

efficient. For me, this means only one thing: high-speed rail.

I am proud to be a member of the Midwest High Speed Rail Association. And I believe it is time to weave this country together, from coast to coast, with a new network of clean, safe high-speed trains. This will create thousands of jobs, serving as a boon to the national economy. It will also save money. Laying track is four times cheaper than building highways, and railroads can transport up to five times as many people. There is no question that high-speed rail will increase the ease and affordability of travel between States. This will bring fresh opportunity to every community, large or small, that touches the new rail lines.

Mr. President, 140 years ago, the great American railway first connected the east coast to the west coast. Rail travel helped give definition to this country. It is an integral part of America's past. And it will be just as important to America's future.

This Transportation bill funds important projects and initiatives like these, all across the country. But it is about more than public transportation. It also helps to lay the groundwork for a renewable energy paradigm. It is a blueprint to create jobs, protect the environment, and save money.

If we pass this legislation, it will be a significant step in the right direction. And if we build upon this progress in the years to come, we can secure a brighter future for ourselves and for our children, because it's not just a matter of dollars and cents, and it's not just about jobs or the environment. It is about all of that, and it is about national security. It is about reducing our dependence on foreign oil. It is about renewable energy, safer modes of transportation, and an electric grid that is more secure and more efficient. This Transportation bill is a piece of that puzzle. It is a great start. So I urge my colleagues to join with me in supporting this measure. Let's invest in America's future once again.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that except for the amendments provided for in this agreement, no further amendments be in order to H.R. 3288; that the following be the only first-degree amendments and motion to recommit remaining in order to H.R. 3288; that second-degree amendments which are relevant to the first-degree to which offered be in order but not prior to a vote in relation to the first-degree amendment; that the listed Kyl motion to recommit be

the only motion to recommit in order, except motions to reconsider votes or motions to waive applicable budget points of order; that a managers' amendment that has been cleared by the managers and the leaders also be in order, and that if the amendment is offered, then it be considered and agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; Landrieu amendment No. 2365, which is pending; Vitter amendment No. 2359, pending and as modified; DeMint amendment No. 2410, pending; McCain amendment No. 2403, pending, as modified; Kyl motion to recommit with instructions, pending; that upon disposition of the amendments and the motion to recommit, the substitute amendment, as amended, if amended, be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the bill, as amended, be read a third time and the Senate then proceed to vote on passage of the bill; that upon passage, the Senate insist on its amendment, request a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses, and that the subcommittee and Senators INOUE and COCHRAN be appointed as conferees; further, that if a point of order is raised against the substitute amendment, it be in order for another substitute amendment to be offered, minus the offending provisions but including any amendments which had been agreed to prior to the point of order; that no further amendments be in order; that the new substitute amendment, as amended, if amended, be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the remaining provisions beyond adoption of the substitute amendment remain in effect; that on Thursday, September 17, following a period of morning business, the Senate then resume consideration of H.R. 3288 and proceed to vote in relation to the amendments and motion as specified above, with 2 minutes of debate equally divided and controlled prior to each vote, and that after the first vote in a sequence, the remaining votes be limited to 10 minutes each; further, that the cloture motion be withdrawn.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, with that, I would like all Members to know that what we have just agreed to is the final amendments of this bill. If any Senator would like to speak on any of them, they are welcome to come to the floor to do so this evening. But with this agreement, all those amendments will be voted on tomorrow morning, as will be announced at the end of the session today.

Mr. President, just to let all Senators know, with this agreement, there will be no further rollcall votes tonight.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, if there are no other Senators who wish

to speak on that—I know a number of Senators are waiting to speak in morning business—I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Connecticut.

#### AFGHANISTAN

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise—and soon will be joined by Senate colleagues, Senators MCCAIN and GRAHAM—to speak about the war in Afghanistan.

For the first time since 9/11, a national debate is underway about the future of our fight in Afghanistan. This is appropriate. Whenever our Nation sends our brave men and women in uniform into harm's way, it is both natural and necessary that we should have a vigorous national conversation about why we are doing so, whether it is necessary for our national security, and what the right strategy is to achieve our objectives. The truth is, we have not had such a debate since the decision was made unanimously to go into Afghanistan after 9/11 to overthrow the Taliban, which had given safe haven to al-Qaida, which planned and trained for the attacks on us in Afghanistan.

The most direct answer to the question of why we are fighting in Afghanistan and why we must succeed there is exactly that: Afghanistan is where the attacks of 9/11 originated, where al-Qaida made its sanctuary under the Taliban, and where the same Taliban is on the offensive today in Afghanistan and has seized the initiative with the clear aim of gaining control of all of Afghanistan, or major parts of it, and once again providing sanctuary for al-Qaida. It remains self-evident to be a clear and vital national interest of the United States to prevent this from happening. It is also because, although Afghanistan may seem geographically remote, we found out on September 11, 2001, in this modern technological world where great spaces are passed over quickly, that it is not remote when it comes to the safety and security of the American people, and Afghanistan is in the heart of a region in which we have critical national interests.

The fact is, Afghanistan and Pakistan are today at the epicenter of global Islamist extremism and terrorism, with which we are at war. This is the test of our age so far as our security is concerned.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I will be glad to yield.

Mr. MCCAIN. Is it true that yesterday, when we had the hearing with Admiral Mullen for renomination as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and who I think we would all agree has done an outstanding job of serving our