

the country. He served as president of that foundation from 1997 to 2009 and today is a trustee of the foundation.

One of the interesting things T. Rogers Wade did—a lot of people talk about what they want to do to reform education and help kids in need. T. Rogers Wade did it. He founded something called Tech High in Atlanta, GA, a school in an old dilapidated building that he raised the money to rehabilitate. He brought in excellent faculty in STEM math and science and opened it as a charter school approved by the State of Georgia for the most in need, free-and-reduced-lunch kids in the metropolitan city of Atlanta public school system. He began attracting those kids to that charter school. So successful has Tech High been that Arne Duncan, the Secretary of Education, chose it to be one of his first visits after he became Secretary of Education under President Obama. It still is a guiding light today of what can be done, with a focus on excellence and helping kids in need to brighten their future.

Just recently, with the election of Nathan Deal as the new Governor of Georgia, he picked one person out of our State to guide him in his transition team. It was T. Rogers Wade.

T. Rogers Wade has touched the lives of American servicemen by being on the board of the USO, Georgia businesses by being on the board of the chamber of commerce, and citizens around our State by being the president of the Public Policy Foundation.

Next Monday night, I am going to have dinner with a great Georgian and great American. And I rise at this moment on the floor of the Senate to pay tribute to T. Rogers Wade on the occasion of his 70th birthday.

I yield back the remainder of my time. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ESSENTIAL AIR SERVICE

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, I realize we are in morning business, but I rise to oppose the McCain amendment to the FAA bill, which will probably come up later when we get to the bill.

The McCain amendment will eliminate the Essential Air Service Program. I applaud my colleague for exploring ways to address our deficit, and I want to join him in looking for opportunities to control spending, but this is one program we must preserve. We won't improve the deficit by stifling local economies.

The Department of Transportation estimates that 1.1 million travelers from more than 150 communities rely

on the Essential Air Service Program. The Essential Air Service Program is a promise to rural America, which absolutely needs airports for economic development, as noted in the 2009 Journal of Rural Studies report entitled, "The Economic Importance of Air Travel in High-Amenity Rural Areas."

Nearly half of the American West consists of publicly owned lands containing mountain ranges, forests, rivers, lakes, parks, and areas for wilderness, wildlife, and grazing. Many people come to the West to visit—especially from the East—especially in the summer, to go fly fishing, camping, for tourism, and in the winter for skiing. People enjoy public lands in the West. We have so many public lands in the West, we don't have private land for development. This means we have tremendous distances between population centers, and we need reliable air travel to ensure jobs, private enterprise, and access to medical assistance.

Montana is primarily a rural State. We rank 47th in population—that is only three States with less populace than we—while being the fourth largest in land mass. To put it differently, although we are slightly larger than the country of Japan, we have fewer citizens than the State of Rhode Island, the smallest State in the Nation.

Montana has eight Essential Air Service communities: Sidney, Glendive, Wolf Point, Miles City, Glasgow, Havre, and West Yellowstone. The first seven rely on industries such as agricultural and mineral extraction—industries that are vital to America's growth and industries which exist in rural America rather than in downtown metropolitan areas. A couple of those airports also lie near Indian reservations where economic needs are paramount. Without the Essential Air Service all these areas risk isolation.

In 2008, Montana's Essential Air Service provider went out of business. We lost air travel for months. At this point, I want to read a passage from a recent Great Falls Tribune article to illustrate the impact on jobs and the economy. It says:

When Havre, a city of about 10,000 people, lost its air service . . . BNSF Railway closed its local office and moved its operation to Billings.

Think of that. Think of the irony. The railroad needs reliable air services. They didn't have them so they moved to another location. That shows how interconnected our economy is.

I want to take this opportunity to also announce that I have launched a Senate Essential Air Service Caucus. Senator COLLINS from Maine is co-chairman of the bipartisan caucus, and several other Democratic and Republican Senators have already joined us, and I encourage my other colleagues to join and stand with us.

It is important to rein in the deficit. That is clear. But let us be responsible about how we do it. Pulling the rug out from under programs such as Essential

Air Service will shrink the economy rather than shrinking the deficit. I will not turn my back on communities that rely on this program as a lifeline.

Madam President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

FAA AIR TRANSPORTATION MODERNIZATION AND SAFETY IMPROVEMENT ACT

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 223, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 223) to modernize the air traffic control system, improve the safety, reliability, and availability of transportation by air in the United States, provide modernization of the air traffic control system, reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Wicker modified amendment No. 14, to exclude employees of the Transportation Security Administration from the collective bargaining rights of Federal employees and provide employment rights and an employee engagement mechanism for passenger and property screeners.

Blunt amendment No. 5, to require the Under Secretary of Transportation for Security to approve applications from airports to authorize passenger and property screening to be carried out by a qualified private screening company.

Paul amendment No. 21, to reduce the total amount authorized to be appropriated for the Federal Aviation Administration for fiscal year 2011 to the total amount authorized to be appropriated for the Administration for fiscal year 2008.

Rockefeller (for Wyden) amendment No. 27, to increase the number of test sites in the National Airspace System used for unmanned aerial vehicles and to require one of those test sites to include a significant portion of public lands.

Inhofe amendment No. 7, to require the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration to initiate a new rulemaking proceeding with respect to the flight time limitations and rest requirements for supplemental operations before any of such limitations or requirements be altered.

Rockefeller (for Ensign) amendment No. 32, to improve provisions relating to certification and flight standards for military remotely piloted aerial systems in the National Airspace System.

McCain amendment No. 4, to repeal the Essential Air Service Program.

Rockefeller (for Leahy) amendment No. 50, to amend title 1 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to include