

communities around the Nation such as Portland and Eugene in my home State of Oregon, and many other cities in Oregon, biking and walking have become a way of life, with families commuting, running errands, and getting around town. When they are able to do that, they decrease the load on the highway system. They reduce the congestion. They reduce the pollution. It is a win-win at every level.

But Federal funding has not kept up with this shift. Just as traffic lights and highway lanes are necessary to make our roads safer and faster for drivers, pedestrians and bikers need basic infrastructure to make their trips safe and efficient. Yet there is no dedicated Federal funding stream for bike and pedestrian infrastructure. This is a growing demand in many communities and States. Despite the fact of decreasing congestion on the roads, it is one of the most cost-effective strategies we could possibly follow. Biking and walking infrastructure costs little, but it has a big bang for the buck. In Portland 2 percent of the city's transportation dollars were spent on biking and walking, but the percentage of commuters traveling by bike went up 140 percent. Imagine if all those bikers were in cars by themselves, as are so many of us who drive to work. Congestion in Portland would have increased instead of staying constant over a 10-year period as it has.

I am supporting an amendment that will retain the current level of funding at 2 percent for bike and pedestrian projects, and I encourage my colleagues to be smart with the Federal dollar and support this amendment.

This bill—the broader highway bill—is a critical investment in our short-term and long-term economic success. Over the next 2 years, it will provide an immediate boost to a struggling construction industry, creating jobs where they are needed most. And over the next generation, it will act as the downpayment we need on infrastructure for our businesses to grow and prosper in the 21st century.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to continue to build support around this bill; indeed, to get this bill to the floor for consideration. While there are some in this Chamber who want to fight social battles by putting unrelated amendments up, there are millions of Americans in need of jobs, there is an infrastructure that needs to be rebuilt, and there are citizens who want us to put aside the games and do the work here so they can do the work back at home.

I yield the floor.

ROMA BRIDGE BUILDING

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, at the end of January, something remarkable happened: Slovak Deputy Prime Minister Rudolf Chmel made a positive statement about Roma. Saying something nice about Europe's largest ethnic minority may not seem newsworthy, but it is and here is why.

The Deputy Prime Minister reacted to an escalation of anti-Roma rhetoric in the runup to Slovakia's March 10 parliamentary elections by calling on political parties not to play the "Roma card." But more than that, he welcomed a landmark decision of the European Court on Human Rights holding that the sterilization of a Slovak Romani woman without her consent had been cruel and inhuman. He welcomed the findings of a Slovak court that concluded Romani children had been placed in segregated schools in eastern Slovakia. And he commended the human rights organization that had helped litigate both these cases.

To say that statements like these are few and far between is an understatement. On the contrary, officials at the highest levels of government frequently perpetuate the worst bigotry against Roma.

For example, after four perpetrators were convicted and sentenced for a racially motivated firebombing that left a Romani toddler burned over 80 percent of her body, Czech President Vaclav Klaus wondered if their 20-plus-year sentences were too harsh. Romanian Foreign Minister Teodor Baconschi suggested that Roma were "physiologically" disposed to crime. Last year, President Silvio Berlusconi warned the electorate of Milan to vote for his party lest their city become a "Gypsyopolis." And French President Nicolas Sarkozy has explicated targeted Roma—from EU countries—for expulsion from France. The common thread in most of this rhetoric is the portrayal of Roma as inherently criminal.

Nearly 20 years ago in the New York Times—Dec. 10, 1993—Vaclav Havel described the treatment of Roma as a litmus test for civil society. Today, Europe is still failing that test miserably. As Hungary's Minister for Social Inclusion Zoltan Balog has argued, Roma are worse off today than they were under communism. While a small fraction of Roma have benefited from new opportunities, many more have been the absolute losers in the transition from the command-to-a market economy, and vast numbers live in a kind of poverty that the United Nations Development Programme described as more typically found in sub-Saharan Africa than Europe. Endemic discrimination has propelled economic marginalization downward at an exponential pace, and the past 20 years have been marked by outbreaks of hate crimes and mob violence against Roma that are on the rise again.

In the current environment, those who play with anti-Roma rhetoric are playing with a combustible mix.

In the near term, there is the real prospect that fueling prejudice against Roma will spark interethnic violence. Before Bulgaria's local elections last October, the extremist Ataka party parlayed an incident involving a Romani mafia boss into anti-Romani rioting in some 14 towns and cities. In

the Czech Republic, the government has had to mount massive shows of law enforcement to keep anti-Roma mobs from degenerating into all-out pogroms; its worked so far, but at a huge cost.

Significantly, Roma are not always standing by while the likes of the Hungarian Guard mass on their doorsteps; they have sometimes gathered sticks, shovels, scythes, and anything else handy in an old-school defense.

Even without the prospect of violence, there is a longer term threat to many countries with larger Romani populations: if they fail to undertake meaningful integration of Roma, they will find their economies hollowed out from within. More than a decade ago, then-Hungarian Minister of Education Zoltan Pokorni said that one out of every three children starting school that year would be Romani. Some economic forecasts now suggest that by 2040, 40 percent of the labor force in Hungary will be Romani. A number of other countries face similar trajectories.

A desperately impoverished, uneducated, and marginalized population will not serve as the backbone of a modern and thriving economy. But several studies have shown that the cost of investing in the integration of Roma—housing, education, and job training and the like—will be more than offset by gains in GNP and tax revenue. In order to undertake those integration policies, somebody has to build popular support for them. And that is where Mr. Chmel comes in.

Until now, most popular discourse about Roma seems predicated on the ostrich-like belief that perhaps they can be made to go away. Few politicians have shown the courage and foresight to reframe public discourse in any way that acknowledges Europe's future will definitely include Roma. Mr. Chmel has taken an important step in that direction. I hope he will inspire others.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING STEVE APPLETON

• Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, my colleague Senator JIM RISCH joins me today in honoring the life of Steve Appleton. We are deeply saddened by Steve's passing, and we join his wife, Dalynn, their children, family, Micron employees and his many friends in honoring his remarkable life.

For more than three decades, our State was a fortunate beneficiary of Steve's determination and hard work. A year after his 1982 graduation from Boise State University, he joined Micron Technology, Inc., and quickly ascended from working on Micron's high-tech assembly line to leading the company as CEO, president and chairman. His talent and energy helped overcome significant challenges and shaped Micron into a multinational world leader

in semiconductors. As Kurt Marko, a coworker at Micron, poignantly described him, “Appleton personified Micron’s can-do spirit. He, and it, defied the odds.”

Steve leaves behind a legacy of hard work, focus, integrity and generosity. He was driven to reach remarkable achievements and was generous in sharing the rewards of that hard work to better our State and future generations of Idahoans. For example, he gave his time and financial resources to help Boise State University develop its College of Engineering; raised funds for scholarships, programs, buildings and projects, including the Appleton Tennis Complex; and established the Micron Foundation. Due to his efforts, our State and Nation will be better equipped to compete globally.

We were honored to have many opportunities to work with Steve over the years. His pragmatic approach was instrumental in achieving remedies needed to better ensure a level playing field for U.S. semiconductor products and address unfair trading practices. No matter the challenges, Steve faced them with optimism and sensibility.

Steve’s adventurous spirit was widely known and well documented. His passion for sports and competition contributed to him excelling in tennis, including winning the doubles title at the Big Sky Tennis Championship in 1982. Besides his love of aviation, he also was involved in a number of adventure sports including, off-road car racing, scuba diving, wakeboarding, motocross and more.

Steve Appleton’s energy and commitment to Idaho will not be forgotten. He has set an extraordinary example of what hard work and initiative in a free enterprise system can achieve. He helped create thousands of jobs and cemented Idaho’s standing in the high-tech field. His innovation, drive and forward-thinking approach, as well as his wonderful friendship, will be greatly missed.●

RECOGNIZING ARKANSAS HOSPITALS

● Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, it is my distinct privilege to recognize the work of five Arkansas hospitals that were honored by U.S. News and World Report as among the Nation’s best hospitals and classified as “high-performing” in a variety of specialties for their outstanding care. These hospitals were judged against almost 5,000 nationwide hospitals and met rigorous standards of medical care, including patient survival and safety, hospital reputation, and care-related factors such as nursing and patient services. The “high-performing” designation is reserved for hospitals that rank in the top 25 percent of each category after further standards are applied. These five hospitals are tremendous assets to my State, and I am pleased to be able to praise their hard work and world-class medical care on the Senate floor.

The U.S. News 2011–2012 Best Hospitals rankings recognized three hospitals in the Little Rock metropolitan area, which includes Little Rock, North Little Rock, and Conway. The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, UAMS, was recognized as a high-performing hospital in four specialty areas: cancer; obstetrics/gynecology; ear/nose/throat, ENT; and nephrology, kidney. Baptist Health Medical Center was named high-performing in the ENT and nephrology specialties, and St. Vincent Infirmary was recognized as high-performing in the ENT and orthopedics specialties.

The 2011–2012 Best Hospitals list included two additional Arkansas facilities providing outstanding care outside of major metro areas: Sparks Regional Medical Center, in Fort Smith, and Washington Regional Medical Center, in Fayetteville. They were two of only 247 hospitals across the Nation recognized for their exceptional care as regional hospitals. Sparks was listed as “high-performing” in the pulmonology specialty and Washington Regional in geriatrics.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the achievements of UAMS, Baptist Health, St. Vincent, Sparks Regional, and Washington Regional. I am thankful for the men and women of these five facilities and all the health care professionals across my State. They are constantly striving to provide Arkansans with the best medical care possible, and I am proud of all their hard work.●

REMEMBERING WILMA J. WEBB

● Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, today I want to recognize a friend and a great Coloradan the Honorable Wilma J. Webb. Wilma is a transformative leader who has left her indelible mark on the State of Colorado and the character of our country.

On February 16, 2012, the Anti-Defamation League’s Mountain States Office will present Wilma with the prestigious 2012 Civil Rights Award. Given all of her work on behalf of the African-American community, it is especially appropriate that Wilma will receive her award during Black History Month. I congratulate her on being the recipient of such an esteemed honor and I applaud her for her remarkable achievements in the struggle for civil rights. Wilma’s award presents me with an opportunity to tell the U.S. Senate about her remarkable life and work.

Wilma is a native of the Centennial State, born in Denver and raised in the city’s Five Points Neighborhood. She later attended the University of Colorado at Denver, and is an alumna of Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government. As a testament to her dedication to public service in Colorado, Wilma also has received honorary doctoral degrees from the University of Northern Colorado and the Art Institute of Colorado.

By 1980, Wilma had become a state representative in the Colorado General

Assembly, where she served for 13 years, distinguishing herself as a trail-blazing leader in the State Capitol. Among her achievements, Wilma spearheaded legislation to prevent discrimination in its many forms. For example, Wilma successfully secured the ability of the Colorado Civil Rights Commission and Division to use the power of subpoena in cases of discrimination. The first woman to represent House District 8, she was also a champion for the rights of women and led legislation to make it unlawful to discriminate against women in the workplace or in the pursuit of an education. Wilma fought to help women and minority professionals lead successful businesses in Colorado. Additionally, Wilma served as an advocate to end discrimination on the basis of a person’s sexual orientation or physical disability.

In the 1980s, the United States was considering a policy of divestment in South Africa because of its abhorrent system known as apartheid. At this time, early in her career as a State Representative, Wilma had the foresight and determination to lead the divestment effort in Colorado. To do so, she carried bills to discourage investment in South Africa until Nelson Mandela was freed from imprisonment on Robben Island and justice was restored to the country’s political system. It’s a stance that many of us think is common sense now, but we must remember that it took brave leaders like Wilma to be on the forefront of the fight several decades ago.

Wilma’s leadership to expand civil rights is laudable, and includes many successful initiatives that make Coloradans proud. She is perhaps most widely known and celebrated for her effort to establish Martin Luther King, Jr. Day as a State holiday in Colorado. Founding the Martin Luther King, Jr. Colorado Holiday Commission along with Mrs. Coretta Scott King and Governor Richard D. Lamm, Wilma committed 18 years to serving as its President and Chairman. The commission, helmed by Wilma, was responsible for organizing the annual “Marade” in the heart of Denver and has served to unite and educate communities across Colorado on the spirit and contributions of Dr. King. The Marade, uniquely named for being both a march and a parade, is one of the largest celebrations of its kind across the country. I have had the distinct privilege of participating in it over the years. In fact, just last month I was in Denver to mark the occasion, and it is among the most important ways we have to celebrate our diverse communities and honor the values to which Dr. King devoted his life. To me, Wilma’s visionary leadership in honoring Dr. King’s legacy symbolizes our nation’s inexorable march toward greater equality and justice for all Americans.

There are many other notable achievements of Wilma Webb. I would like to discuss a few more.

She has been a pioneer on education issues, fighting for a level playing field