

The rebuilding and renewing of America should be one issue that actually brings us together, where there are solutions that are clear and complementary in terms of creating jobs, protecting the environment and reducing the budget deficit.

We have serious needs all across America for water and transportation investments in every single community. There are estimates that up to 20 million Americans every year are sick needlessly from waterborne illness because of failures in water systems. There are millions of hours and billions of dollars that are wasted as Americans and American businesses are stuck in traffic. There are tens of thousands of unsafe bridges. There are transit systems in desperate need of repair and revitalization.

What America needs, first and foremost, is a vision of investing in renewing and rebuilding America in this century. The plans for infrastructure for this century are available. As someone who has labored in this field for years, working around the country, I know that the vision is ready to be incorporated into the reauthorization of the Surface Transportation Act or in new water trust fund legislation, and it can be done not in years or in months but in a matter of weeks. This work is ready.

Next, we must commit to extracting more value out of existing and future investments. Luckily, here, too, reform is in the works. I have been deeply impressed with the work of Secretary Ray LaHood of Transportation, of Housing Secretary Shaun Donovan and of EPA administrator Lisa Jackson, where the Federal Government is in the process of creating a new partnership with our communities, businesses and families in terms of how the Federal Government does business and invests that money.

But even with bold vision and with more value being extracted, we actually are going to need to invest more money. The Chinese, for instance, are investing about nine times as much as the United States in their infrastructure needs. We are losing the race for global competitiveness while we see conditions deteriorating at home. The Society of Civil Engineers has graded American infrastructure at a D, and suggests that it requires at least \$2.2 trillion in the next 5 years to bring things up to standard.

If we act now, there are, in fact, areas of broad support for more investment—from business, local government and the American people—if this increased money goes to rebuild and renew our country.

There is a danger that our current direction will not be as effective as it could be. I am heartened that there appears to be a consensus that we will be spending, perhaps, \$50 billion or more in new infrastructure investment, but if this money is simply going to flow through existing channels with an imperative that it be spent as quickly as

possible, it is not going to have as much long-term impact as it would if we were to do it right.

Doing it right means a reauthorization of the 6-year Transportation bill with a national purpose and reform specified. It means the creation of a water trust fund to give money where it is needed. It is the reenactment of the Superfund tax so that polluters actually pay to clean up dangerous areas that are found in every single State. It would create tens of thousands of jobs while it would reduce environmental threats.

There are many contentious, complex and partisan issues that, understandably, divide Congress and the American people, but renewing and rebuilding America is not one of them. Done right, it will be deficit-neutral with a bold vision to revitalize the economy while strengthening our communities and protecting the planet. I hope we all start the new year with a commitment to invest in livable communities where our families are safer, healthier and more economically secure.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 37 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. RAHALL) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Our conversation with You, Lord, is so often born out of passing needs and events but always rooted in faith and Your faithful love. Through our prayer, things often become clearer, we recover focus or You give us strength to persevere.

We are confident, Lord, You will provide in the way You see best. When our personal efforts are stymied or our collective means fail us, we begin to face our own limitations.

It then remains for us only to lift up our eyes to You so that You might respond to our deepest needs as You see best. It is then and only then we say with free abandonment, "Amen."

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 3288) "An Act making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes."

CONGRATULATING A FEW OUTSTANDING HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAMS

(Mr. GINGREY of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate a few outstanding high school football teams for their efforts in the State playoffs. These tremendous athletes are an exemplification of true dedication and remarkable talent.

The teams being recognized in the 11th District of Georgia are as follows: Bremen High School in Haralson County; Bowdon High School, Carroll County; the Darlington School in Troup County; Trion High School in Chattooga County; Armuchee High School in Floyd County; Pepperell High School in Floyd County; Chattooga High School, Chattooga County; Calhoun High School in Gordon County; Carrollton High School, again, Carroll County; Hiram High School in Paulding County; McEachern High School in Cobb County; and last but not least, Marietta High School in Cobb County.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud these young men, their bands, their dance teams, their cheerleaders, for proving themselves such sound competitors in the State playoffs. I am certainly proud of them for their achievements.

Congratulations to all on a great season.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 4 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.