	Murkowski
Bond	Gorton	Murray
Breaux	Gregg	Nickles
Brownback	Hagel	Reed
Bumpers	Harkin	Roberts
Byrd	Hatch	Rockefeller
Cleland	Helms	Roth
Coats	Hollings	Sarbanes
Conrad	Hutchinson	Shelby
Coverdell	Hutchison	Smith (OR)
D'Amato	Inouye	Snowe
Daschle	Jeffords	Specter
DeWine	Johnson	Stevens
Dodd	Kennedy	Thompson
Dorgan	Kerrey	Thurmond
Durbin	Kerry	Torricelli
Enzi	Lautenberg	Warner
Faircloth	Lieberman	Wellstone
Feinstein	Lott	Wyden
	Lugar	

NAYS—27

Allard	Craig	Kyl
Ashcroft	Domenici	Levin
Boxer	Feingold	Mack
Bryan	Ford	Reid
Burns	Gorton	Robb
Campbell	Gramm	Santorum
Chafee	Grassley	Sessions
Cochran	Inhofe	Smith (NH)
Collins	Kempthorne	Thomas
	Kohl	

ANSWERED "PRESENT"—1

McCain

NOT VOTING—3

Biden Landrieu Leahy

The amendments (Nos. 1267, 1268, 1269), en bloc, were agreed to.

Mr. STEVENS. Madam President, I move to reconsider the vote by which the amendments were agreed to, and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. STEVENS. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LOTT. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 1250

Mr. LOTT. Madam President, I believe the Senator from Oregon would

like to now move to the consideration of his amendment. We have an agreement there will be up to 20 minutes of debate on that amendment and we will engage in a colloquy.

I am glad to yield the floor so the Senator from Oregon can carry this out.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, the Wyden-Grassley amendment is before the Senate at this time?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, I will be very brief. I also want to thank the majority leader for his courtesy.

This amendment involves one of the most awesome powers that a Member of the U.S. Senate has. That is the power to effectively block the consideration of a bill or nomination in secret.

Now, it is a power that I think many Americans are concerned about. I have made it very clear that I am not seeking to abolish the right of a Senator to put a hold on a measure or matter. But I do think that if an important health or environmental matter comes before the Senate, as the Kennedy-Kassebaum measure did in the last Congress, involving health care for millions of Americans, that there ought to be public disclosure, that there ought to be sunshine.

The majority leader, in my view, has made a number of constructive proposals in the past with respect to this procedure. I am particularly pleased that he sought in the beginning of this year, January 27, to limit Members from putting holds on blocks of legislation, in effect, blocking a whole package of legislation, from coming before the Senate. But we still have not been able to change the Senate rules to bring some sunshine in, to make sure that the American people can hold each one of us accountable.

There have been reports that when the Senate passes the Wyden-Grassley legislation to have public disclosure of holds in the U.S. Senate, this is just going to die in conference and it will just vanish in the vapor in secret. It is especially ironic that an effort to eliminate secrecy in the exercise of awesome powers of the U.S. Senate, that would somehow take place again in secret, but I am concerned that may happen. In fact, there is a report today in Roll Call, a Capitol Hill publication, that raises concern in my mind.

I briefly would like to engage the majority leader in a colloquy on this point. He and I have been talking about it for about a year and a half now, I think. As I said, I believe the majority leader has made a number of constructive changes already with respect to the hold procedure. I would like to have his thoughts at this time with respect to his views on public disclosure of holds, and specifically whether it will be possible on a bipartisan basis to work out this change and ensure that there is real accountability with the American people for important actions taken by Senators.

I yield to the majority leader.

Mr. LOTT. Madam President, first and foremost, I want to apologize to the Senator from Oregon for not being able to respond last week to his request that we engage in a colloquy regarding his amendment which is pending to the D.C. appropriations bill. He was generous enough to be understanding that we had a number of other issues we were dealing with late last week, including the campaign finance reform issue, as well as a number of other issues that are very pressing at the end of the fiscal year with the appropriations bills. So I am glad he was willing to allow us to do the colloquy now instead of last week. I appreciate his attitude on that.

I think also I should note that he has been talking with me over the past year and 4 months that I have been majority leader about his concerns in this area. I appreciate the fact that you noted, Senator, I have tried to be more open and more communicative with Senators about the procedures around here, trying to open up, trying to make them clearer and more understandable. As a matter of fact, I sent out a long letter clarifying to Members what is the process and what is the proper way to exercise a hold. I did feel that it had sort of evolved into a situation that was not fair and was not intended.

I continue and want to continue working to have a fair system around here and one that everybody understands. I am sure the Senator also has learned to appreciate, as a Senator, the importance and the significance of the hold. It is a unique creature in the Senate and it is one that is used, I think reasonably and responsibly most all of the time, and can serve very positive purposes.

For instance, I believe you noted in your comments that you used it earlier, or last month, with regard to the confirmation of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to get an issue addressed that was important to you. You didn't do it secretly. You were pretty open about your hold. It led to some accommodations that I believe will be helpful to the families there in Oregon and satisfied the Senator.

We want to be careful how we change things around here. When you come over from the House to the Senate you really have a lot of questions about how this place operates: What are the rules? This seems like an archaic way to do things. Then you begin to understand it better, then you begin to think to yourself, no, I don't want the Senate to be the House. You begin to appreciate the traditions and the rules and the procedures around here. You have an opportunity to talk to Senator BYRD, as the Senator from Oregon has, or in my case, to Senator STEVENS or Senator HELMS. If you go to them and say, why is this important? Why has it been done that way? Then you begin to have a whole different view about the institution and the tradition and how things are done.

So, I will continue to move in the direction, I think, that the Senator is seeking. I want a clearer understanding and I like doing things in the daylight, not in the dark of night. I don't like secrecy generally on anything, as a matter of fact. I like sunshine.

But it is a problem for the majority leader and for the Senate to make this kind of change on the D.C. appropriations bill. I think to change the standing orders of the Senate in this way is something that is troublesome to some Senators.

For instance, I have not had an opportunity yet to sit down and talk with the minority leader about this. I had thought that the better place to do this would be at the beginning of a session when we meet, between the two leaders of the two parties, and we have knowledge and input from both sides of the aisle and that you do it at the beginning of a Congress when you have the organization of the Senate. I think that path would have been much preferable or is preferable to this approach.

I assume that the minority leader has some reservations of the use of any Senator to effect the so-called standing orders with an amendment on an appropriations bill.

So I say to my colleague, then, that I understand what he is trying to do and I am not unsympathetic to that, but I do have problems with doing it in this way on an appropriations bill.

I will continue to listen to all Senators. I will sit down. This has caused me to find a time—and I am not complaining—to sit down and make sure that senior Senators understand what we might be thinking of doing. Are there problems with it? I don't know that there will be. I really think that any Senator who feels strongly enough about an issue to put a hold on it ought to be prepared to come to the floor and explain it. I have indicated to Senators on both sides of the aisle, sometimes when holds have been placed and have not been removed in a reasonable period of time that they better be prepared to come to the floor and object and debate because I was prepared to call up the issue.

However, I also feel a real appreciation for the way the Senate is considerate of every single Senator—if she or he has a problem, I like to give them time to work through it, whether they are Republican or Democrat, regardless of philosophy, religion, or anything else. Sometimes there may be a good reason why they would not want, in a specified period of time, 2 days, for instance, to explain all of what is going on.

I guess that is a long explanation to the Senator's comments and questions, but I understand what he is trying to do. I hope we can find a way to continue to work on it and come to a conclusion that would benefit the Senate as a whole.

Mr. WYDEN. If the majority leader can spend another minute—these are thoughtful points that you raise, and I

appreciate the courtesy—the reason for acting now is this is the season when senior Members say that the abuses are greatest. At the end of a session when there is a rush to complete the business is when this practice which, as the majority leader points out, is a long tradition, that is when this practice is abused. I think the majority leader makes a very good point with respect to the need for courtesy and respect for traditions.

I see our friend, Senator GRASSLEY, is here. This is a bipartisan amendment. We share the majority leader's view with respect to this tradition. We are not seeking to eliminate the hold, seeking to eliminate the filibuster, seeking the right of Senators to work matters out. What we are concerned about is secrecy. At a time when the American people are so skeptical about our Government, when they go to hearings and day after day look at practices that they question, when they look at the U.S. Senate and see these procedures that are secret, it smacks of a backroom deal.

I think the majority leader is right, the Senate is a good institution. It is not going to suffer if a bit of sunlight comes in. This is an institution strong enough to have a bit of sunlight and to have Members held accountable. I don't want to disrupt the tradition of the Senate, but if an important health or environmental measure or other important issue is held up for months on end because a Senator genuinely objects, then it is not just a matter of courtesy, it is a matter of being accountable to the American people.

I will interpret the majority leader's response to this colloquy as willing to work with the Wyden-Grassley effort, and I appreciate the fact that it is going to pass today. I know the majority leader has other matters that he has to attend to. I want to thank him for his colloquy and look forward to working with him.

I yield the time now to the Senator from Iowa, Senator GRASSLEY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWNBACK). The Senator from Iowa.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, what we are proposing in the Wyden-Grassley amendment is not going to hurt anybody. Senator WYDEN and I experimented with this so the other 98 Members of the Senate would not have to be hurt if it didn't work. Well over a year ago, we voluntarily, on our own, without any instigation from the rules or anything or anybody else, we publicly stated that we were going to follow the practice of our amendment, even though we didn't have to, and when we put a hold on a bill or a nomination, we would put it in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. We did that. I can speak for myself and say that there are no bruises, there is no harm, there is no retaliation. Nothing happened as a result of the whole world knowing why Senator GRASSLEY or Senator WYDEN were holding up a particular action.

I think that ought to tell everybody else that they can likewise do whatever they need to do in the Senate to adequately represent the interests of their constituents through the use of a hold and freely tell everybody, and the end result can still be accomplished without anybody being hurt as a result of it. I hope that we will now institutionalize what I have found to be a very effective way of doing the job of U.S. Senator and, yet, at the same time, being open and aboveboard about it.

This amendment requires simply disclosure by Senators of the holds that they place on legislation. As we all know, the current Senate practice allows Senators to block consideration of any measure without disclosing their actions just by notifying Senate leaders of their objection. Our amendment does not stop this practice. Rather, we seek to put an end to the secrecy surrounding the practice. If any Senator objects to legislation, that Senator should have the courage and conviction to express openly the reasons for opposition. It is critical to preserve the right of every Senator to represent the views of his constituents, but we cannot fully earn the trust of our constituents if we do not shed the brightest possible light on what we do here in the people's assembly.

It is important for the Senators to remember that their right to place holds on initiatives about which they have objection, then, is very much preserved in the tradition of the Senate, but everything is out in the open. The only thing untraditional about it is, if you want to hold up legislation, you should state your reason in the RECORD and let people know. All we are requiring is that Senators make their objections known in one of two ways—either stating their objections on the floor, or publishing their objections in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD within 48 hours of placing such a hold.

It is a simple amendment that sends a very powerful message that the U.S. Senate is willing to operate in an open manner, according to the principles of representative democracy. I believe this amendment can only increase our constituents' belief that we are willing to be open and honest about the legislative process and what our legislative agenda is. It should help reduce some of the cynicism toward the processes of representative Government here at the Federal level.

I thank Senator WYDEN for his work on this amendment and the majority leader for accommodating this issue. It will go to conference. I would expect comity between the House and Senate because this is just a Senate issue, and that there will not be any objection on the part of the House because of comity. In the case of the Senate, since this is being adopted by the Senate, I would expect that our Senate conferees would uphold the amendment and it would become a part of the traditional process.

I urge my colleagues to continue to work toward reform that makes Congress more open and straightforward in how we do the people's business. I thank you for your consideration.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for an additional 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WYDEN. Thank you. Mr. President, I want to especially thank my colleague, Senator GRASSLEY, for a fine statement and for all his help. He has long been recognized as one of the most honest, up-front Members of the U.S. Senate. I want to tell him that it is a special pleasure to be able to work with him.

Mr. President, certainly, if you walk down the main streets of this country and ask our citizens what a hold is in the U.S. Senate, you are certainly not going to find many Americans who are familiar with this practice. But the fact of the matter is, this is an awesome, awesome power exercised by a Member of the U.S. Senate. The power to put a hold on a bill or a nomination is the power to singlehandedly, effectively block the consideration of a bill or nomination from coming to the floor of the U.S. Senate.

All Senator GRASSLEY and I are asking tonight is that when a Member of the U.S. Senate exercises this extraordinary power, that it be publicly disclosed. All we are asking is for an end to the secrecy.

My constituents look at the U.S. Senate sometimes and raise questions about how business is done here and, frankly, have some suspicions about the way the Senate conducts business. Sometimes I think they suspect that the procedures around here are a little bit like an elegant game of three-card monte. Now, my own hope is that with the passage of this amendment tonight in the U.S. Senate, and by making public the exercise of this extraordinary power by a U.S. Senator, our citizens will feel a bit more confidence and a bit more likely to see the Senate as an institution that is open and accountable.

The majority leader, Senator LOTT, is absolutely right about the traditions of the Senate and, particularly, making accommodations to work out issues wherever possible. All we are saying is that when a Member of the U.S. Senate digs in with all his or her strength to block a bill or a nomination, the American people deserve to know the name of that Senator. This effort does not eliminate holds, it doesn't eliminate the filibuster; it eliminates none of the traditions that the majority leader referred to. All it does is say that a Senator is going to be straight with the American people when they exercise their enormous power to effectively block the consideration of a bill or a nomination on the use of the hold procedure.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the amendment is agreed to.

The amendment (No. 1250) was agreed to.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HUTCHINSON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION REAUTHORIZATION

Mr. FAITHCLOTH. Mr. President, I want to say a few words about the surface transportation reauthorization debate. North Carolina is the number one donor State. We received just 82 cents on the dollar for our gas tax contributions to the Highway Trust Fund under the 1991 ISTEA. In fact, over the 40 year life of the federal highway aid program, we have received just 87 cents for every dollar that we sent to Washington. There is no State that received a lesser rate of return on its gas taxes than North Carolina.

Mr. President, like other Donor State Senators, I will not support a reauthorization bill that fails to offer the Donor States some basic fairness. The Donor States accepted this role—and accepted it graciously—for forty years. The Chafee-Warner-Baucus bill is a step in the right direction. However, there is much work to be done. I served on the North Carolina Highway Commission and chaired it for four years. We understood the national importance of the interstate system. We were not happy about our Donor State status, Mr. President, but we accepted it. We understood that the interstate system was a national priority. However, the interstate system is now almost complete, and the rationale for Donor and Donee States is gone.

The Donor States are not asking for extra dollars. We're not asking to be made whole for past subsidies to the Donee States. We just want an equitable rate of return on our gas taxes. Just a fair return after forty years of our subsidies to other States. I believe that there is a real role for the federal government in transportation. But it must be a fair one. Make no mistake about it, now that the rationale for Donor and Donee States is gone, their argument is just plain old-fashioned politics.

Let me illustrate the absurd results of this long-term imbalance. One of the last additions to the 1991 ISTEA was a 3 billion dollar pot of money to reimburse States for the costs of roads built before the start of the Interstate system in 1956. This so-called "equity category" benefitted, for the most part, northeastern Donee States. These are the same States that enjoyed a huge windfall from the federal highway aid program during the Interstate construction era. Mr. President, these roads are more than 40 years old, and the construction bonds were paid off long ago. The toll booths are still up, though, collecting millions of dollars. These States received 3 billion dollars in ISTEA—for 40-year-old roads—but, apparently, that wasn't enough for them.

The Clinton Administration proposed in its NEXTEA that the American taxpayers continue to funnel their hard-earned tax dollars to these States. In the NEXTEA proposal—its plan for the first post-Interstate highway bill—the White House proposes not only to retain this program, but to increase it to 6 billion dollars.

These must have been pretty expensive roads. After all, Mr. President, they have been paid for several times. First, the drivers paid tolls to pay off the construction bonds, and these roads were all paid off more than a decade ago. After the bonds were paid off, though, the States kept collecting tolls. Then the federal government sent 3 billion dollars to pay for the roads again. And the States kept collecting the tolls.

Now they want 6 billion dollars to pay for the roads another time. And they will still keep collecting the tolls. North Carolina drivers lose 20 cents off every gas tax dollar to the Donee States. The Southern States are growing fast and have major transportation needs. But, not only can't North Carolina drivers get a dollar for dollar return, we are supposed to pay again and again for these 40-year-old roads. It seems just absurd to squander money like this. It is especially absurd since there is such a limited pool of transportation funds.

In fact, Mr. President, the transportation budget is so squeezed that we hear all this talk about new "user fees" for transportation. These are just new taxes, of course, just a euphemism for new ways to take money from the taxpayers. The American people are already overtaxed. These proposals to raise taxes just defy common sense. I find it interesting, however, that I don't hear much discussion about one of the most obvious ways to increase the value of our transportation dollars. It will not cost the taxpayers a dime and will boost the value of some transportation dollars by 15 percent.

The taxpayers' friends know that I am talking about repeal of the Davis-Bacon Act. I am talking about a Congress that favors the taxpayers over the union bosses. These Davis-Bacon

requirements, especially the "union work practices" provision, drive up construction costs because they promote inefficiency in many forms. Davis-Bacon is a needless surcharge, just a contribution to union bosses, on these construction projects. The Davis-Bacon Act drives up construction costs by an average of 15 percent. The Congressional Budget Office confirms that repeal of Davis-Bacon will save the taxpayers billions of dollars.

Incredibly, the White House proposed to expand Davis-Bacon in its transportation bill. It is no secret, though, that Davis-Bacon repeal is essential if we are serious about squeezing every penny out of the federal highway program. It is far better for the taxpayers to root out these inefficiencies than to raise the taxes of the American people. I know that some people find it hard to imagine that there are alternatives to new taxes in order to increase the transportation budget. This Senate voted this year for billions of dollars for a mission in Bosnia, which was supposed to be over last year, and for hundreds of millions of dollars in new welfare spending.

It is time to cut the waste—not raise taxes—to fund our transportation priorities. This is the first authorization bill in the post-Interstate era. It is also the first authorization bill subject to the constraints of a balanced budget plan. This bill brings new challenges. And, Mr. President, new obligations. This bill must be fair to the States that subsidized the Interstate system for 40 years. We need to get the most for each and every dollar in the transportation budget. We certainly cannot afford to squander taxpayer dollars on outdated rules in order to prop up the power of the labor unions.

It's time to tell the union bosses that the good times are over! This is not their transportation bill! North Carolina needs a transportation bill that builds highways, not government bureaucracies. A transportation bill that works for the taxpayers, not the labor bosses. Mr. President, if this bill is not fair to North Carolina taxpayers, I will be forced to filibuster it.

VISIT OF DAVID TRIMBLE OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND ULSTER UNIONIST PARTY

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, next week David Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionist Party in Northern Ireland, will begin a visit to the United States where he will meet with many of us on both sides of the aisle in Congress who are deeply committed to helping achieve a lasting peace in Northern Ireland. There is perhaps no one better placed to make that happen than Mr. Trimble, who leads Northern Ireland's largest party.

Mr. Trimble is to be commended for bringing his party into the current talks, which now include Sinn Fein as a result of the restoration of the IRA cease-fire in July. Those talks are ably