

their lives as uncomplicated by government as possible. Time and time again, however, we have seen ObamaCare doing the very opposite.

Across my district, hourly employees are seeing cutbacks in their workweeks. Multiple employers are weighing the costs of offering health coverage to their employees. I have received countless complaints from folks whose insurance was canceled or whose premiums increased.

It is offensive that the White House dismisses these experiences as “anecdotal.” The people in my district do not consider their lives, their businesses, and their health care to be anecdotal. Delays and exemptions have proven that this law is flawed and unworkable.

ObamaCare has got to go and be replaced by patient-centered health care reform.

SUPPORT FOR UNDERAGE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

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

Mr. McNERNEY. Madam Speaker, the current surge of children seeking entrance to the United States and the protection of our laws is a humanitarian challenge that we cannot ignore. The reasons for this surge are complex, ranging from a misunderstanding of the 2008 law signed by President Bush to discourage human trafficking to the consequences of our drug wars.

Our focus should be the interests of the children. Any person in this country is assured due process and the protection of our laws. Shortcutting these protections would be a tragedy and a crime. Each case must be decided on an individual basis, taking the child's best interest into account. Sending children back to be likely victims of murder or other crimes would be morally unacceptable and would cause new waves of refugees.

As in the aftermath of World War II when the United States helped rebuild Europe, taking the moral and humanitarian road will benefit us in the long run, whether this means finding homes for these children in the United States or helping their countries of origin develop the infrastructure to receive them back. This will create safe, friendly, and stable neighbors.

I urge Americans to support the humanitarian road that will benefit the children and our country.

IRAQ

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

Mr. LANGEVIN. Madam Speaker, for a decade, the United States, the international community, and the Iraqi people sacrificed immeasurably in support of the Iraqi people and their future.

Generations of Americans and Iraqis bear the indelible marks of this conflict. Unfortunately, the gains wrought at such cost are now jeopardized by the shortsightedness and malfeasance of Iraq's political leaders.

To survive, Iraq needs a government that is inclusive and representative. And if we are to support Iraq militarily or in any other way, our Nation must know that we are supporting such a government, a condition that I do not believe the Maliki regime meets.

Moreover, if the U.S. is to assist Iraq beyond current efforts, the President must seek a new Authorization for the Use of Military Force from Congress. I believe that authorization and that debate is absolutely essential, and I am concerned about the slippery slope we are going down.

We must not become further embroiled in another Iraq conflict without both a thorough debate and a legitimate partner in the Iraqi Government.

OUR FAILING INFRASTRUCTURE

(Mr. YARMUTH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. YARMUTH. Madam Speaker, Republicans talk a lot about the need for the Federal Government to provide businesses with certainty so they can plan for the future. I agree with them. So why do they continue to block a long-range plan to fix our crumbling roads and bridges?

Across the country, one of every nine bridges is structurally deficient, and the American Society of Civil Engineers recently gave our national infrastructure a grade of D-plus. In my district alone, 129 bridges have been deemed functionally obsolete, and 65 are structurally deficient. Every American who drives a car, rides a train, or crosses a bridge knows we need to act.

Our national infrastructure was once the envy of the world. In a lot of communities today, it is an embarrassment. A strong, long-term investment in infrastructure provides States, cities, and businesses the certainty they need for the future. It will keep Americans safe and help commerce move more efficiently, and it will put tens of thousands of workers back on the job.

Madam Speaker, we should take this opportunity to create jobs and certainty for a change and enact a multiyear transportation bill.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on the motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record vote on the postponed question will be taken later.

PERMANENT INTERNET TAX FREEDOM ACT

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3086) to permanently extend the Internet Tax Freedom Act.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3086

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act”.

SEC. 2. PERMANENT MORATORIUM ON INTERNET ACCESS TAXES AND MULTIPLE AND DISCRIMINATORY TAXES ON ELECTRONIC COMMERCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1101(a) of the Internet Tax Freedom Act (47 U.S.C. 151 note) is amended by striking “during the period beginning November 1, 2003, and ending November 1, 2014”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to taxes imposed after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on H.R. 3086, currently under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The clock is ticking down on a key law that protects Internet freedom. On November 1, 2014, a temporary moratorium on State taxation of Internet access will expire.

In 1998, Congress temporarily banned State and local governments from newly taxing Internet access or placing multiple or discriminatory taxes on Internet commerce. With minor modifications, this ban was extended three times with enormous bipartisan support. The most recent extension passed in 2007.

If the moratorium is not renewed, the potential tax burden on consumers will be substantial. The average tax rate on communications services in 2007 was 13.5 percent, more than twice the average rate on all other goods and services. To make matters worse, this tax is regressive. Low-income households pay 10 times as much in communications taxes as high-income households as a share of income.

The Permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act converts the moratorium into a permanent ban on which consumers, innovators, and investors can permanently rely by simply striking the 2014

end date. This legislation prevents a surprise tax hike on Americans' critical services this fall. It also maintains unfettered access to one of the most unique gateways to knowledge and engines of self-improvement in all of human history.

This is not an exaggeration. During the 2007 renewal of the moratorium, the Judiciary Committee heard testimony that more than 75 percent of the remarkable productivity growth that increased jobs and income between 1995 and 2007 was due to investments in telecommunications networks technology and the information transported across them.

Everyone in Silicon Valley knows Max Levchin's story. He came to America from the Soviet Union at age 16. His family had \$300 in its pocket, and he learned English by watching an old TV set he hauled out of a dumpster and repaired. Ten years later, he sold PayPal, the well known Internet payments platform he cofounded, for \$1.5 billion.

That is the greatness of the Internet. It is a liberating technology that is a vast meritocracy. It does not care how you look or where you come from. It offers opportunity to anyone willing to invest time and effort. That is precisely why Congress has worked acidulously for 16 years to keep Internet access tax-free. Now we must act again once and for all.

The Permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act has 228 cosponsors. The Judiciary Committee reported it favorably by a vote of 30-4. Nevertheless, small pockets of resistance remain. They argue that the Internet is no longer a fledgling technology in need of protection. But it is precisely the ubiquity of the Internet that counsels for a permanent extension. It has become an indispensable gateway to scientific, educational, and economic opportunities. It is the platform that turned Max Levchin from an impoverished immigrant into a billionaire. The case for permanent tax-free access to this gateway technology is stronger today than it ever has been.

Opponents also claim that this legislation will lower State revenues. Seven States currently enjoy an exemption from the moratorium. This legislation lets these grandfather clauses expire. But these grandfathered States had no reasonable expectation of maintaining their special status. The original moratorium included a grandfather clause to give States that were then taxing Internet access some time to transition to other sources of revenue. Some discontinued taxing Internet access in support of a national broadband policy. For those that still haven't, it has been 16 years, time enough to change their tax codes. If the revenue grandfathered States now reap is truly essential, it should be straightforward for the State to recoup it through a different form of taxation.

It is important to note that the Permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act does

not address the issue of State taxes on remote sales made over the Internet. It merely prevents Internet access taxes and unfair multiple or discriminatory taxes on e-commerce, whether inside the taxing State or without.

I would like to specifically thank Mr. CHABOT, Ms. ESHOO, Subcommittee Chairman BACHUS, and Subcommittee Ranking Member COHEN for their work on and support of this legislation.

This bipartisan legislation is about giving every American unfettered access to the Internet, which is the modern gateway to the American Dream. I urge all of my colleagues to support it. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Internet Tax Freedom Act, enacted in 1998, established a temporary moratorium on multiple and discriminatory taxation of the Internet as well as new taxes on Internet access. This moratorium is due to expire on November 1 of this year.

□ 1245

Since 1998, Congress has extended the moratorium on three occasions. Unfortunately, however, H.R. 3086, the Permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act, responds to the impending expiration of the moratorium by making it permanent and ending the act's grandfather protections for States that impose such taxes prior to the act's enactment date.

The approach taken in H.R. 3086 is problematic for a number of reasons. First, Congress, instead of supporting this seriously flawed legislation, should really be focusing on meaningful ways to help State and local governments, taxpayers, and local retailers. The House can do that by addressing the remote sales tax issue.

In addition to extending the expiring moratorium on a temporary basis, the House should take up and send to the Senate legislation such as the Marketplace Fairness Act, which was mentioned earlier today on the floor of the House by the distinguished gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH). That bill incentivizes remote sellers to collect and remit sales taxes as well as require States to simplify several procedures that would benefit retailers. Such legislation would enable States and local governments to collect the over \$23 billion in estimated uncollected sales tax each year.

The measure would also help level the playing field for local retailers—who must collect sales taxes—when they compete with out-of-State businesses that do not collect these taxes. Retail competitors should be able to compete fairly with their Internet counterparts at least with respect to sales tax policy. The House should do its part and adjust the remote sales tax disparity before the end of this Congress.

In addition, this legislation will severely impact the immediate revenues

for the grandfather-protected States and all States progressively in the long term. The Congressional Budget Office, for example, estimates that this bill will cost certain States "several hundred million dollars annually" in lost revenues.

Indeed, the Federation of Tax Administrators estimates that the bill will cause the grandfather-protected States to lose at least \$500 million in lost revenue annually. These States include Texas, which would lose \$350 million a year in revenue; Wisconsin, which would lose about \$127 million per year; Ohio, which would lose about \$65 million per year; and South Dakota, which would lose about \$13 million per year.

Further, this bill would become effective during the mid-cycle for the grandfather-protected States. Because these States have to balance their State budgets, they will need to cut spending or raise taxes to balance their budgets.

Should this become law, State and local governments will have to choose whether they will cut essential government services—such as educating our children, maintaining needed transportation infrastructure, and providing essential public health and safety services—or shift the tax burden onto other taxpayers through increased property, income, and/or sales taxes.

Meanwhile, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities estimates that the permanent moratorium will deny the non-grandfathered States almost \$6.5 billion in potential State and local sales tax revenues each year in perpetuity. H.R. 3086 will burden taxpayers and services while excluding an entire industry from paying their fair share of taxes.

Finally, the bill ignores the fundamental nature of the Internet. The original moratorium was intentionally made temporary to ensure that Congress, industry, and State and local governments would be able to monitor the issue and make adjustments where necessary to accommodate new technologies and market realities.

The act was intended as a temporary measure to assist and nurture the fledgling Internet that back in 1998 was still in its commercial infancy. Yet this bill is oblivious to the significantly changed environment of today's Internet.

The bill's supporters continue to believe that the Internet still is in need of extraordinary protection in the form of exemption from all State taxation. But the Internet of 2014 is not the same as its 1998 predecessor. Today's Internet is considerably different in terms of both the types of accessibility and the accompanying technology.

The Internet then was accessed primarily a slow, unreliable dial-up service. But now technology has provided many types of methods to access the Internet, and we can anticipate that

the Internet and its attendant technology will continue to evolve. By permanently extending the tax moratorium, however, Congress severely limits its ability to revisit it and to make any necessary adjustments.

Simply put, a permanent moratorium is unwise, and so I urge my colleagues to think about this carefully and oppose H.R. 3086.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, at this time, it is my pleasure to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT), a member of the Judiciary Committee.

Mr. CHABOT. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) for his leadership on this bill.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3086, a bill that would make permanent the Internet Tax Freedom Act, which was passed a number of years ago, around the time when I came to Congress the first time.

The Internet is an essential part of our everyday lives. Americans use it to run small businesses, to do research, apply for jobs, listen to music, communicate with friends and family, check the weather and traffic, and a whole bunch of things. It is really a part of virtually all Americans' lives nowadays.

Madam Speaker, since 1998, Congress has made sure that access to the Internet remains tax-free. Unfortunately, this protection expires in November, as has been mentioned, at which point taxes will go up on every American who wants to get online.

Now is the time to make this policy of having access to the Internet free of taxes permanent. Now is the time to protect Internet access.

Madam Speaker, the Internet is an essential component of our economy. It drives innovation, job creation, and has resulted in a higher standard of living for virtually every American. The bill before us today provides certainty to Americans by making the current law of the land permanent and protecting access to the Internet from new taxes.

Madam Speaker, there is common ground in this Chamber today. We all agree that the Internet is an essential part of our lives and an incredibly powerful tool for communication, education, and job creation. Let's not make accessing the Internet more costly and more difficult.

Madam Speaker, the Permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act protects all Americans' access to the Internet from new taxes, and I urge my colleagues to support this important bill.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased now to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California, Ms. ZOE LOFGREN, a senior member of the Judiciary Committee.

Ms. LOFGREN. Madam Speaker, after nearly two decades, it does make sense to make this moratorium permanent. The moratorium is one of the

reasons for the huge growth in the digital economy. The Internet wouldn't be what it is today without affordable Internet access. And, by the way, this tax relief is not to companies. It is to individuals who access the Internet.

Madam Speaker, I applaud the Judiciary Committee for ensuring that the moratorium is made permanent before it expires. But the work on discriminatory taxes is not done. Wireless access to the Internet is still vulnerable to discriminatory taxation. The average tax is 17.2 percent—it goes as high as 25 percent in some States—and a disproportionate number of low-income Americans access the Internet only through wireless devices.

We have the Wireless Tax Fairness Act that I introduced. It has 220 cosponsors. So, in addition to voting for this moratorium on Internet taxation, I would encourage my colleagues to ask for a vote on the Wireless Tax Fairness Act that, after all, is sponsored by a majority of this House.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from California and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) for their leadership on this issue.

Now I would like to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUCSHON) for his statement and thank him for his leadership on this issue as well.

Mr. BUCSHON. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3086, the Permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act. I believe that this permanent extension is necessary to ensure the Internet remains accessible for all Americans.

Madam Speaker, the Internet economy is growing and changing every day, and this pro-growth legislation will support the vibrant online marketplace of goods and ideas by preventing State and local tax policies from creating barriers to access.

Americans use the Internet every day to communicate, to work, and to get an education. They shouldn't have to pay an unnecessary and unfair tax to do so.

Madam Speaker, I thank Chairman GOODLATTE for his work on this important bipartisan bill. I urge all my colleagues to vote "yes."

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure now to yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California, Ms. JUDY CHU, a distinguished member of the House Judiciary Committee.

Ms. CHU. Madam Speaker, I rise to speak in opposition to H.R. 3086 in its current form.

As a former member of the Board of Equalization, which is California's elected statewide tax board, and as a member of the Judiciary Committee, I support a temporary—not a permanent—extension of the current moratorium.

Madam Speaker, when the Internet was in its infancy, Congress rightfully put the moratorium in place to outlaw any burdensome tax regulations on Internet access. The Internet has

grown tremendously since then, and it will undoubtedly evolve over time. As it evolves, Congress should be called upon to revisit these issues. But I believe that a permanent moratorium would make reexamination of technology and market realities very difficult in the future.

A permanent moratorium would impede a State or local government's ability to make taxing decisions that are right for them. This is the message I have heard from States, counties, and cities. Take, for example, the city of Pasadena, which is the largest city in my district. Pasadena does not have any plans to impose taxes and fees on Internet access. However, it has concerns with a permanent extension that could shut the doors years down the line.

In fact, Madam Speaker, the National League of Cities, the League of California Cities, and the California State Association of Counties all oppose this bill. They are opposing it because they see a dramatic decline of sales tax revenue due to the increase in online sales that are not taxed, and that is why I also support the Marketplace Fairness Act. It would require large businesses to collect online sales tax.

I can tell you that this makes a dramatic difference in whether local government has the funds to fill the potholes and clean the streets. Since enacting its remote sellers sales tax law, my home State of California brought in \$260 million in its first year of collection. This is an improvement, but the potential for future growth is even greater, with a little over \$1 billion of use taxes still to be collected from remote sales in California alone.

□ 1300

With this act, we can stop the closing of businesses on Main Street and have a fighting chance to keep the jobs that they provide our communities. Keeping the Internet tax moratorium temporary helps in this fight. A short-term moratorium strikes the right balance between respecting the rights of local taxing authority and the ability for the Internet to grow.

Congress must reserve the flexibility to examine the Internet Tax Freedom Act from time to time. That is why I urge a "no" vote on this bill.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, at this time, it is my pleasure to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS), a member of the Judiciary Committee and a leader on technology issues.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of H.R. 3086, the Permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act, because I support ensuring that Internet access remains free from predatory taxes imposed by State and local governments looking to fill their coffers at the expense of their residents.

I think we just saw why this bill is needed because there are two different

philosophies. Especially for those who support this legislation, this is an area where we want to continue to have the Internet free, especially as the gentlelady from California (Ms. LOFGREN) said, that this goes to the user, and I think that is one thing that we need to understand here.

This legislation ensures that no person is discouraged from accessing the Internet and experiencing its transformative power. The Internet is a tool for democracy and education. It is an outlet for free expression and the megaphone for those who were previously ignored. It connects individuals and is a means for creative entrepreneurship.

The Internet allows for all boundaries to be transcended—cultural religious, geographical, and lingual. Our economy, the expressions of our freedom, and our role as a beacon of hope and democracy are all enhanced by free and open access to the Internet.

I want to applaud the work of the chairman in ensuring this Congress is doing everything in its power to promote an open Internet that can be accessed without predatory taxes and fees.

Again, this is about the people that we represent, moms and dads who have the dream of a better America where they are making it for their kids and not being imposed upon by government simply looking to fill their coffers at the expense of citizens.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ESHOO).

Ms. ESHOO. Madam Speaker, I thank the distinguished ranking member of the Judiciary Committee and my friend for yielding this time to me.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support today of this legislation, the Permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act. This is a bill that has been stated before that will permanently eliminate any barriers created by the taxation of Internet access.

The current tax moratorium is going to expire shortly on November 1, which would then open the doors to taxation on Internet access. I think it is very important to make this very clear. This really protects consumers because the taxation would fall to them and their access to the Internet.

This issue should not be confused with the issue of sales taxes collected by jurisdictions and the discrepancies between Main Street and what is purchased on the Internet. That is not what this issue is about. This is clearly, I think, a consumer issue.

Now, whether for communication, commerce, business, education, research, the Internet is an integral part of the everyday lives of the American people and around the world as well, so we need to encourage its usage. We need to protect that usage, and I think we need to do everything we can to ensure that the access to the Internet is universal.

This legislation has widespread support in the House. It has been my

pleasure to work with Chairman GOODLATTE as the Democratic lead on this effort. It has 228 bipartisan cosponsors in the House—I think that is the most eloquent statement about it—and there are 51 bipartisan cosponsors in the Senate. It has strong support of the communications, Internet, and e-commerce communities.

I think this is an affordability issue. It is a consumer issue. It is sensible. It is bipartisan, and I believe that it deserves the full support of the House.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ESHOO) for her leadership on this issue.

Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FARENTHOLD), a member of the Judiciary Committee.

Mr. FARENTHOLD. Madam Speaker, I am here to speak in strong support of Internet tax freedom. I am a believer in the power of the Internet. It means a lot for America. It means a lot for the world.

Because of our commitment to keeping Internet access largely unencumbered by taxes and government control, we have created something really cool—a dynamic market for goods and services and, most importantly, a marketplace for ideas.

Our rights to freedom of speech and freedom of association have grown as the Web opens new outlets for expression in advocacy. Whether it is a group of citizens organizing to petition the government for a redress of their grievances or somebody looking for the love of their life on an Internet dating site, the Internet is there, but we cannot get comfortable.

We cannot forget that the power to tax—and might I add the power to overregulate—is the power to destroy. That is why I am up here supporting the Permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act, and I thank Chairman GOODLATTE and our numerous cosponsors on both sides of the aisle. This is good for America and good for the world.

Please join me in voting “yea.”

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, at this time, it is my pleasure to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON).

Mr. BARTON. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia, the full committee chairman, and I would like to enter into a little bit of a colloquy.

I am an original cosponsor. I certainly want to prevent taxation of the Internet, but as you know, I represent one of the 36 districts in Texas, and in my district, my largest city is the city of Arlington, and they currently collect approximately \$1 million a year in revenue from connection fees to the Internet in their city limits, and under this bill, that would be prohibited.

I had been led to believe that we were going to have the same grandfather provision that we have had for the last

16 years. Apparently, that is not the case.

Could the chairman enlighten me why we are not grandfathering existing local collection fees, and what might be done in conjunction with the other body if and when this goes to conference?

I yield to the chairman.

Mr. GOODLATTE. First of all, I thank the gentleman for his question, and I and others have been clear that we think these grandfather clauses should expire. When they first were adopted 16 years ago, it was with the intention that they be phased out. Of course, they have had 16 years, and we would like to have them do that.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself an additional 30 seconds.

Our goal is to have a clean, permanent moratorium signed into law as promptly as possible. If the gentleman from Texas can engineer a phaseout consistent with that goal, I am certainly willing to work with him in that objective.

Mr. BARTON. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GOODLATTE. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. BARTON. If the gentleman will allow me to be part of the process and inform me at such a time that it would be possible to offer an amendment or to work with you and the other body, I would certainly be more than willing to do that.

Mr. GOODLATTE. As this measure is considered in the Senate and then in conference between the House and Senate, we would look forward to working with you.

Mr. BARTON. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, let me thank the ranking member and the chairman of the full committee. We seek opportunities on the Judiciary Committee to compromise and work together. This legislation would have been an excellent opportunity to be able to work together.

I appreciate the position of my chairman, but I know that Mr. CONYERS and myself worked on a compromise that I think and hope that, as we ultimately watch this bill make its way through the process, that we will be able to draw upon the Conyers-Jackson Lee compromise that makes this Internet Tax Freedom Act extended for a certain period of time.

We understand that there are frustrations on all sides. This bill would make permanent the Internet Tax Freedom Act, which imposes a moratorium on taxing Internet services, but as written would delete the existing grandfather clause which has been in place since the original passage of the bill in 1998 that allowed a number of States with unique circumstances, at the State and

local level, to impose tax on Internet access services.

Now, we can suggest that the present bill is a laissez-faire bill. Let me say that there is another principle of states' rights, and I have often heard it from my friends on the other side of the aisle. When it is for good, we should look at it as a reasoned answer to the uniqueness of the 50 States.

The Conyers-Jackson Lee amendment preserves the grandfather clause, so that Texas and other States could raise this very valuable revenue, but more importantly, it retains the moratorium for 4 years for us to be able to address this question in a fair manner. We offered this in the full committee, and there are many who support this compromise beyond the States that would be impacted.

A letter that I have received from the director of Citizens for Tax Justice writes in opposition to making permanent the Federal law—and I will include the letter for the RECORD—by banning State and local governments from subjecting Internet access to the same taxes they impose on other goods and services.

This letter goes on to say that it was decided that this infant industry needed special protection from taxes. Now, we are beyond that, but we are harming States.

I just want to use, as an example, the State of Texas will lose \$280 million; cities will lose \$51 million; transit, \$18 million; special districts, \$4 million; a total of \$358 million. When we are putting more burdens on States, we need to not remove an opportunity where they can raise revenue innocently and in good conscience.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. CONYERS. I yield an additional 15 seconds to the gentlelady.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Why are we barring our States from doing their good due diligence, providing resources—needed resources—for schools and infrastructure and health care?

So I am well aware of the arguments on the other side, but listen to our arguments. We are not stopping the taxation issue; we are putting a moratorium for 4 years, so that we can reassess it.

I ask my colleagues to consider that as they consider this legislation. I rise in opposition to this legislation.

Madam Speaker, the bill would make permanent the Internet Tax Freedom Act, which imposes a moratorium on taxing Internet services, but, as written, would delete the existing grandfather clause that has been in place since the original passage of the bill in 1998 that has allowed Texas at the state and local level to impose tax on Internet access services.

At the markup in the Judiciary Committee, Ranking Member CONYERS and I offered an amendment to extend the moratorium and the grandfather protections for four years. Unfortunately it failed on a primarily party line vote in the Committee.

Now, the authors of this bill would deem to tell Texas what it can do or not do regarding

its tax policy. At the heart of the notion of federalism is the right of states to legislate matters within their own jurisdiction.

The lines of authority between states and the federal government are, to a significant extent, defined by the United States Constitution and relevant case law.

The Constitution does, however, provide certain specific limitations on that power. In this instance, states would be prohibited from taxing Internet access.

H.R. 3086 would make the moratorium permanent but it would not extend the grandfather protections on which seven states, including Texas, still rely on.

The Conyers-Jackson Lee amendment preserved this “grandfather clause” so that Texas could continue to raise this very valuable revenue.

And the Conyers-Jackson Lee amendment retained the moratorium on taxation for four years instead of making it permanent.

Unfortunately, for Texas, this legislation would delete the existing grandfather clause that has been in place since the original passage of the bill in 1998 that has allowed Texas at the state and local level to impose tax on Internet access services.

The original intent of ITFA in 1998 was to encourage development of the Internet, which at the time was a new technology. The Internet is no longer an infantile industry.

Madam Speaker, as a practical matter this justification is no longer applicable given the substantial advancements in technology that have occurred since 1998.

Bundling non-Internet based services with Internet services creates a loophole for industry to avoid taxes altogether.

Again, the Conyers-Jackson Lee amendment would have preserved this “grandfather clause” so that the state can continue to raise this very valuable revenue. As written the bill raises significant federalism concerns and essentially tells Texas what to do—nobody messes with Texas.

I urge my colleagues to vote for fairness and judicial economy by opposing this legislation in its current form.

H.R. 3086: EFFECT ON TEXAS

State: \$280 million
City: 51 million
Transit: 18 million
County: 5 million
Special districts: 4 million
Total: \$358 million (per year)

JULY 14, 2014.

Hon. SHEILA JACKSON LEE,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE JACKSON LEE: Citizens for Tax Justice writes in opposition to making permanent the federal law banning state and local governments from subjecting Internet access to the same taxes that they impose on other goods and services. This ban was first enacted with the “Internet Tax Freedom Act” (ITFA) in 1998 and extended several times since then.

Both the “Permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act” (H.R. 3086) and “Internet Tax Freedom Forever Act” (S. 1431) would make this ban permanent, thereby forever treating the Internet differently from other goods and services by barring state and local governments from deciding for themselves whether or not to tax it.

In 1998 Congress decided that the internet was an “infant industry” needing special protection from the taxes that state and

local governments impose on other goods and services. Today, the infant of 1998 has the keys to the American economy, yet lawmakers are still coddling it by proposing to make the tax ban permanent.

Congress should allow the ban to expire as scheduled on November 1.

Sincerely,

ROBERT S. MCINTYRE,
Director, Citizens for Tax Justice.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES, NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES, U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS, INTERNATIONAL CITY/COUNTY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION, GOVERNMENT FINANCE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS OFFICERS AND ADVISORS,

June 17, 2014.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE JACKSON LEE: On behalf of local governments across the nation, our organizations want to express our opposition to H.R. 3086, the “Permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act (ITFA).” Instead, as the expiration date for the current moratorium on taxing Internet access approaches, and Congress considers changes to ITFA, our organizations recommend a shorter-term extension of ITFA, as a sensible solution that respects state and local taxing authority. In addition, any extension must maintain both the long-standing grandfather provisions that preserve existing state and local revenues, as well as certain general business taxes that were not intended to be part of the moratorium.

Over the next several years, most of the services known as telecommunications and cable services will transition to broadband. As a result, the scope of the services that ITFA shields from state and local taxation will greatly expand, even if ITFA's language remains unchanged. In light of this substantial expansion and the need to protect the fiscal strength of state and local governments, we encourage you to support a temporary extension of ITFA, rather than making it permanent, as H.R. 3086 would do. That would allow time to assess more fully (1) the transition from telecommunications and cable services to ITFA-protected broadband services; (2) its impact on state and local governments' tax bases and revenues; and (3) its impact on the relative tax obligations of industry sectors to which ITFA does not apply. A temporary extension of ITFA ensures that Congress has the opportunity to revisit the moratorium to correct any unintended consequences.

For these reasons, our organizations urge you to support a fair, short-term extension of the Internet tax moratorium. We look forward to assisting you and your staff in these efforts.

Sincerely,

MATTHEW D. CHASE,
Executive Director,
National Association
of Counties.

CLARENCE E. ANTHONY,
Executive Director,
National League of
Cities.

TOM COCHRAN,
Executive Director,
U.S. Conference of
Mayors.

ROBERT J. O'NEILL,
Executive Director,
International City/
County Management
Association.

JEFFREY L. ESSER,
Executive Director,
Government Finance
Officers Association.

STEPHEN TRAYLOR,
Executive Director,
National Association
of Telecommuni-
cations Officers and
Advisors.

[From the Hill, July 14, 2014]

CONGRESS POISED TO SLAM STATES ON
INTERNET ACCESS CHARGES
(By Michael Mazerov)

The House is slated to vote this week on a bill to permanently bar states from applying their normal sales taxes to the monthly charges that households and businesses pay companies like Comcast or Verizon Wireless for Internet access—potentially costing states roughly \$7 billion a year in potential revenue.

For starters, the bill would strip Hawaii, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Texas, and Wisconsin of at least \$500 million in annual state and local revenue from their existing taxes on these charges.

Beyond costing states the \$7 billion a year in potential revenue to support education, healthcare, roads, and other services, the bill would violate an understanding between Congress and the states dating back to the 1998 Internet Tax Freedom Act (ITFA): that any ban on applying sales taxes to Internet access charges would be temporary and not apply to existing access taxes.

Enacted when Internet commerce was still in its infancy, ITFA sought to balance Congress' desire to encourage development of the Internet against states' and localities' need to finance essential services. Thus, it imposed only a temporary "moratorium" on new taxes on Internet access and protected existing taxes through a "grandfather" clause.

Congressional extensions of ITFA in 2001, 2004, and 2007 maintained those two key features. This latest ITFA legislation, though, eliminates both—the first time Congress has seriously considered doing so.

Every state would feel the impact. The seven states with taxes would start losing revenues this year, forcing some to cut services or raise other taxes to keep their budgets balanced. The remaining states would continue to lose as much as \$6.5 billion in potential revenue each year from their inability to tax Internet access charges.

The forgone revenue would likely grow substantially over time as more people sign up for Internet access and current subscribers trade up to faster, more expensive, service.

The House bill would have other, unintended effects. Eliminating the grandfather, for example, would put at risk numerous other state and local taxes that Internet access providers pay on the things they buy in order to provide Internet service, such as fiber-optic cable, or gasoline for their vehicles. Almost all of these taxes existed before 1998, so the grandfather protects them from legal challenge. But if Congress eliminates the clause, Internet access providers could challenge these taxes in court as indirect taxes on access service and therefore voided by ITFA.

The bill's proponents argue that banning taxes on Internet access charges is necessary to close the "digital divide" between low- and high-income households. Keeping monthly Internet access as inexpensive as possible by exempting it from roughly \$2-\$4 in taxes will encourage low-income people to subscribe and service providers to extend broadband service to low-income neighborhoods, they claim.

But there's scant evidence to support this argument. Studies haven't found a significant difference, in either the share of house-

holds with broadband or the availability of broadband service, between states that tax access and those that don't. And numerous studies find that Internet access costs are a smaller cause of the "digital divide" than unfamiliarity with computers and the Internet and a belief that the Internet is irrelevant to the person's life.

In fact, a permanent ITFA would likely impede the goal of getting more people online—especially low-income people who don't have Internet at home. Many people first use the Internet in public schools, libraries, and community centers, all of which rely on state and local tax revenue. The less state and local revenue that such institutions receive, the less they could provide Internet service.

Some in Congress argue that states and localities should accept a permanent ITFA as part of a deal that would also include enactment of the Marketplace Fairness Act, which would empower states to require large Internet merchants to charge sales tax on all taxable sales. Any extension of the moratorium, however, must include the grandfather clause. Eliminating that clause would threaten to invalidate many existing taxes on Internet access providers, as noted earlier.

Congress' proper course would be to end, not extend, the ban on state and local taxation of Internet access. The Internet is no longer an infant industry needing protection from taxes that apply to other services for which Internet access is a close substitute. Cable television service is widely taxed, for example, but if someone decides to pay Verizon \$50 a month so that they can stream Netflix to their TV, ITFA bans the taxation of the access charge. This unequal treatment doesn't make sense.

Even if Congress wants to renew ITFA, surely the terms should be no more favorable than in 1998—a temporary exemption for taxes on access service, with pre-1998 taxes still grandfathered—and must include the Marketplace Fairness Act, which the Senate has passed with broad bipartisan support.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CHAFFETZ), who has been a steadfast proponent of Internet tax freedom.

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Madam Speaker, I thank Chairman GOODLATTE for bringing this piece of legislation forward, and I appreciate the bipartisan manner in which it is done.

The Internet is working. It is working. It is one of the great things about our economy. It is one of the great things that is happening in this country. It is creating jobs, and it is creating excitement with the younger generation. It is providing for innovation. We are leading the world in what we are doing.

Access is not necessarily available to everybody. We have people from inner cities to Indian reservations to rural communities to those who are just seeking to try to be part of this community and have access and get information and be informed and be educated and allowed to engage in commerce.

Since 1998, this has been the position of the United States of America, and if you look at the Internet, it truly is interstate commerce. We can be standing side by side, right next to each other, and you can send a tweet or a

Facebook message or an email, whatever sort of electronic communication, and it literally can zoom around the country—hopefully through Utah—and then back to the person standing right next to you.

□ 1315

But in order for all that to work, the magic of the Internet and all that to work, it needs to be unimpeded. It needs to keep those costs as low as possible to ensure the maximum amount of access so those in our communities who are still trying to get in there, from our seniors, the rural communities, again, to our inner cities.

The wisdom that happened in 1998 has been reaffirmed multiple times. Only two people in the history of this piece of legislation have ever voted against this piece of legislation. The majority of the House of Representatives are cosponsors on this piece of legislation that is before us today. So, I urge its passage.

There are some other pieces of legislation that I would like the body to look at. I think we do have to deal with the remote sales tax issues. I think there are transactions that happen remotely. I would like to see parity in that—another topic for another day, but something that needs to be addressed sooner rather than later.

The issue before us today is are we going to allow the freedom for Internet access to happen at the lowest cost possible without the government coming in and thinking, oh, this is another bucket of funds that we can just tax on. The consequence is we would have less people involved and engaged. Companies are going to take care of this, but individuals who are trying to access the Internet, we need to keep those costs as low as possible.

Think about your telephone bill. We don't want that to be lit up. You know how that is lit up with all these different taxes. We don't want the Internet to be lit up like a Christmas tree with all these different taxes. It is interstate commerce. It is the purview, I think, of the United States Congress. That is why this bill is so needed. That is why I proudly joined as a cosponsor and why I urge its passage today.

And again, I thank Chairman GOODLATTE and Members on both sides of this body for bringing this bill forward. I urge its passage.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to conclude by pointing out that we might be going in the wrong direction with this misguided legislation. It will devastate State revenues, especially those States currently protected by the grandfather clause, and force State governments to eliminate essential governmental programs and services and burden taxpayers.

Furthermore, 11 national organizations are concerned with the fiscal impact on our State and local governments: the National Governors Association, the National Association of

Counties, the National League of Cities, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and 15 other labor organizations: the AFL-CIO, AFSCME, the American Federation of Teachers, the UAW, SEIU. Fifteen national labor organizations and 11 national, local, and State government organizations all join with us who are urging my colleagues to reject this seriously flawed legislation.

Please join us in making sure that we, the people, prevail on this measure in the House of Representatives.

I yield back the balance of my time.

LIST OF OPPONENTS OF H.R. 3086

There is a long list of opponents of this bill. These opponents are concerned with the fiscal impact on our state and local governments. Opponents include such state and local groups as—the National Governors Association, the National Association of Counties, the National League of Cities, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the Federation of Tax Administrators, the League of California Cities, the California State Association of Counties, the International City/County Management Association, the Government Finance Officers Association, the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors, and the Multistate Tax Commission.

Also opposing this bill are labor groups such as—the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), the Communication Workers of America (CWA), the Department for Professional Employees (DPE), the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), the International Union of Police Associations (IUPA), the National Education Association (NEA), the Services Employees Union International (SEIU), the United Auto Workers (UAW), and the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW).

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, passing the permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act would increase access all across America for millions of Americans, especially lower-income Americans, increase growth and increase opportunity, increase jobs in this country.

Now is the time to act. A permanent ban on taxation of Internet access is crucial for protecting the future of our digital economy. If the ban on Internet access taxes is not renewed by November 1, the potential tax burden on Americans will be substantial. It is estimated that Internet access tax rates could be more than twice the average rate of all other goods and services. Low-income households could pay ten times as much as high-income households as a share of income.

The last thing that Americans need is another bill on their doorsteps. A tax on Internet access would burden millions of Americans who rely on the Internet to conduct business, communicate, educate, and live.

Over the past 14 years, Congress has extended ban after ban on States tax-

ing Internet access. The measures have been met with enormous bipartisan support. Only five “no” votes were cast in the history of these renewals in the House and the Senate.

As price rises, demand falls. If the ban lapses, State telecommunications taxes could take effect, and those rates are already too high. Former White House Chief Economist Austan Goolsbee estimated that a tax that increased the price of Internet access by 1 percent would reduce demand for Internet access by 2.75 percent.

The permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act merely prevents Internet access taxes and unfair multiple and discriminatory taxes on e-commerce. It does not tackle the issue of Internet sales taxes.

Madam Speaker, this is a great issue for the Congress to move forward on in a bipartisan fashion that will help to create jobs and economic growth and foster continued greater access of the Internet. After all, isn't that what we want? We want every American to have opportunity to access this in the most affordable way so that they can have the educational opportunities, the employment opportunities, the recreational opportunities, the social opportunities that are created by the Internet.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. DELBENE. Madam Speaker, several weeks ago, I joined my colleagues on the House Judiciary Committee in supporting the Permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act when it was reported out of committee by a vote of 30 to 4.

It is clear that there is broad bipartisan agreement that we should not allow the current moratorium on Internet access taxes to expire. While I joined my colleagues in moving this legislation forward to provide clarity and certainty in this area, I also have serious concerns that Congress has failed to resolve another critical issue related to state taxation and the Internet: e-fairness and the current exemption for state and local sales tax collection for online purchases.

Since the Internet Tax Freedom Act first passed in 1998, Congress has made far too little progress in developing a coherent policy that addresses the intersection of state taxation and the Internet. Aside from extending this tax moratorium three times since it first passed, Congress has yet to pass legislation like the Marketplace Fairness Act or similar legislation that would allow states to tax e-commerce sales at the same rate as sales from brick-and-mortar stores. Instead we have seen states attempting to set a patchwork of policies that simply doesn't work. A federal solution is needed from Congress.

In the meantime, adoption of the Internet has exploded since ITFA first passed in 1998, and today, 75 percent of American households subscribe to broadband Internet services, and hundreds of billions of dollars worth of commerce is done over the Internet annually. The Census Bureau recently announced that total e-commerce sales for 2013 were estimated to have increased nearly 17 percent (16.9 percent) from 2012, totaling \$263 billion in 2013.

Given the importance of the Internet to consumers and to economic growth, it is Congress's responsibility to determine a federal approach to e-fairness, and I am disappointed that we are simply looking at this bill in isolation without regard to the other issues related to Internet and taxation.

While I support an extension of the current moratorium on Internet access taxes, I believe we cannot move this legislation forward while also continuing to allow the Internet to serve as a sales tax loophole. The issue of e-fairness is a related issue that we must commit to tackling, and I know there is bipartisan support for doing so.

This is a critical jobs issue that I continue to hear about from small businesses in my district.

It is the role of Congress to ensure that our nation's tax policies and regulation don't unfairly burden one business model over the other. Yet, brick and mortar businesses can't fairly compete right now because states do not have the ability to efficiently collect the taxes owed from online purchases. Only Congress can fix this and I believe we must continue to move forward on legislation like the Marketplace Fairness Act.

I hope that House Leadership does not consider our work on Internet tax policy complete after voting today on the Permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act and I look forward to continuing to work with members on both sides of the aisle to work to find a solution to move forward on both ITFA and e-fairness legislation like the Marketplace Fairness Act before the end of this year.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3086, the Permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act (ITFA). I want to commend my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for bringing this legislation to the floor today.

H.R. 3086 which permanently extends the moratorium on Internet access taxes and prohibits discriminatory taxation of internet commerce has 228 bi-partisan cosponsors. Originally passed in 1998 and extended three times since with broad bi-partisan support. H.R. 3086 encourages the flow of commerce and information over the internet and improves our nation's ability to compete in the global economy.

The original intent of this law was to protect and nurture what once was a fledgling industry. Today, access to the internet has become the engine of our 21st century global economy. The internet is one the primary drivers of U.S. economic growth innovation and productivity and it is indispensable for finding jobs and accessing education and health care resources. Permanently extending the ITFA protects citizens from a fee to access this indispensable tool while continuing to encourage the growth of a key driver for American global competitiveness.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3086.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5021, HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION FUNDING ACT OF 2014

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 669 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 669

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 5021) to provide an extension of Federal-aid highway, highway safety, motor carrier safety, transit, and other programs funded out of the Highway Trust Fund, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means, modified by the amendments printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution, shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided among and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. For the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS), my friend, pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of the resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in support of this rule and the underlying bill. House Resolution 669 provides a closed rule, as is customary for bills that are reported by the Committee on Ways and Means, for H.R. 5021, the Highway and Transportation Funding Act of 2014.

On July 10, the Ways and Means Committee marked up H.R. 5021. The committee ordered the bill favorably reported by voice vote.

The bill is simple. It extends our transportation programs and our reforms enacted by MAP-21, and it pays for the extension without raising taxes on hardworking American taxpayers.

This extension is crucial. Prior to the expiration of MAP-21 later this fall, the highway trust fund is expected to encounter a funding shortfall. The Secretary of Transportation has warned that, as early as August, payments from the trust fund to the States will begin to be delayed.

Let's be clear: this bill is just an interim remedy for our current situation. It is not a solution to our transportation funding problem.

As a member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, I can testify to the work that Chairman SHUSTER and the committee are doing to provide a multiyear authorization bill. It is a deliberative, thoughtful process. The underlying bill advances that process.

The underlying bill proposes policies that have previously received bipartisan support. Further, these policies have previously also been embraced by the Senate.

The bill extends the surface transportation programs and funding through May 2015. It provides stability and certainty for States. It continues our investments in infrastructure. It staves off job losses at the height of the construction season. And it allows the process to move forward toward a long-term solution.

Some have suggested or proposed a short-term patch for just a few months. There are some who would like to see this just provide enough time to get through the election. A short-term extension would guarantee a crisis. Even worse, that manufactured crisis is easily avoidable.

Central Floridians are still trying to dig their way out of years of economic downturn. We are focusing on improving our families' financial situation, and certainly we don't need a downturn in construction—and especially infrastructure construction in the State of Florida and in my particular area, central Florida.

A short-term extension is, at best, feeble and, at worst, irresponsible. Washington should not do less when it can do better. Washington should not add to the list of crises of its own doing by passing a short-term patch when a longer-term answer is within reach.

The task at hand remains avoiding the expiration of the existing transportation authorization. The existing authorization is actually a good bill.

MAP-21 included significant reforms to cut out Federal red tape and bureaucracy. It streamlined the project delivery process. It reformed and consolidated programs. It improved safety. It ended the process of earmarks in transportation bills.

MAP-21 set deadlines for slow-moving projects. It set a new NEPA funding threshold and expedited projects that were destroyed by disaster.

MAP-21 consolidated more than 100 programs by nearly two-thirds. It eliminated dozens of ineffective programs and provided more resources and flexibility to States. It also

incentivized States to seek partners in the private sector to finance and operate infrastructure projects.

Further, MAP-21 passed the House by a strong bipartisan vote of 373-52, including the support of the gentleman from Colorado. It passed the Senate by an equally strong bipartisan vote of 74-19. The White House issued a statement that said they were pleased with the bill.

While we continue with a process that will lead to a multiyear authorization bill, there is no reason why we should not support an extension of MAP-21. Extending MAP-21 through next summer is simply an extension of another year of good transportation policy.

Once again, I rise in support of this rule and the potential this extension holds for producing a thoughtful process that results in a quality long-term authorization bill.

I encourage my colleagues to vote "yes" on the rule, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1330

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the customary time, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, today, we are considering the rule for H.R. 5021, the Highway and Transportation Funding Act of 2014. While this bill provides an extension of Federal highway programs, frankly, our Nation deserves a long-term solution to support our transportation infrastructure needs that will allow for a more effective and efficient use of resources through public-private partnerships and long-term contracts. In effect, by engaging in short-term legislating, we are actually raising the cost of infrastructure projects across the country, making it less efficient rather than more than efficient.

Unfortunately, this bill is a closed rule, which I do not support. It limits debate. It doesn't allow Democrats or Republicans to come up with ideas for amendments to improve the bill. That should be what this legislative body is all about.

I have friends on both sides of the aisle who have ideas to make this more efficient, to save taxpayers money, and to get more infrastructure bang for their buck, ideas like a national infrastructure bank, a bipartisan bill by my colleague, Mr. DELANEY, that would allow for lower-cost financing with locally driven infrastructure projects, at no taxpayer cost.

None of us are even allowed to discuss for not 10 minutes, not 1 minute, not a single moment, any amendments under this closed rule, and I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote "no" on this closed rule.

In 2012, Congress passed the Moving Ahead for Progress program that my colleague, Mr. WEBSTER, mentioned, which reauthorized Federal surface transportation programs and maintained the solvency of the highway