

over, Missourians will now see a 91 cent return on each dollar as opposed to a dismal 80 cents that it received under the former funding scheme. Under the formula that was passed out of the Environment and Public Works Committee, Missouri will receive \$3.6 billion compared to \$2.4 billion that Missouri received over the last 6 years of the 1991 highway bill. Missouri's average allocation per year would be around \$600 million as opposed to around \$400 million that the State received under the old bill. I believe this allocation of highway trust money to the development and construction of highways is appropriate. I would add that this is not taking from other Government programs. This is the allocation of highway trust money for highways. Uniquely, we are beginning to get to the place where we focus resources that we take from people who use the highways on the highways. That is a major benefit. Although, I would like to see a 100 percent return on Missouri's investments, I appreciate the advancements made over the last few days. Also, I am committed to working with the Budget Committee to see that these additional funds are offset so we can stay within the budget caps that were approved by this Congress last session.

Regrettably, we were unable to resolve these issues and a number of other concerns during the First Session. In order to continue funding to the states for their highway needs, Senator BOND authored the six month extension plan while ensuring that Missouri receives its fair share of highway dollars. The six month extension is scheduled to end April 30, of this year. I have recently received word from the Missouri Department of Transportation that their last bidding process for road construction contracts will be in March.

I would like to share with you some of the long term projects that are in jeopardy because of our failure to act expeditiously. These are all top priorities for the Missouri Department of Transportation. "The replacement or rehabilitation of seven bridges on Interstate 70 in the St. Louis area. A new exit on Route 40 in St. Charles County to Chesterfield Airport Road." Here is a few not to far from my home in Southwest Missouri the, "Widening to five lanes of Route 71 in Newton County. Rehabilitation of the Interstate 44 bridge at Route 50 in Franklin County. Widen and resurface 3 miles of Route 39 in Barry County." The list goes on.

Mr. President, federal funds make up about seventy percent of all funding for road and bridge construction in Missouri. With seventy percent of the funds hanging in uncertainty the Department of Transportation must end the bidding process. As the State of Missouri stops issuing construction contracts, contractors stop asking their employees to come to work.

In order to put this into perspective I would like to share with you an e-

mail that I received from one of my constituents from St. Louis, Missouri. This constituent has been in the road construction industry for nearly thirty years. He writes,

... We the construction workers, have always strived to produce quality, on time projects. You, the U.S. Senate have failed once again to provide those needed funds in any sort of timely manner... I received a notice on January 22, 1998 that the Missouri Department of Transportation was going to cancel all future lettings after March 1998. I wish I could make you understand the devastating effect this will have on the Missouri Construction Industry, it's workers and the many related and non-related industries in our state.

I was hoping to be contacting you regarding a better allocation of those tax dollars back to Missouri to better represent the amounts paid into the trust fund, I now find myself doubting if there will be any authorization at all...

I do understand. I am grateful for the words of insight that I have received from my constituents.

I quickly would like to address one more issue. This is the amendment that was voted on yesterday to take away State highway funds if they do not establish a blood alcohol content of .08 for drunk-driving violations. I opposed this amendment, not because I do not abhor drunk driving. Far too many of us have lost loved ones as a result of this tragedy. However, I believe States are in the best position to make the decision on the most effective way to eliminate drunk driving. The 'stick' approach offered in the amendment was rejected by the 104th Congress, when we repealed the Federal speed limit. I believe the 'carrot' approach, contained in the safety provisions of this bill—which provides a .08 option—is the appropriate method to allow States the freedom to establish comprehensive programs to discourage drunk driving. That is why the National Governors Association, the National Association of Governors' Highway Safety Representatives, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the National Association of Counties, and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials support the safety provisions contained in the bill, rather than the amendment offered by the Senator from New Jersey.

The people of Missouri gave me the privilege of serving them in this body. We would be derelict in our responsibility to them and the people of this great country, if one person lost their job because of our failure to act. I urge the Senate to once again avert the continued loss of time to our families, the loss of funds to our states and the loss of jobs for our workers, and quickly pass a long term ISTEA bill.

Mr. D'AMATO. 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. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Monday, March 9, 1998, the federal debt stood at \$5,523,019,454,633.25 (Five trillion, five hundred twenty-three billion, nineteen million, four hundred fifty-four thousand, six hundred thirty-three dollars and twenty-five cents).

Five years ago, March 9, 1993, the federal debt stood at \$4,209,676,000,000 (Four trillion, two hundred nine billion, six hundred seventy-six million).

Ten years ago, March 9, 1988, the federal debt stood at \$2,485,526,000,000 (Two trillion, four hundred eighty-five billion, five hundred twenty-six million).

Fifteen years ago, March 9, 1983, the federal debt stood at \$1,222,370,000,000 (One trillion, two hundred twenty-two billion, three hundred seventy million).

Twenty-five years ago, March 9, 1973, the federal debt stood at \$455,698,000,000 (Four hundred fifty-five billion, six hundred ninety-eight million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,067,321,454,633.25 (Five trillion, sixty-seven billion, three hundred twenty-one million, four hundred fifty-four thousand, six hundred thirty-three dollars and twenty-five cents) during the past 25 years.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting a withdrawal and sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

REPORT ENTITLED "THE 1996 ANNUAL REPORT ON ALASKA'S MINERAL RESOURCES"—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT—PM 108

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.