

does better. The same would be said for the State of the Senator from Wyoming. His State will remain a donor State. Those States that are beneficiaries, that receive more than they pay in, will continue to receive more than they pay in. The amendment that Senator THOMAS and I have put together would not change that fundamental reality.

But what we do feel is that this is an opportunity, when there is this very significant growth in the overall pot of money available for transit, that 7 percent of the total pot be subject to some redistribution to recognize the contemporary realities that we now face.

In order to address some of the concerns that have been raised with Senator THOMAS and with me and with our staffs, we have made some changes.

First, there will be no transferability provision in our amendment, so that the money which would be shifted to States that are currently being underfunded for their transit needs will not be allowed to then be shifted into highway construction or bridge repair or nontransit needs.

There was some concern that this amendment was somehow a raid on transit funds for nontransit purposes. We want to make sure—make absolutely certain—that all of our colleagues understand that that is not the case, that the 7 percent component of the transit funds that would be redistributed would be strictly for transit needs.

Secondly, it was expressed that there is some concern about whether a shifting of this 7 percent portion of the funds would somehow jeopardize donor States, what are called new-start funds. And I have heard some concern expressed. The fact is that under our amendment, no State which gains under the pending amendment will have their new-start funding cut next year. Under this amendment, we pay for the changes by making modest reductions from the donee States but not from attacking the new-start funds.

Thirdly, the question has been raised whether this is need based or not, whether 30 to 35 States that would benefit by this have transit needs. Admittedly, the needs that we have in many of our areas where there are fast growing suburban areas, whether it is fast growing new younger cities or whether it is in rural areas, are different than the needs that our colleagues from New York or Chicago might have, but they are very great needs nonetheless.

In my home State of South Dakota, we have a tremendous reliance on our rural transit needs, particularly for seniors to make it to health visits, for groceries, to get to congregate meal sites. All of these things, given the dispersal of the population, the very rural nature of the State, makes transit all the more critical. And it is critical, as well, in our Indian reservation areas. I have nine in my State where the need for access to quality nutrition, education, and medical care would be

enormously enhanced by the availability of at least some minimal rural transit assistance.

Currently, over 30 percent of our 206 vehicles providing rural transit in our State are 10 years old or older; 70 percent are 5 years old or older. We have had, in the course of the State, local, and Federal partnership to make rural transit a reality, a continuing hardship where some of our counties now, in fact, are terminating their transit programs. We cannot afford to see this kind of retreat, this kind of neglect, for rural transit needs in my State.

So I think that anyone who takes a close look at our amendment will recognize the very modest nature of the amendment, that it is only 7 percent of a total pot, a vastly growing pot of money, that would be subject to some modest change of redistribution to meet the contemporary transit needs; that, in fact, the overwhelming share of States would benefit by this redistribution; and it would not incur a significant reduction really in the States that currently have the traditional great benefit from the transit programs.

So, again, this is a modest step, but I think it is a modest step in the right direction, one that will contribute greater equity, one that will contribute to the creation of what is truly a national transit strategy. And I think every one of our colleagues who come from the traditional large recipient States will recognize that a national commitment to transit assistance will be all the stronger if, in fact, more than eight States benefit but that all 50 States benefit to a greater degree than is currently the case.

So, again, I thank my colleague, Senator THOMAS from Wyoming, for his work on this in our effort to craft a reasonable and a balanced and a modest change, but one that nonetheless ought to be of great help to the large majority of States as we debate the transit amendment and the infusion of new money into the transit provisions of the ISTEA II legislation.

So, with that, I encourage my colleagues to be very supportive of this and to examine the language of our amendment carefully.

Mr. President, I yield back my time and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. WELLSTONE. We are in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent I be able to speak for 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN CHINA

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I want to bring to the attention of my colleagues a matter before we go back to the ISTEA, or the transportation bill. It concerns a resolution that I think is extremely important. This will be a sense-of-the-Senate resolution that we will have a vote on this week, an up-or-down vote, which says that the Senate strongly urges the President, acting through the current representatives of the United States, to make all efforts necessary to pass a resolution criticizing the People's Republic of China for its human rights abuses in China and Tibet at the annual meeting of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, which convenes March 16.

Mr. President, last week, on Friday, I was able to discuss this with the majority leader, and he made a commitment—and his word is good, I know that—that on this resolution we will have a separate up-or-down vote. I believe we will have a very strong vote for this.

Mr. President, I started out working with Senator MACK from Florida. The resolution was a Mack-Wellstone resolution. I know he will be a very strong supporter, as well as Senator HUTCHINSON from Arkansas, Senator FEINGOLD from Wisconsin, and I think this resolution will receive broad bipartisan support.

I come to the floor of the Senate to speak for two reasons. One, to again thank the majority leader for his commitment that we will have an up-or-down vote on this specific resolution, and second of all, to make an all-out appeal to the administration, to the President, to the Secretary of State, to Sandy Berger and others.

The Washington Post had an editorial last week, and I will read relevant paragraphs.

The immediate issue is whether to sponsor a resolution at the United Nations Commission . . . in Geneva next month [actually this week.] You wouldn't think this would be a tough call. Such a resolution would moderately criticize China's record and call for improvements; it would impose no penalty beyond well-deserved embarrassment. Democracy advocate Wei Jingsheng nevertheless calls the resolution "a matter of life and death" for reform in China. President Clinton explicitly promised, back when he delinked trade and human rights in 1994, that the administration "would step up its efforts" to get such a resolution approved. China's regime remains as oppressive today as it was then.

Mr. President, I come to the floor to make an appeal to the President, to make an appeal to the administration. I think when we have an up-or-down vote on this resolution, which calls on our country to be a part of an effort to introduce a resolution at this Human Rights Commission meeting on human rights dealing with abuses of human rights in China, we will get a strong vote on the Senate floor—Republicans and Democrats, Democrats and Republicans. We want to work with the administration. I call on the President