

there are some who don't like to admit this, but they have been told that this money will be spent on highways. Now, that can be discussed because there was a period when they were not told about a particular portion of that money, the 4.3 cents, there was a brief period when that was not going into the trust fund for highways.

Because of the action by the distinguished Senator from Texas, Mr. GRAMM, and the Finance Committee, that money, the 4.3 cent tax, is not going into the highway trust fund but it is just sitting there. We are saying in our amendment, let's spend it, because the American people think that is what they are getting when they go to the gas tank. Don't let anybody tell you they don't think that.

I was in this Congress in 1956—I was in Congress before that—but in 1956 we created a highway trust fund. That was during the Eisenhower administration. It was during his administration that his great and good idea concerning an interstate highway system came into being. In order to fund that highway system, Congress created a trust fund. The people were told that the moneys that they were putting into that trust fund in 1956 would go for highways, and they have been under that impression for 42 years, except for a couple of years, perhaps, beginning in 1993 or some such.

Mr. President, the people ought to have faith in their Government and that is what this amendment is all about, a faith-in-Government amendment. Build highways. And the Department of Transportation tells us that only 39 percent of the highway systems throughout this great country stretching from the Atlantic to the western waters and from the border of Canada to the Gulf of Mexico can be considered in good condition.

The highways are rapidly deteriorating. So are the bridges. We have over 580,000 bridges and 180,000 of them are either structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. The American people want to see their highways and their bridges built back up. We talk a lot about child care. We see people spending their time in the long lines because of congestion. They ought to be home taking care of the children who have just come in from school. They have to have good highways in order to do that. It took me an hour and 15 minutes to get from my house, 10 miles away, to my office yesterday morning. What are we talking about? What are we kidding the people about? That is our purpose.

Now, I hope, as do my colleagues, that we can reach an agreement among the principals. I am encouraged by this morning's meeting, very much encouraged, by the attitudes and presentations of all who were there. I want to express my compliments and my thanks, again, to the majority leader and to the chairmen of the committees who were there, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. CHAFEE, and to the ranking members who were there. Everyone participated.

Mr. President, I hope we will be able to continue these discussions. The majority leader is going to ask us to come back tomorrow, and in the meantime we will be talking. But there is no deal, and I hope people will debunk some of such wishful thinking from their minds. We have yet to see where we are going to go and how we are going to get there. We are making progress but we are not there yet.

Mr. President, how much time do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 13 minutes and 50 seconds remaining.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I see Mr. WARNER has come on the floor. Would he like any time at this point? Our friend, Mr. GRAMM, and I have been discussing this highway bill. I think the Senator who has just walked on the floor would be pleased with what we said.

Mr. WARNER. I was not able to be here when our distinguished colleague from West Virginia spoke, but I am sure the Senator got the assurance of our colleagues to work this problem out, together with the Republican leader, and I am sure, shortly, the Democrat leader, will likewise join. I think it is in the interests of the Senate that this legislation move. That was very definitely Senator LOTT's principal motivation to try and assemble this meeting today. We would not have reached this meeting today had it not been for the leadership shown by the distinguished Senator from West Virginia and the senior Senator from Texas.

Here we go. Let's hope for the best.

Mr. BYRD. I thank my friend from Virginia, Mr. WARNER, who has been a participant in this matter from the beginning. I am sure he will agree that until he and Senator GRAMM and Senator BAUCUS and I came up with this amendment, the Byrd-Gramm-Baucus-Warner amendment, until we came up with that amendment, there wasn't any idea as to how we were going to get more money above the reported bill for the States. It is only because our amendment was prepared and 53 cosponsors are on it today, that any of the States have real prospects for getting more money for highways.

Is that an accurate statement?

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I say to my distinguished colleague, you will recall Senator BAUCUS and I had an amendment early on in this procedure. It failed, by my recollection, by one single vote. I believe the distinguished Senator from West Virginia joined in our amendment urging the Senate for a greater allocation of spending.

I do believe, however, there is considerable momentum not only within the 53 Senators who have joined in this Byrd amendment but other Senators who are hearing from their respective highway constituencies, and that is not just the road builders, that is the citizens that use the highways.

As the distinguished Senator from West Virginia pointed out in our meet-

ing with the majority leader this morning, there is one-third growth in the use of highway structure, which in and of itself is perhaps only one-third to 40 percent in top shape. So it is essential for America that this is truly a bipartisan effort, for America to move ahead to improve its infrastructure transportation.

I thank the distinguished Senator.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I just close by thanking the people out in the country who have shown great interest in this amendment, who have discussed it, Senators in their home States with the people, and people who are in the construction business, people who are in the highway construction business, people who are in the cement-asphalt business, other related industries that see the imperativeness of having this highway bill called up, acted on, in time, that it can be acted on in the House, in time, that both Houses can go to conference, in time, that we hopefully can get a signature on the bill by May 1. I thank those groups, as well.

How much time do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 9 minutes and 35 seconds remaining.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I will yield back that time. Before I do, I thank all Senators for listening. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

CANCELLATION DISAPPROVAL ACT—VETO

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now proceed to the consideration of the veto message to accompany H.R. 2631.

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate a message from the House of Representatives, as follows:

The House of Representatives having proceeded to reconsider the bill (H.R. 2631) entitled "An Act disapproving the cancellations transmitted by the President on October 6, 1997, regarding Public Law 105-45", returned by the President of the United States with his objections, to the House of Representatives, in which it originated, it was

Resolved, That the said bill pass, two-thirds of the House of Representatives agreeing to pass the same.

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate a message from the President of the United States to the House of Representatives, as follows:

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval H.R. 2631, "An Act disapproving the cancellations transmitted by the President on October 6, 1997, regarding Public Law 105-45."

Under the authority of the Line Item Veto Act, on October 6, 1997, I canceled 38 military construction projects to