

ON THE INTRODUCTION OF THE
“FLEXIBILITY INCENTIVE GRANT
PILOT PROGRAM”

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 20, 2007

Ms. MATSUI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce an important bill that anticipates and addresses our communities' immediate and future transportation needs.

Today I am introducing the Flexibility Incentive Grant Pilot Program, or as I call it—the FIG program.

This legislation creates a \$250 million annual grant program that provides a two-prong approach to growing our national transit program while rewarding states and localities that are making an investment in their transit infrastructure.

Specifically, this legislation will provide incentives to encourage States and counties to establish new sources of revenue for transit projects and services. Such sources may include the dedication of new State motor fuels taxes, sales taxes, interest on existing highway funds, motor vehicle excise taxes, tolls, or other sources of funding.

Furthermore, this legislation rewards those States that currently invest in transit by making them eligible to receive “bonus” payments by the Secretary of Transportation so that they can continue to invest in their transportation infrastructure.

I look at this as a federal transportation tax return for those states and localities that invest in their transportation infrastructure.

Transportation is about partnerships—and funding our infrastructure requires a strong commitment between federal, State and local governments. We need to grow our transit system in order to meet our growing population and infrastructure demands that our states and localities are experiencing.

Fortunately, some States are already making a substantial investment in their transportation infrastructure. For example, in my home state of California, voters last November approved \$19.9 billion in transportation bonds to fund a variety of transportation projects and initiatives.

At the local level, citizens are willing to tax themselves to pay for much need transportation improvements. For example, in my district of Sacramento, a recent survey revealed that 74 percent of Sacramento County residents would support a ballot tax measure for transit and roads. Our citizens understand the need for more transportation funds and are proving this as a priority at the ballot box.

The federal government must play a key leadership role in encouraging this type of initiative.

Why is this so important?

Last week, the American Public Transportation Association announced that Americans took a record 10.1 billion trips on local public transportation in 2006.

Over the last decade, public transportation's growth rate outpaced population growth and the growth rate of vehicle miles traveled on our Nation's highways.

There is great demand on our national transit infrastructure.

Since 1995 public transit use has increased by 30 percent, which is double the population growth in our country, 12 percent, during that same time period.

Despite record levels of federal investment and the display of local jurisdictions to tax themselves for the purposes of increasing the level and quality of public transportation services, we have to make sure that State funding, across our country, keeps pace.

State Legislatures are facing huge deficits and some States have little choice but to freeze or cut funding for many important programs, including transit services.

My legislation is designed to encourage States and counties to think twice before they cut transit funding by providing “bonus” Federal transportation dollars to those States that increase public transportation funding or take steps to increase funding.

As a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, my colleagues and I will be looking for new and innovative ways to fund our transportation programs in the coming years.

The Flexibility Incentive Grant Pilot Program is a good place to start this conversation. I ask that my colleagues support my legislation.

H. CON. RES. 584: TO DESIGNATE
THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN
WASHINGTON, DC, AS THE LYN-
DON BAINES JOHNSON FEDERAL
BUILDING

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 20, 2007

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, throughout his tenure as President and during his life in general, President Lyndon Baines Johnson held firm to his belief that education was an essential part of the American dream. In particular, he championed the right to quality education for minorities in public schools that were challenged by merit, limited funding, and poor resources. It is fitting that this building bear his name given his central role in passing landmark education legislation.

During his term as President, LBJ signed into law the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. For the first time, this act allocated large amounts of Federal money to public schools, targeting assistance to disadvantaged children in rural and urban areas. In addition, this bill allowed for the first time, private schools, mostly Catholic schools in urban areas, to receive funding and support.

Johnson's second major education achievement was the Higher Education Act of 1965. Again, this bill incorporated the needs of low-income students via grants, the work-study program, and government loans. These are just a small sample of the great accomplishments of President Johnson, a leader who took the steps necessary to make education a top priority for the country, a goal to which we continue to strive today. I salute his great contribution to education. I am proud to see that the headquarters of the Department of Education in Washington, DC, will be commemo-

rated as the Lyndon Baines Johnson Federal Building in honor of our 37th President.

TRIBUTE TO THE CITY OF TROY,
ILLINOIS

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 20, 2007

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the City of Troy, Illinois, on its 150th anniversary.

The City of Troy first began in 1819 as a ten acre spread of land in southern Illinois and soon became the first stagecoach stop for travelers to and from St. Louis. By 1850 the City of Troy became a story of success, and Troy became legally recognized as a town in 1857.

By 1978, Troy became the third fastest growing area in the United States and still continues to prosper.

I am pleased to congratulate Troy on its 150 years of accomplishments.

NEAL SMITH FEDERAL BUILDING

SPEECH OF

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 13, 2007

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, as a proud co-sponsor of H.R. 1045, a bill to designate the federal building located at 210 Walnut street in downtown Des Moines, Iowa as the “Neal Smith Federal Building,” I strongly support its passage.

As a distinguished public servant to an Americans—a World War II bomber pilot and the State of Iowa's longest serving Member of the U.S. House of Representatives—Neal Smith deserves to be recognized by this body, where he served the people of Iowa with honor for 36 years.

To this day, Neal Smith is held in high regard by Iowans. His accomplishments as a member of the House Appropriations Committee helped strengthen Iowa's economy and improve the lives of its citizens. In addition to his committee work, Neal Smith championed many issues important to Iowa agriculture and the environment. Neal Smith is credited with creating the Commodity Futures Trading Commission and a federal national wildlife refuge in Prairie City, Iowa that now bears his name.

But what is most impressive to me and most important to Iowa and this country is the dedication and sacrifice Neal Smith made during World War II. As a courageous United States Army Air Force bomber pilot Neal Smith, encountered enemy fire and his plane was shot down. His valor and perseverance earned him the Purple Heart, nine Battle Stars and the Air Medal with four oak leaf clusters.

Neal Smith—Iowa is proud and thankful for your many years of service and I proudly support H.R. 1045.