

They are angry and frustrated, and they rightfully want their Government to act on their behalf now. They have paid and they will continue to pay their Federal gasoline tax dollars into the highway trust fund, and they want that money fully expended on vitally needed highway improvement projects starting now.

Our Senate bill, the one we passed some time ago, responded to their needs. Our bill increased the highway and transit funding significantly over the next 6 years compared to the last 6 years. For my State of Minnesota, the increase is 81 percent, thanks to the overall increase which was passed with bipartisan support at the committee and the full Senate level, and with special appreciation to Senator GRASSLEY of Iowa, the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, for correcting the ethanol penalty which was penalizing Minnesota and other States that placed a mandate on ethanol consumption as part of every gallon of gasoline.

Senator COLEMAN, my colleague from Minnesota, and I worked together to keep these provisions benefiting Minnesota in the Senate bill. Unfortunately, the House scaled back their overall bill from what even most of their Members wanted themselves, at the insistence of the White House. But the President said even that reduced level in the House bill is too high, and the Senate's version is too high a figure. In fact, the President set a level of funding that is \$60 billion less than in our Senate bill. That is \$10 billion a year less for highway and other transit projects throughout America.

We are told that every \$1 billion of spending on transportation projects creates 47,500 jobs. So \$10 billion a year less spending means 475,000 fewer jobs this summer, next summer, and throughout the next 6 years—475,000 jobs, American jobs, jobs that we could be putting into place right now. People in my State and your State would be going to work right now to perform vitally needed infrastructure improvement projects with dollars that have already been committed and received and are set aside for this purpose. Why doesn't that matter to the White House? Why can't we act as we should anyway to move this matter forward?

The President has his rightful prerogative to veto a bill with which he does not agree. I am told by the manager of the bill in the Senate that he believes we have the votes to override that veto because these projects are so important to so many Members, and rightfully so. He believes the House has the necessary votes to override a Presidential veto because the projects in the bill are vitally important to their districts. That is the way the system is supposed to work. If the President vetoes, we can attempt to override so the public interest is served.

From what I am reading this week, the majority leader and the Speaker of the House have said they will not take the conference committee report, the

final legislation, to the White House if the President is going to veto it. That means the President can dictate to the Congress the level of funding he will accept, and we have no choice but either to agree to that reduced level or to set the bill aside until next year.

That is not the way the process is supposed to work, if we believe in something—and we do. I commend Senator INHOFE, the manager of the bill, who has been tenacious and terrific at standing up for the needs of, I am sure, the State of Oklahoma, but also reflective of the urgent needs in my State of Minnesota and elsewhere, and saying this is the right thing to do.

On paper this may look like it is some kind of brand new fiscal responsibility that we certainly have not seen from the White House in the last 3½ years, with budget deficits extending now as far as the eye can see at record levels. But this is the wrong bill to sort of suddenly get fiscal religion and go on to make a spectacle of because these are capital expenditures that are going to benefit our country for an extended period of time, and as business owners, farm owners, homeowners know, the proper reason to go into debt is for capital expenditures for long-term improvements. If you are going to be fiscally prudent, then you pay cash for current consumption.

We have it backward. We are creating enormous deficits based on current consumption, and then when we get to a bill where we should legitimately be incurring debt, if we need to, for long-term capital expenditures, we are going in the other direction—for politics, for reelection politics, not for the public interest. We know that. I bet the Speaker knows that. Certainly the members in his caucus know that.

We need to stand up and speak out and insist that our voices be heard, that our proffer of responsibilities in this body on behalf of the people of our States be exercised. Our leader and the House leader should take this bill to conference and protect all the projects that are of concern to myself and members of my caucus—as the projects of importance to the members of the majority caucus will be, I am sure, protected, as they should be, just as is the tradition in the House. Writing those into the actual House bill will, I am told, ensure they will be protected, honored, for both the Republican and Democratic Members. That is the way the system has worked, I am told, in the past.

Frankly, I think we should dispense with all of those earmarked projects which benefit some States far more than others—more than my State—because of the way the memberships on committees and seniority falls, but that is a discussion for another day.

Given that is the system we have, I certainly understand why I and my colleagues on this side of the aisle need to and should have the right to assurances that our projects are going to be treated as they have been in the past

and not just discarded in the committee, as so many of our amendments and proposals have been in other legislation earlier this year and last year.

But that is something that can readily be resolved. That is a very minor consideration compared to what, I am told, is the real obstacle right now, and that is to get the leadership of the Senate and the House to be willing to take a bill to the President that we say is the right thing to do. We know what that is. It is what our Senate bill provided overall and for our respective States. It is a fiscally responsible bill because it uses every dollar in the highway trust fund over the next 6 years—not more than that, not less than that. We know our States need those expenditures.

Let the President veto the bill if that is his decision. Then let's override it here and in the House and then it becomes law. Then those 475,000 Americans who are either drawing unemployment benefits—or many of them, I believe, have probably exhausted their unemployment benefits; just this week we found the Senate unwilling to provide an extension of those benefits—can go back to work in construction jobs and related jobs.

This bill more than anything we have done in tax adjustments will put Americans to work—now, this summer, right away—when they need work. We can't turn our back on that opportunity and that responsibility. Let's make the system work the way it is supposed to work. Let's pass this bill. Let's get it to the White House. Let's take it back and do what is necessary to make it law.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SUNUNU). The time of the Senator has expired. The Senator from Rhode Island.

DEATH OF HOPE HARRIS

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, it is with great sadness that I speak about a true friend and colleague. For 26-years, Hope Harris served the people of Rhode Island as a member of my staff, and prior to that, on the staff of my late father, Senator John H. Chafee. Hope Harris was known to thousands of Rhode Islanders who have visited and telephoned their Senator as the sympathetic and trustworthy professional answering the phone and the door at the front desk in their Senator's Providence office. She was without peer in her ability to convey, in a brief encounter, that the mission of the Senator's State operation is to help people in any way possible. On May 12, Hope died after a difficult struggle with cancer.

Hope's impact on my ability to represent the people of Rhode Island cannot be overstated. Her impact was felt by every anxious senior citizen who experienced a problem with Social Security, by every parent calling to plan a family trip to Washington, every young

idealist determined to save the world, and every beleaguered citizen convinced that the government is after them. When they called or visited my office seeking help—an answer or action or reassurance—Hope was the first person they encountered in their quest. In the space between saying, “Good morning, Senator CHAFEE’s office,” and hitting the “transfer” button, Hope put people at ease, instilled calm, became a friend.

People were not numbers to Hope; they were souls in search of a connection, one that maybe Hope could help them find. One of her greatest gifts was her ability to see the humanity of all people, regardless of social station, political power, religion, or race. In that, she remains an example for us all. Thanks to Hope’s extraordinary ability to convey that human connection, Rhode Islanders knew that our office was a welcoming and responsive place.

Hope remained optimistic and of good cheer regardless of what was going on in her personal life. In 2001, she lost her husband. And she has faced, and lost, a daunting battle with cancer. Through it all, Hope demonstrated the highest level of dedication to her job, never betraying to any individual constituent that they were anything but the center of her universe.

Hope was involved in many volunteer organizations throughout the course of her career. She was most recently active with the AIDS Project of Rhode Island and she cherished her involvement with the First Pentecostal Church and the Congdon Street Baptist Church.

In 2003, Hope celebrated her 25th year as a Senate employee. And just recently, on May 3, 2004, Hope was the proud recipient of the Federal Employee of the Year Award by the Rhode Island Association of Federal Employees. This honor was richly deserved. All of the Chafee family and the myriad of people who have been touched by the life of Hope Harris will miss her joy for living. She was the heart and soul of our Providence office.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a copy of an article that appeared in the Providence Journal on March 11, 2004, that speaks to the true essence of Hope Harris.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Providence Journal, Mar. 11, 2004]

ON THE JOB: HOPE HARRIS, CHAFEE AIDE

(By M. Charles Bakst)

Hope Harris, 72, the receptionist in Sen. Lincoln Chafee’s Providence office, likes looking out from her desk at 170 Westminster St. The view from this 11th floor aerie is striking and she says, “It gives you a sense of being close to the Lord.”

Harris’s is the voice you are likeliest to have heard if you’ve phoned the Chafee shop during the last quarter century. For most of that span, of course, the senator was John Chafee, Lincoln’s late father.

Harris is enthusiastic, pleasant, and at peace. She has an advanced case of cancer that has spread from her liver to her breast

area. She comes in now only four days a week; if she tires, she goes home. I find it remarkable that she works at all, but Harris says, “I love what I’m doing.”

Barbara Berke, a Harris pal and former colleague says, “She’s happy and she wants to make the world happy.”

Chafee marvels at Harris’s patience in fielding constituent calls. “People like to tee off, they like to vent, and sometimes they go over the top,” he says.

How ironic that some people don’t realize Harris is black.

A man phoned to grouse about Jesse Jackson. Harris, no Jackson fan, said she wouldn’t argue. But the man said, “I wish they’s put him on a boat and send him back to Africa—and all the rest of them, too.” Harris said, “Well, I didn’t do anything. I don’t want to go to Africa. I don’t know anybody there.” The man laughed and said he didn’t mean her. By the end of the conversation, Harris says, they were friends.

Once a man who’d called for years came in to meet her. “He looked at me. He said, ‘Are you Hope?’ I said, ‘Yeah.’ He said, ‘You’re black!’ I said, ‘I know. What should I do?’ He said, ‘Oh, nothing, it’s all right.’”

Harris hears from people with immigration problems, or folks looking for a job reference, or who think Republican Chafee should bolt parties, or who are lonely, or who have strong views on abortion—including backers of legislation outlawing a form of late-term abortion and who talk about fetuses having their brains sucked out. “They want me to get the willies,” she says. (Like Chafee, she opposes such bans.)

Harris adds, “Everybody that calls here is somebody important to me because they’re a voter. . . . When they are abusive, when I’m through with them, they’re nice. They calm down. John Chafee said, ‘Hope can tame the wildest beast.’”

State Rep. Maxine Bradford Shavers, D-Newport, Harris’s sister-in-law says the key to understanding her is that “she’s a Christian.”

While Chafee press aide Debbie Rich, who is Jewish, sits by and listens, Harris defines “Christian” this way: “It means that Debbie and I have the same blood running through our veins. If Debbie bleeds, I get the Band-Aid. If I bleed, Debbie gets the Band-Aid. If I know you’re hurting, I will get you water. I love you with all of my heart and I love everybody.”

As Harris, who was raised a Baptist, mulls her cancer, she says her life is in God’s hands and she has no fear. She knows who she wants to speak at her funeral, which will be at Beneficent Congregational Church, more spacious than the Providence Church of God where she currently worships. She has picked out some hymns, including “How Great Thou Art.”

When I talk of death, I say someone has died. But you might hear Harris say “passed.” She explains, “It means they go from one degree of grace to another. They pass over.” Though her body will return to dust, “My spirit will soar.”

She declares, “In my heart, I just look to the heavens and I think, ‘My God! Some day I’ll see Him face to face.’”

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, this week our Nation’s police officers gathered in Washington, DC to commemorate National Police Week. The week long tribute to our Nation’s Federal, State, and local police officers honors those

who have died in the line of duty and those who continue to serve and protect us at great personal risk everyday.

The first National Police Week was celebrated in 1962 when President John F. Kennedy signed an Executive Order designating May 15 as Peace Officers Memorial Day and the week in which that date falls as “Police Week.” Every year since, tens of thousands of Federal, State and local police officers have come to Washington to honor those that have made the ultimate sacrifice.

In addition to a number of other events, police officers join for a candle light vigil at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial. The first memorial service took place on May 15, 1982. On that date, approximately 125 police officers assembled in the Senate park to honor the law enforcement officers who had been killed that year. Over the past 22 years, over 3,000 law enforcement officers from around the country have been so honored.

Today, there are approximately 870,000 sworn law enforcement officers serving in the United States. Over the past 10 years, a total of 1,658 law enforcement officers have died in the line of duty, of which 145 were killed in 2003. Over the course of this week, all 145 of these officers have been honored and tonight their names will be added to National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial.

One way we can further honor the sacrifices of these brave men and women is to pass sensible gun safety legislation. A number of my colleagues, with my support, have sought to do just that. That is why I cosponsored the Gun Show Background Check Act introduced by Senator REED. I support that bill because I believe it is an important tool to help to prevent guns from getting into the hands of criminals. This bill simply applies existing law governing background checks to persons buying guns at gun shows. It is supported by a variety of law enforcement organizations including the International Association of Chiefs of Police, Major Cities Chiefs of Police, National Black Police Association, Police Foundation and National Troopers Coalition.

The law enforcement community has also asked Congress to reauthorize the 1994 Assault Weapons Ban. The 1994 law banned a list of 19 specific weapons, as well as a number of other weapons incorporating certain design characteristics such as pistol grips, folding stocks, bayonet mounts, and flash suppressors. The assault weapons ban also prohibited the manufacture of semiautomatic weapons that incorporate at least two of these military features and which accept a detachable magazine. This law is scheduled to expire on September 13, 2004.

I support the efforts of the law enforcement community who are calling for legislation extending the law. In 1994, I voted for the assault weapons ban and, last month, I joined a bipartisan majority of the Senate in voting