

But it is important to note, as my colleague from Wisconsin pointed out, that this is not just for children. We do have over 57 million Americans who take part in cycling as part of their regular routine. It is the seventh most popular recreational activity in America.

It is also serious transportation. Those 5 million American bicycle commuters that my colleague referenced in his comments a moment ago burn 90,000 calories a year for a 5-mile commute on average instead of seven barrels of oil, a savings of 35 million barrels of oil at a time when we are concerned about our energy dependence on oil from imported sources.

It is serious in terms of our economy. That commuter who was cycling was saving money. I did a little back-of-the-envelope calculation. Since I came to Congress 10 years ago and made a decision that I was going to bring a bicycle to our Nation's capital instead of an automobile, I have been able to save, conservatively, \$40,000.

The economic impact goes beyond individuals who use bikes. It is a significant part of our Nation's economy, somewhere between \$5.5 billion and \$6 billion a year in economic activity just in terms of the direct bicycle industry. Worldwide there are three times as many bicycles manufactured as cars, and even in the United States we sell more bikes than automobiles. There are some 5,000 independent specialized bicycle shops around the country, 2,000 companies that are involved with the marketing of bicycles, and manufacture of accessories.

In my community, we have recently completed an economic impact statement for cycling in Portland, Oregon. We have been able to identify well over 800 jobs and over \$63 million in direct economic impact in our little community. It has dramatic ripple effects across the country.

We are also seeing an explosion in the number of bicycle events, in my community, every day across the country, hundreds of them. Bicycle tourism has assumed a very significant role, starting with the historic Ragbride, the ride across Iowa. State after State are now involved with similar activities. Oregon has the Cycle Oregon, a week-long adventure that often is sold out the day that the route is announced. But there are others in terms of mountain bike adventures, cycling events on behalf of charity. This is an important mixing of charitable, economic, and recreational activity.

Our celebration of cycling also should include reflecting on the effects of integrating bicycling into the fabric of our community. There is nothing that is a better expression of a livable community. Indeed, some would suggest that a family that is able to cycle safely down the street is an indicator species of a livable community. Making bicycles available on transit vehicles, having bike parking, all of these make a difference in terms not just of

the adventure but the utility of cycling in everyday life.

Mr. Speaker, since we formed the Bicycle Caucus here in Congress, and my colleague referenced his membership, we have 164 bike-partisan members of the Congressional Bicycle Caucus that are active in terms of not just promoting some recreational activity on the Hill for Members, their families and staff but also advocating on behalf of cycling in our Nation's capital and around the country.

We have been able, through a collective effort, to invest in the most recent reauthorization, not just the two-thirds of \$1 billion I mentioned for Safe Routes to School but some \$4.5 billion of bicycle path trail amenities, several thousand projects that are priority projects of Members. It seems that every Member that I talked to has a bicycle story, something that makes a difference to them individually or to their community.

We are celebrating Bicycle Month and its importance to the country not a moment too soon. Cycling is important for the health of our citizens. It is playing a larger role for the health of our economy and our environment and literally the health of our communities and our planet. We are recognizing not just a Bicycle Month but the role in cycling in making a livable community, making all our families safer, healthier, and more economically secure.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I strongly support H. Con. Res. 145 to recognize May as National Bike Month and to acknowledge efforts of bicycling advocates to promote the limitless benefits of cycling, including reduced congestion, healthier lifestyles, and an environmentally friendly and efficient mode of transportation.

May has officially been celebrated as National Bike Month by the cycling community since 1956 to educate Americans about bike safety and the benefits of cycling.

H. Con. Res. 145 provides an opportunity to salute the more than 100 million people of all ages who cycle each year, and the national and community-based volunteers and professionals associated with cycling for promoting bicycle safety and the benefits of cycling.

Bicycling is the most efficient form of urban transportation in history. This transportation choice helps ease congestion on our roads and reduce environmental pollution while allowing cyclists to incorporate exercise into their everyday lives.

National Bike Month has inspired countless bike rides, safety inspections, commuter challenges, ribbon cuttings, share the road promotions, and other varied celebrations of bicycling in communities throughout the Nation.

Bicycling became popular in the 1880s, when cyclists formed the League of American Wheelman—still in existence and now called the League of American Bicyclists. The league began the first organized lobby for better roads, literally paving the road for the automobile.

This body has had a major hand in encouraging greater use of human-powered travel modes, increasingly recognizing the importance of bicycling as an alternative to travel by

motorized vehicles by providing unprecedented funding opportunities in the Nation's surface transportation bill.

Funding provided in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act—A Legacy for Users, SAFETEA—LU, will further help communities change transportation habits by building bike lanes and paths, adding sidewalks, installing crosswalks and organizing safer, more efficient ways for children to get to school.

I want to thank my colleague from Oregon for introducing this important resolution, and I want to thank this body for continuing to recognize the important role that cycling plays in our Nation's transportation system.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H. Con. Res. 145.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 145.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### EXPRESSING SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING CANDIDATES FOR DRIVER'S LICENSES

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 235) expressing the sense of the Congress that States should require candidates for driver's licenses to demonstrate an ability to exercise greatly increased caution when driving in the proximity of a potentially visually impaired individual.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 235

Whereas many people in the United States who are blind or otherwise visually impaired have the ability to travel throughout their communities without assistance;

Whereas visually impaired individuals encounter hazards that a pedestrian with average vision could easily avoid, many of which involve crossing streets and roadways;

Whereas the white cane and guide dog should be generally recognized as aids to mobility for visually impaired individuals;

Whereas many States do not require candidates for driver's licenses to associate the use of the white cane or guide dog with potentially visually impaired individuals; and

Whereas visually impaired individuals have had their white canes and guide dogs run over by motor vehicles, have been struck by the side-view mirrors of motor vehicles, and have suffered serious personal injury and death as the result of being hit by motor vehicles: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring)*, That it is the sense of the Congress that each State should require any candidate for a driver's license in such State to demonstrate, as a condition of obtaining a driver's license, an ability to associate the use of the white cane and guide dog with visually impaired individuals and to exercise

greatly increased caution when driving in proximity to a potentially visually impaired individual.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI) and the gentleman from Maine (Mr. MICHAUD) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on House Concurrent Resolution 235.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Wisconsin?

There was no objection.

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

House Concurrent Resolution 235 expresses the sense of Congress that States should require candidates for driver's licenses to demonstrate an ability to exercise greatly increased caution when driving in the proximity of a potentially visually impaired individual.

Each year too many visually impaired individuals have their white canes and guide dogs run over by motor vehicles or are struck by the side-view mirrors of motor vehicles. Others suffer serious personal injury and death as a result of being hit by cars.

Unfortunately, many States do not require candidates for driver's licenses to demonstrate the ability to associate the use of the white cane or guide dog with potentially visually impaired individuals. With a little education by the States and some extra attention paid by drivers, we can greatly improve the safety along our surface streets for those individuals who are visually impaired.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the sponsor of this resolution, our colleague LANE EVANS, who will be leaving the Congress at the end of the year. Representative EVANS has always been a champion of our Nation's veterans, and this resolution has the strong support of veterans groups and other organizations. Representative EVANS has long had a record of distinguished public service, and our thoughts are with him at this difficult time.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the passage of House Concurrent Resolution 235.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 235.

House Concurrent Resolution 235 expresses the sense of Congress that States should require candidates for driver's licenses to demonstrate an ability to exercise greater increased caution when driving in the proximity of visually impaired individuals.

More than 1 million individuals are blind in the United States. Even more

are visually impaired. Many of these individuals are veterans. These individuals face many obstacles in their daily lives and travel. The white cane and the guide dogs have become means to gain greater independence and mobility. The white canes have become one of the symbols of a blind person's ability to come and go on their own.

Unfortunately, many States do not require candidates for driver's licenses to associate the use of white canes or guide dogs with potentially visually impaired individuals. Many drivers are not aware of the white cane as a symbol of a visually impaired or blind individual. And, tragically, hundreds of visually impaired individuals have had their white canes and guide dogs run over by motor vehicles and have suffered serious personal injury and death as a result of being hit by cars.

If our Nation's visually impaired are to maintain their independence, it is important that drivers understand and respect State white cane laws. With a little education by States and some extra attention paid by drivers, we can greatly improve safety along our streets for those individuals who are visually impaired. H. Con. Res. 235 will make pedestrian travel a little safer for visually impaired individuals using mobility aids.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EVANS) for introducing this legislation. Mr. EVANS has been a friend and mentor to me during my 10 years of serving on the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

I urge my colleagues to give this resolution their full support.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to our distinguished colleague from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN).

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Wisconsin, Chairman PETRI, for yielding me this time.

I would like to thank Congressman LANE EVANS for his leadership on this matter. Congressman EVANS and I serve together on the Veterans' Affairs Committee, and he is a tireless advocate for all veterans. I also want to thank Chairman PETRI for his leadership and support of the legislation.

H. Con. Res. 235 proposes that all States require that candidates for driver's licenses demonstrate the knowledge to use increased caution when driving in the vicinity of what may be a visually impaired individual.

As a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, I appreciate all the hard work the Blinded Veterans Association has done to support this legislation. The Blinded Veterans Association has received hundreds of letters and e-mails concerning individuals who have had their white canes hit or have been hit themselves in crosswalks by drivers who are unaware of what a white cane or guide dog indicated.

As an optometrist, I know firsthand that many people with visual impair-

ments live normal, independent lives. They too should be able to travel without fear. Unfortunately, many States do not require people who are applying for driver's licenses to indicate awareness in regards to recognition of visually impaired pedestrians. Simple education can greatly increase the much-needed protection for visually impaired fellow citizens.

Again, I would like to thank Congressman EVANS for his leadership on this matter, and I urge my colleagues to support House Concurrent Resolution 235.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As you heard, this resolution has been fully supported by major associations for the blind, principally, the American Council for the Blind, the American Foundation for the Blind, and the Blinded Veterans Association.

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It also has the support of the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators.

I want to thank the chairman and ranking member of the House Transportation Committee for this resolution introduced by my good friend, Congressman LANE EVANS. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I strongly support House Concurrent Resolution 235, expressing the Sense of Congress that States adopt procedures for driver's license education or certification that improve driver awareness of the white cane or guide dog used by vision-impaired pedestrians.

There are 1.5 million visually impaired Americans, who seek to gain and maintain their mobility independence.

Through the agile use of the white cane, or a guide dog, our visually impaired citizens move about independently in their sight-limited world.

Unfortunately, America's drivers do not always recognize the white cane or guide dog as a warning that the user is visually impaired or blind. Many States do not require driver license candidates to associate the use of the white cane or guide dog with visually impaired individuals.

The visually impaired report they have had their white canes and guide dogs run over by motor vehicles, have been struck by sideview mirrors, and have suffered serious personal injury as a result of being hit by cars.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports that 4,827 pedestrians were killed in 2003, and approximately 70,000 were injured. People who are blind and visually impaired face an increased risk of serious personal injury and death while maneuvering America's streets and intersections.

A heightened awareness by our Nation's drivers of what a white cane or guide dog indicates will remove a potential obstacle from the safe mobility of the visually impaired.

H. Con. Res. 235 is supported by the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA), the American Council for the Blind (ACB), and the Blinded Veterans Association (BVA).

H. Con. Res. 235 will help the blind find their way to the greater freedoms associated with safer mobility.

I thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EVANS) and Ranking Member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs for introducing this Concurrent Resolution.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H. Con. Res. 235.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the legislation introduced by my good friend from Illinois, LANE EVANS.

I have worked for years with the distinguished Ranking Member on the Veterans Committee and am sorry to see him leave this fine institution. I have been blessed to have known him and this Congress will be diminished without him.

However, I am here to speak on legislation to improve driver awareness when driving around visually impaired persons.

There are 1.5 million visually impaired Americans.

The bill requests that every State in the country include information in the driver education material and driver license application manuals. Such information would instruct drivers of motor vehicles to approach persons with white canes or guide dogs with recognition that such individuals are blind and that extra caution should be exercised.

It is common sense legislation that will help save a life.

This legislation was passed by the House of Representatives in the 108th Congress, but could not come to an agreement with the Senate before the end of the session. I hope we can agree to this legislation and pass it before the end of this Congress.

Ms. JACKSON—LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 235, a resolution that would require candidates for driver's licenses to demonstrate an ability to exercise heightened caution when driving in the proximity of a potentially visually impaired person. It would also require these candidates to be able to relate the use of the white cane and guide dog with visually impaired individuals.

Each year, dozens of visually impaired persons are involved in car collisions. For example, a blind person may be crossing a street intersection and be hit by a reckless driver. There is simply no reason for a driver to strike a visually impaired pedestrian. H. Con. Res. 235 will help to reduce the likelihood of this happening in the future by educating drivers about visually impaired persons. This resolution will therefore help to safeguard visually impaired individuals and make our streets safer.

I strongly support H. Con. Res. 235, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting it.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 235.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

## RAILROAD RETIREMENT TECHNICAL IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2006

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5074) to amend the Railroad Retirement Act of 1974 to provide for continued payment of railroad retirement annuities by the Department of the Treasury, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 5074

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Railroad Retirement Technical Improvement Act of 2006".

### SEC. 2. DISBURSEMENT AGENT.

Section 7(b)(4) of the Railroad Retirement Act of 1974 (45 U.S.C. 231f(b)(4)) is amended so that subparagraph (A) reads as follows:

"(A) The Secretary of the Treasury shall serve as the disbursing agent for benefits payable under this Act, under such rules and regulations as the Secretary may in the Secretary's discretion prescribe."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE) and the gentleman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on H.R. 5074.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this bipartisan legislation. In 2001, after several years of intense labor management negotiations, the most comprehensive reform of the railroad retirement system in nearly 2 decades was enacted. The ERISA-type investment trust in which Tier II pension assets are invested has been performing extremely well. Payroll tax rates have gone down for both the railroads and workers, benefits have increased and the investment trust has experienced a nearly 50 percent growth in asset value in those 5 short years.

At the time of the 2001 legislation, we included a retirement that Tier II pension benefit checks be issued through a private contractor. This rested on the belief, since proven wrong, that this would be more efficient than continuing the use of the Treasury for this purpose.

In fact, the Railroad Retirement Board, the trustees of the investment trust and the Congressional Budget Office have all found that by using an outside disbursing agent, actually costs to the program are increased by

\$2 million a year more than they would have been if we had used the Treasury.

As a temporary expedient, the mandate to use an outside disbursing agent has been legislatively postponed in appropriations measures since 2001, but it is obviously time to make the correction permanent. H.R. 5074 does this by amending the permanent Railroad Retirement Act to designate the U.S. Treasury as the disbursing agent for the benefits.

This legislation has been fully bipartisan from the outside. I particularly want to commend the chairman of the full committee, Mr. YOUNG, the ranking member of the full committee, Mr. OBERSTAR, and my ranking member on the subcommittee, Ms. BROWN, for their leader in moving this bill forward expeditiously. It means greater efficiency for a system that is critical to the well-being of the Nation's retired railroad workers and deserves the endorsement of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my chairman for his strong leadership on the committee. I am proud that our Railroad Subcommittee has been dedicated to protecting and improving the retirement benefit the hard-working employees who are part of the railroad retirement system. Too often we look at an industry and we forget about the devoted men and women who are working very hard every day to serve their customers.

This legislation teaches us a very valuable lesson, particularly as we begin to debate legislation sunseting Federal agencies. We learn that sometimes government can do better and cheaper than the private sector can. I want to repeat that. Sometimes government can do better and cheaper than the private sector can.

In 2001, the Railroad Retirement and Survivors Improvement Act made several changes to the railroad benefit system, including requiring the Railroad Retirement Board to contract with a private firm for distributing Tier II benefits. However, the Railroad Retirement Board quickly learned that an outside company would cost \$3 million more than using the U.S. Treasury Department.

Since the 2001 legislation was enacted, the Appropriations Committee has provided a waiver for this requirement, but this bill would permanently make the U.S. Treasury Department the distribution agent for Tier II railroad retirement benefits and end the need for this yearly benefit.

This plan was proposed by the Railroad Retirement Board and the Railroad Retirement Investment Trustees and is supported by both railroad management and labor. I urge my colleagues to support speedy passage of this legislation.