

The population of our dentists in general is getting older, and we are losing more of them to retirement than we are seeing graduates of dental school. Even the dentists who are graduating are often not migrating to the areas where we need them the most. Many dentists are involved in making our teeth white and shiny and our smiles very beautiful, but meanwhile in those communities there are people who are seeing the teeth in their mouth rot away, there are kids who have dental problems, and they are not getting the treatment they need.

I hope that tomorrow at the hearing we are going to bring forth some great panelists. We will be talking about the issue. I intend, as soon as we can, to introduce comprehensive legislation to make sure every person in this country has access to affordable and decent-quality dental care.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASEY). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, we are debating the Transportation bill, so let me say a few words about transportation.

I think everybody in this country—or at least anybody who gets into an automobile and drives around—understands that we have a major infrastructural crisis in this country and that it is becoming more dire each passing year.

The American Society of Civil Engineers has reported that we should be investing \$2.2 trillion over the next 5 years simply to get our roads, bridges, transit, and aviation to a passable condition. This is more than eight times the annual rate of spending proposed in the bill under consideration.

The first point I think we should acknowledge is that the legislation before us, which I support and which is significantly a step forward, is a very modest proposal going nowhere near as far as we should be going.

Clearly, I see when I go home to Vermont, and I am sure you see when you go home to Pennsylvania, the very apparent infrastructural needs we as a nation face. In my State of Vermont, just under one-third of Vermont's bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. About one-third of Vermont's bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. Thirty-six percent of our Federal aid roads are in need of major repairs. In fact, a recent national report ranked Vermont's rural roads as the worst in the Nation, and that was before the very terrible storm we experienced, Tropical Storm Irene, which caused hundreds of millions of additional dollars of damage to our roads.

I think the point here is not a complicated point. I was a mayor for 8

years, and I had to deal with the roads and the water system in the city of Burlington, and I think I speak for every mayor in the world when I tell you that infrastructure does not get better all by itself. I think we can all agree that if you do nothing, if you do not invest in repairs, it is just not going to get better. In fact, it will get worse.

It is really dumb that we as a nation end up spending a lot more money than we should in repairing our roads and bridges and water systems because we don't adequately fund maintenance. If you keep up good repair, it will end up costing you less money. If you ignore them and they deteriorate and you need to massively rebuild them, it ends up being a much more expensive proposition.

So as a nation what we should be doing is properly maintaining our infrastructure, investing a certain sum every single year. And I should tell you that compared to the rest of the world, we do not do a particularly good job of that. Right now, the United States invests just 2.4 percent of our GDP on infrastructure. Europe invests twice that amount, and China invests almost four times our rate. Roughly 9 percent of their GDP goes to infrastructure. So in terms of our own needs, we are falling behind. Internationally, other countries are doing a lot better than we are.

Equally important is that we are in the midst of the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. If you look at those people who have given up looking for work, those people who are working part time or want to work full time, real unemployment in this country is not just the official 8.2 percent, it is closer to 15 percent. And what economists tell us is that if we are serious about creating jobs, investing in infrastructure is probably the best way to do that. It is the easiest way to create meaningful, decent-paying jobs. For every \$1 billion of Federal funds spent, we can create or maintain nearly 35,000 jobs. Given the economic crisis we face, that is exactly what we should be doing.

In addition to preserving more than 1.8 million jobs, the legislation we are dealing with today, which is being presented by Senators BOXER and INHOFE, will create up to 1 million new jobs by expanding the TIFIA Program—a measure championed by Chairperson BOXER. This is an extremely important issue. It is important for our productivity because when you have a crumbling infrastructure, productivity suffers. It is important in terms of international competition. It is important in terms of job creation. It is important in order to provide a basic need for millions of Americans.

People do not want to drive on roads which are falling apart, that have huge potholes. People want to make sure when they go over a bridge, that bridge will not collapse. People want to make sure we have a strong rail system, not a rail system which, in fact, is far be-

hind those of Europe, Japan, and China.

This bill, while modest in terms of our needs, is a step forward. It is a bipartisan bill. I hope we can get to it and pass it as quickly as possible because the infrastructure needs of this country are great, and they must be addressed.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

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

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

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

#### SENATE YOUTH PROGRAM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the achievements of the U.S. Senate Youth Program, USSYP, an organization that has molded some of our Nation's brightest students to become the next generation of public servants.

This year marks 50 years of a commitment to educate and nurture talented young leaders interested in serving their communities. The USSYP hails from a strong family that valued bipartisanship and democratic lawmaking. William Randolph Hearst's sons, George R. Hearst and Randolph A. Hearst, envisioned this program and brought it to life with the collaboration of then-Senators Tom Kuchel, R-CA, Mike Mansfield, D-MT, Everett Dirksen, R-Ill., and Hubert Humphrey, D-MN.

The USSYP was created by S. Res. 324 in 1962 "to increase young Americans' understanding of the interrelationships of the three branches of government, the caliber and responsibilities of federally elected and appointed officials, and the vital importance of democratic decision making not only for America but for people around the world."

I would also like to commend the State departments of education across the country that select the outstanding students each year and the Department of Defense, which provides competitively selected military officers from every service branch to serve as guides and mentors to the students during the program. The Hearst Foundations have continued to administer and fund the program since inception, including college scholarships for each student given with the encouragement