

defective products and quickly remove them from circulation.

The proposed rule under consideration would make substantial changes to the “Fast Track” program and could threaten the incentives for businesses to undertake voluntary recalls, as well as substantially increase the cost of completing the process. Most significantly, the proposed rule makes the corrective action plans in voluntary recall agreements legally binding, which could dramatically shift the incentive structure for businesses to report incidences of defective products. Making a plan legally binding will slow down the voluntary recall process, leaving consumers at risk for a longer period of time as the plans will first need to be subject to detailed review by legal counsel.

The proposed rule would also allow the CPSC to require the adoption of a compliance program as a component of corrective action plans. This requirement—if not properly calibrated—could introduce further delays in the voluntary recall process, even when a business has no history of recalls or violations. Thus, in the midst of working with the CPSC on the parameters of a voluntary recall agreement, a business might also have to negotiate the parameters of a compliance program and provide description of said program in the recall announcement.

While Section 214 of the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008 required the CPSC to establish requirements for mandatory recall notices, the statute bears no mention of establishing similar requirements for voluntary recalls. I understand that the CPSC bases its authority to establish guidelines from language in a House committee report, but I am not convinced that the proposed rule’s sweeping changes to the existing voluntary recall process is congruent with either the intent of the statute or the language in the committee report.

Existing regulations require companies initiating a voluntary recall to propose and implement a formal corrective action plan, but these plans were never intended to be legally binding. Part 1115.20 of title 16 of the Code of Federal Regulations describes a corrective action plan as “[a] document, signed by a subject firm, which sets forth the remedial action which the firm will voluntarily undertake to protect the public, but which has no legally binding effect.” In effect, the regulations expressly prohibited the Commission from making these agreements legally binding in order to encourage—not deter—businesses to recall defective products. The CPSC’s proposed rules may have the opposite of the intended effect—and, at the very least, could substantially delay the timely distribution of product safety information to the public.

Make no mistake: I have long been an advocate for strong regulations that protect public health, safety, and the environment. However, I also believe that we must regulate in a manner that is sensitive to the burdens placed on individuals and businesses. My opinion is that the CPSC’s proposed rule may go too far—and may have the unintended consequence of delaying the recall process and extending the period of time in which defective items remain in circulation.

I urge the Commission to take my comments into consideration. The proposed rule could have a widespread and indiscriminate effect on voluntary recalls, and I ask the Commission to do its due diligence in fully vetting the impacts on businesses across the country, particularly for those wishing to initiate a voluntary recall as a precautionary measure. For large businesses, who already employ legal counsel and compliance officers, these new requirements will

be substantial; for small businesses, they could be crippling.

Sincerely,

ANGUS S. KING, JR.,
United States Senator.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I also ask that Members of this Chamber recognize that the proposed rule change would slow a process meant to be conducted with speed and without red tape and would harm a system that ensures that consumer products sold in the U.S. are the safest in the world.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from New York is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Chairman, there is a contradiction with what the gentlewoman says because, on one hand, she doesn’t want government involved in localities, and on the other hand, she wants to tell localities how to act.

On the other hand, she doesn’t want us to tell the Consumer Product Safety Commission how to act, so it becomes very confusing. This is an issue we should leave to the discretion of the Consumer Product Safety Commission. This is not something we should be micromanaging the CPSC on.

Furthermore, it is a proposed rule, and the CPSC is simply reviewing comments at this stage, and that is important to note. They are simply reviewing comments at this stage. We in this body should let the process of issuing rules play out, as is required in law, instead of cherry-picking where and when we want to interfere.

This is simply not an area of over-regulation, since no regulation is yet in effect, so this amendment is unnecessary. I oppose the amendment, and I hope my colleagues will as well.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. CRENSHAW).

Mr. CRENSHAW. I think the gentlewoman has very well explained the amendment. We have a system that has been working well for 40 years, and so I don’t think we need to make any unnecessary changes, and so I urge Members to support her amendment.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Chairman, I thank the chairman.

I urge support of this amendment. The program in place at the CPSC has worked well. It is supported by both Republicans and Democrats. The process they are going through at CPSC is expending a tremendous amount of time and money.

Looking at setting up a system that would force these retailers into legal negotiations and settlements is not the way to address this.

The Fast Track program has been enormously successful. Former Chairman Brown worked during the Clinton administration—was appointed by President Clinton. They did a great job putting this program together. We

should leave it in place. I urge a “yes” vote.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Chairman, this agency is one of the better agencies. Every so often, we read about baby seats and blankets and all kinds of issues that affect our communities and our daily lives.

We should stop trying to attack it, as some people do. I just think that this is not a good amendment and that it should be defeated.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Tennessee will be postponed.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LAMALFA) having assumed the chair, Mr. WENSTRUP, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5016) making appropriations for financial services and general government for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material in the further consideration of H.R. 5016, and that I may include tabular materials on the same.

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

There was no objection.

INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS OF AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, it is good to be back here on the floor once again. Tonight, we want to carry on our long-running discussion about how to improve the American economy, how to create jobs here in this Nation and move us all forward, how to rebuild the middle class, how to make sure that every family has the opportunity

to earn a good living, buy a home if they want to, educate their kids, get health care, and enjoy the fruits of this great Nation.

We often talk about this in the context of Make It In America. This is our jobs agenda. This is the agenda about how to rebuild this Nation, and there are seven different parts to it: trade policy, which we are not talking about tonight; we will talk a little bit about taxes; energy, that is another day; labor; education; and research.

We are going to spend tonight talking about this issue, the infrastructure issue of this Nation.

Let's see, in California, it is right smack in the middle of commute time, 5:15. I am from California, and I know that my constituents in the Sacramento area on that great Interstate 80 are sitting there in a traffic jam.

□ 2015

What a surprise. Or maybe they are on the Caltrain returning from the San Francisco area and held up behind a freight train that is probably carrying bulk and crude oil to the refineries in the Bay Area. They are waiting and waiting and waiting, whether they are on the road or on the train or on the bus, waiting and waiting and waiting.

Folks, in case you didn't know it—and I know you did—we have got a transportation problem in America. We have got a very serious problem.

So as we talk about jobs, as we talk about our Make it in America agenda, we need to talk about infrastructure, we need to talk about transportation, because this is a big, big issue for America. It is an issue that affects every single one of us.

My district also has about, I don't know, 150 miles of Interstate 5. So as you travel from California and you head north, last winter or last year, you would get on Interstate 5, you would get past Seattle, and then you would come to a screeching halt. Why? Because the Interstate 5 bridge in Washington State, just as you got to the Canadian border, collapsed. Wow.

How could that happen in America? How could it be that our bridges on a major interstate connecting Canada, United States, and Mexico would collapse? Well, it is because we did not maintain that. It is because our transportation policies are the previous century's policies and they don't fit in this century.

So, all across America, you are going to see more of this. In a moment, I am going to turn to my colleague from New York (Mr. TONKO), and he will undoubtedly talk about the problem on that side.

It was a big day here in the Congress, because today we did what we do so very well: we kicked the can down the road. We have a major transportation crisis. This isn't the "bridge to nowhere," but this is where we are headed right now. We are headed for a transportation crisis, because in about 3 weeks, maybe 4 weeks, the transpor-

tation funds are going to run out of money.

So, in an effort to deal with this problem. The United States Congress, led by our Republican leadership, did what it has done for the last 3½ years, and that is taken their can and kicked it down the road. We passed a stopgap temporary transportation funding bill that will provide us with another 10 months of funding so that the rest of the Nation's transportation systems—the State governments, the local governments, the cities, and even the Federal Government—will be perfectly unsure what the game plan is for the future years.

How they will plan, nobody knows, because they don't know what to expect from the Federal Government in terms of funding beyond the next 10 months, which is precisely where we are today. So, doing our very best, the repeated process of kicking the can down the road, we did it once again. Now, I will admit, I voted for it. We had no options, unless we wanted to lose several tens of thousands of jobs.

This is what my State government gave to me. If we fall off the bridge and don't fund transportation, here is what will happen to California: 73,572 jobs will be jeopardized; 5,692 active highway and transit projects will come to a screeching stop, which is pretty much what the commuters are doing right now on Interstate 80 between Sacramento and Davis, where it is my district; and California has 172,201 miles of public roads that will continue to be in very, very poor condition.

So, given the options that our Republican leadership has presented to us—and, by the way, we don't do anything that they don't allow us to do—they gave us the opportunity to kick the can down the road. Okay, better than nothing, but not the solution.

I would like to now turn to my colleague from the State of New York to talk about this system from your area, and then I would like to go back to what we should be doing, what we must be doing, which is to put in place a 4-year transportation program that actually solves our transportation and infrastructure problems, the Grow America Act.

What is the view from the east coast? Any better than the west coast?

PAUL TONKO, my colleague, I yield to you.

Mr. TONKO. Thank you, Representative GARAMENDI.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will suspend.

Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for half the remaining time until 10 p.m. as the designee of the minority leader.

The gentleman from New York is recognized.

Mr. TONKO. I believe that is 53 minutes, Mr. Speaker?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is correct.

Mr. TONKO. Thank you.

Representative GARAMENDI, let me, once again, thank you for leading us in this hour of discussion, 53 minutes worth of discussion, that focuses on the value added, the importance of investment in transportation projects.

Back to our humble beginnings as a Nation, we were able to cite the relevance of having investments made in transportation. Whether it was to address public safety, whether it was to address the needs of commerce, or to grow our Nation, transportation investments have always provided that lucrative dividend that enables us to be just that much stronger as a Nation, and certainly to build our competitiveness to the ultimate.

That is the wisdom here that comes with an associated investment in transportation. Now, we have throughout our history tremendously sound ideas of how we work together as a Nation with a vision, with a sense of purpose, that enabled us to move forward, whether that was investing in an Erie Canal that gave birth to a necklace of communities called "mill towns" that enabled people to tether their American Dream in those given locations, as they were to find life anew here in their new country, or whether it was the Transcontinental Railroad.

There was an investment, there was a plan, there was a vision shared by this Nation where we chose to go forward and invest those dollars so as to enable us to connect as a Nation, enable us to, again, sharpen the edge, the competitive edge of this country. Or perhaps it was an interstate highway system that found President Eisenhower working with Democrats and Republicans in Congress to put together this strategy, to have a better way to allow us as States, individual States, to, again, connect as a Nation.

So, we have been, or should be at least, inspired by these chapters of our history that showed that when we had this vision, when we executed this plan, when we dug deep to make the investment, and when we were bold in our initiative, great things happened. There were tremendous responses that came to build commerce, to provide for public safety, and to, again, connect the Nation.

Today, the saga is no different. We should respond again in robust fashion, and understand that in this new century it is important for us as we compete in a global economy to offer our business community the best sets of infrastructure investment so that we can move forward with that sound down payment that enables them to function and function well.

What we have seen here in the House, as my colleague from California just indicated, was a delay tactic, a kicking the can down the road, if you will. And as it was the only game in town, that was a "take it or leave it" situation, where we did not want a trust fund to be emptied, and we moved forward with this effort.

However, the leadership bringing their bill to this floor didn't even have enough Members of their majority to support this measure. So, they needed to reach to Democrats to say: okay, we will move forward with this short-term solution, it is not the optimum, it is not near what is needed, and so now the work should continue to put together a legitimate opportunity for us to avoid insolvency in the near future.

What do we need to do? We need to have a long-term strategy, we need to go forward to avoid what could have been without action today 700,000 jobs lost nationally and some 100,000-plus projects either delayed or coming to a grinding halt. We need to provide the predictability, the stability, for those groups that want to invest in our infrastructure.

No corporation, no group out there, no business which involves itself in improving our highways and bridges will take this method seriously unless they feel that, they sense that stability. So, let's go forward and be sound about the investments we will make in our infrastructure, and let's put together that long-term strategy, because as we have witnessed in the past, and understand it to be today, that investment in infrastructure is the rock-solid cornerstone of a stronger tomorrow.

Representative GARAMENDI, there is much work to be done. There is work to be done that will require investments into infrastructure, transportation and infrastructure, in every region of this country. We know that. Let's get serious about the business, and let's avoid these short-term strategies that, again, get into areas where we smooth pensions, which can create another crisis of another kind.

We need to do better than what was done today, and we need to go forward. There were attempts to improve this, but this was the measure that was put before us, and, again, people saw it as the only opportunity to avoid insolvency of that highway trust fund. So, here we are again challenged in this moment to go forward with much better vision, with bolder initiatives, and with deep-rooted commitment to the transportation needs of this Nation.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. TONKO, thank you so very much. It is always good to be on the floor with you. Thank you so very much for bringing to our attention once again the history of this Nation, how it was built, the great infrastructure.

There is a report card out on how our infrastructure is today. This was put together by the engineers and others who do this kind of work. I am just going to read through this: aviation—these are our airports—D; bridges, C-plus; dams, D; drinking water, D; energy, D; hazardous waste, D; inland waterways, D; levees, D; ports, C—whoa, that is good; public parks and recreation, C-minus; rails, C-plus; roads, D; schools, D; solid waste, B—I guess we can get rid of our trash, that is good—transit, D; and wastewater, D. So, the entire infrastructure is D.

Do you want to know why? Well, here is the reason why. Short-term we run out of money.

Let's take a look here.

In 2002, we spent \$325 billion on non-defense structures, all of these things I just talked about, and that was 2002, at the beginning of the Bush Presidency. And then every year after that—we are now down to about \$225 billion.

So \$100 billion of investment, annual investment, disappeared, and so now we are running all of these D scores. It is fortunate that we are not asking for—well, I guess we are asking for re-election. We are in trouble.

Just by the way, I got a phone call from my wife, and she said: You know, about the pickup truck, John. I said: What about it? She said: I've got to take it in, the mechanic says the wheels are out of alignment. I said: How much is that going to cost? She said: Somewhere over \$100. On average, in San Francisco, \$782 is spent on every car every year to repair for the damages of the poor highways in California. I don't think I have New York, Mr. TONKO, but I suspect it is no better there.

Let's talk about the future. Excuse me, I am just stuck. I don't want to get stuck on the past, but it is pretty bad. Let's talk about the future.

Mr. TONKO. Before you go there, let me just share this, because even though it is 27 years old as a memory, it is still vividly captured by so many of us that lived in upstate New York. When I served in the New York State Assembly, Montgomery County, New York, is my home area. We are a donor county to the New York State Thruway system. Twenty-seven years ago, ten lives were lost when a Thruway bridge collapsed. It, obviously, was a terrible price for those ten individuals to pay. Their family members and friends would remind us that there is no pricetag that we can put on that loss.

□ 2030

I can tell you the economic impact on many counties in that region was severe. Interestingly, no one from that home county, my home county, was lost in that tragedy. Some in New York State paid dearly for that tragedy, but people whose home States were far away from New York were lost in that tragedy.

So that reminds all of us that we are all at risk, no matter where that deficiency may be, no matter where that lack of investment may fall. We are all at risk because we are interconnected, incredibly so, which is an undisputed fact. Any failure out there, any deficiency, challenges each and every one of us.

And so when we talk about the future, that past history of lack of investment needs to remind all of us that there is a worthiness here that this should be a high priority.

You talk about the delays that trip has measured. The impact on people

within the capital region that I represent in New York is some \$1,600 annually in terms of idle time, in terms of repairs required to their vehicles, in terms of accidents that might be caused by less than acceptable conditions on those roadways. So this is costing us, as you just indicated, annually.

We need to understand that it is about public safety and it is about avoiding accidents and tragedies. It is about connecting the Nation. It is about investing in commerce. That is what this is telling us. It is the requirement of this Chamber and the United States Senate and the White House to come together and get things done.

This President has urged us to accept his plans to close loopholes that will provide revenues in a long-term strategy, that will provide for work for millions of people in the trades industry, to put their skilled labor abilities to work for us as a nation and to make certain that future consequences like those that were faced in Montgomery County with the bridge collapse aren't repeated time and time again.

Before we go to the future, I just wanted to set that tone for some very tragic situations that we as a nation have endured. I am speaking of one assembly district in one State, but I know across the country there have been these terrible situations where the infrastructure weakness gripped us with pain and consequence.

Mr. GARAMENDI. No doubt about that. I am thinking about the Twin Cities. That was another bridge that collapsed more recently. These are real reminders of the necessity of dealing with the reality of transportation.

Fortunately, there is a way to solve the transportation and the infrastructure challenges of this Nation. It has been proposed by President Obama. It is called the GROW AMERICA Act. It specifically is designed to rebuild our crumbling transportation system.

It is a comprehensive plan. It deals with all of the various parts of the transportation and infrastructure system. There is a major piece for our rail. There is a major piece for inner city transit buses and transit within the cities. There is a piece for the ports, bridges, and highways. All of this is encompassed in the GROW AMERICA Act, which the President and Secretary Foxx of the Department of Transportation proposed a few months ago.

The legislation was presented to the House of Representatives, introduced here in the House by Delegate ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON about a month and a half ago, and it has simply sat there. The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee of this House has not taken it up, although it should.

We should be holding hearings on this issue, because this is what we need to address: the rail system, the buses, the ports, the bridges, the highways, the freight systems; the movement of men, women, materials, and freight all across this country.

The program is a very robust program, and over 4 years it will bring us almost back to what we were doing in 2002. Because in 4 years, we would be spending at the level of \$325 billion a year over that 4-year period of time.

But here is what it means for next year. If we were to pass the GROW AMERICA Act now rather than kicking the can down the road, beginning October 1, 2014, we would have \$7.6 billion to fix our highway system. We would have \$6.8 billion to improve public transportation: buses, light rail, and intracity rail. We would have \$3.4 billion for our rail systems, like what you have here in the Northeast Corridor. Out in California, we have the Capital Corridor, the train system between San Diego and Los Angeles, and so forth. And we would have \$1 billion for our freight transportation system, or a total of \$18.6 billion more in 2015 to fix our crumbling infrastructure.

This is a very robust investment and it covers all of these programs. Each of these programs are necessary in and of themselves, like the highway system, to fill the potholes so that men and women across the country don't have to, as I must do, take my pickup in for a front wheel realignment. And all of these other systems, like transit, rail, port and freight systems, we would be able to grow those. We would be able to begin to fix our infrastructure system, and we would put people back to work.

Mr. TONKO. Right.

What I like about the plan, Representative GARAMENDI, is that it is all-inclusive in terms of an umbrella approach that encompasses several policy areas. It is not just transportation, which is very valid and certainly urgent, but we also address environmental policy, energy policy, economic development policy, and urban policy.

There are a number of strategies that come together into this one initiative that allow us to be smart about our investments and to be efficient. And isn't that what people seem to call for when they go to vote each and every time for Congress?

People interpreted the 2010 election that the voters were saying government is the enemy, government is the problem, government is too big. I think the people said, no, we want efficient government, effective government.

That is what a strategy like this provides. It incorporates planning. It incorporates investing on a routine scale so that we are not doing these catch-up games that require down payments of interest before we even get some investments made in infrastructure. So I like this.

With the rail portion, we are talking about the most energy-efficient form of travel. In order for us to provide a benefit to the public or to commerce, a transportation quotient is an important factor in the household budget and planning that all of us do as households and in budgeting for business so that they can cut that factor and be competitive in landing the contracts

for the work that they do. So rail is an important component for that vision of providing a sounder outcome. It is better for the environment, and there is less pollution as we become more energy-efficient in our travel.

The next order of business is the connection with urban cores. Multimodal concepts enable us to again provide for the recovery of our inner urban cores. We have been lacking for sound urban policy in this Nation. It is time for us to have a heart for these urban cores and to put together smart growth strategies, which this sort of planning, this sort of vision enables us to do.

And the list goes on and on.

To your point, Representative GARAMENDI, we are going to put people to work, too. That is not a bad thing.

Instead of coming up with dollars to sue a President, why don't we invest in our infrastructure? We are going to rush around this week and come up with ways to make certain that we can go forward with a lawsuit against the President. We are going to invest hard-earned taxpayer dollars to prove a point, to stage some sort of political theater and not do the sort of priorities that the American public is calling on us to do.

They don't want this acrimony to be driven by additional digging into the pocket of the taxpayers. They want soundness and effectiveness of programs. They want to know that what we do will grow jobs, create a climate that fosters private sector job growth, enable us to be more competitive, enable our public to be more safe as we travel, and enable us to put people to work.

That is what people deserve. They are calling for that sort of vision and initiative. We owe it to the American public to put into play this long-term strategy that we know deep in our hearts is the best thing to do.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Representative TONKO, what is happening tomorrow? The Speaker and the leadership of this House are going to do a press conference to talk about suing the President?

Mr. TONKO. And there is talk of how we will provide the dollars to make that happen.

Mr. GARAMENDI. And we haven't taken up a transportation bill, have we?

Mr. TONKO. Right. I think the approvals we are looking for here ought to come for sound investments that will bear benefits for generations to come—and in a multiple order of effectiveness for various purposes, from jobs to safety to connecting for commerce and the like.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Let's put aside that lawsuit tomorrow and all the foolishness that it is and at least let you and me and whoever cares to join in this talk about substantive issues the American people really want, which is to do our work to put together programs that actually meet the needs of the people.

This is the President's proposal. I know the President has said if it has his name on it, it isn't going anywhere. So take his name off of it and let's just call it an American act.

What is it?

It is a 4-year program. It is 4 years of transportation infrastructure funding. As you said, it is holistic. It includes many different elements, including planning and research, as you just described. It is \$302 billion over the 4 years, which is a substantial increase over what we are presently doing. It is fully paid for and does not increase the deficit.

I love my charts. I hope the rest of you like them as much as I do. If you don't, I am going to show them anyway.

What happens when we invest a dollar in infrastructure is we actually grow the economy by \$1.57. So for every dollar we invest, we get economic growth. We increase the economy in this case by another 57 cents beyond the dollar that we have already spent. And as you just said, you are laying in place the foundation. You have made the capital investment that will endure for years to come.

Anyway, in 4 years, this GROW AMERICA Act is \$302 billion over the 4-year period. For transportation, the highway system has \$199 billion. That is a 22 percent increase over what we are currently spending. In the area of transit systems, it is \$72 billion over the 4-year period. That also is an increase. There is research, which we have talked about.

The multimodal, this I really like. You talked about the transit hubs, and that is an important piece, but the multimodal freight system is the ports, the trains, and the highways all coming together.

I know you have major projects in New York. You may want to talk about those.

These are the hubs for which our economy grows because it is the export as well as the import from overseas. It is the rail system that then takes those containers of that cargo and puts it on the rails to go across the country—whether it is BNSF, or UP on the west coast, or the CSX rail system on the east coast—and the trucks, and they all come together in a hub. So there is actually \$10 billion for those rail hubs. For the rail system itself to improve the Nation's rails, it is \$19 billion over the 4 years.

Then there are the special innovative programs that local governments want to do like the TIGER grants. These are local programs. That is \$5 billion.

□ 2045

It is a substantial growth in what we have been spending over the previous years, and you will remember the chart that shows the decline in spending. It is an opportunity for us to pick it up and push it forward at a much higher level, employing people, growing the economy in the process, and laying

down the foundation—the concrete, the steel, the bridges, the rails—upon which the economy will grow.

I know you have examples of this. Please, Mr. TONKO.

Mr. TONKO. What I would add to your support of statements would be that, as we delay, as we do these gimmicks, as we do these kicking the can down the road scenarios, there are projects lining up. They are building up.

We are not resolving the overall core of concern out there. In a way, projects are piling up. In New York, the American Society of Civil Engineers has given this country, as you stated earlier, a poor report card on our infrastructure.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Excuse me. Are you like California, with D ratings?

Mr. TONKO. Yes. I mean, we have some tough, tough issues to deal with, and this report card from professionals is telling the story as it is.

Today, nearly 13 percent of New York's bridges are deemed structurally deficient. Some 27 percent of the State's bridges are considered functionally obsolete. Now, that is piling up. It is not going to get better until we invest. As it piles up, these concerns or these benefits from this investment are not being shared with the country.

Now, people don't want to hear about climate change and global warming, but at least see it as a way to be more resourceful with the energy supplies that we do have. If you can't buy into the notion of cleaning up the air to avoid carbon emission and methane emission, at least see it as a way to pull cars off the highway and allow for mass transit, public transit, to enable us to better address the capacity situation of our roads and bridges throughout all of our States, then see it as a way to bring under control the transportation cost factor for commerce.

When you build this port system, when you connect with rail and highways and bridges and when you have the ultimate investment made in today's state-of-the-art infrastructure, you are providing this golden benefit to commerce, so that they can compete and can compete effectively in a global marketplace. It is driven by commerce, as is our public safety, as is our connectedness as a Nation.

So there are many benefits here. The multiple facets of all of this vision that the President has shared with this Congress should not be kicked aside. You don't kick this away, like you did the strategies and the solutions for our infrastructure needs. You sit down at a table together and perform, as this Nation expects us to on behalf of issues as critical as infrastructure.

We know what has to be done. Let's do it. Let's be the professionals as we come together in a bipartisan fashion and bicameral fashion—the legislative branch working with the executive branch—and get it done. We have been inspired throughout our history with

those concepts of the Erie Canal, the Transcontinental Railroad, the interstate highway system.

Here is our moment. Do we let it pass us by, or do we move forward and get it done in grand fashion, where we are pulling cars off the road, enabling people to enjoy the public and mass transit opportunities as a Nation and where we have state-of-the-art port facilities so that we can ship our goods and so that we can enable commerce to be given that muscle it needs, which is the American way?

Our grandparents knew about this. They handed us a better Nation. Where are we in this moment? As stewards of today's given strategy and policy, are we going to fail for the next generations? Or will they look at us someday and say: they got it, they did it, they did it well, and they did it with a sense of vision and planning and passion and commitment, and they scored for us as a generation, and now, we will build upon that success?

Mr. GARAMENDI. Si se pueda. Yes, we can.

Mr. TONKO. Yes, we can.

Mr. GARAMENDI. We can do it.

It is interesting that we spend a lot of time talking on the floor here in the Chamber about government regulation and red tape and all of that. In the GROW AMERICA Act, there are major reforms to speed up projects, to move projects faster—to get the concrete poured, to get the bridge built, to get the airport up and running.

Those reforms are very, very important. They, along with the overall bill, are languishing for lack of a hearing, for lack of action. We really have the opportunity to not only put the projects in place, but to put them in place faster with the reforms that are called for in the GROW AMERICA Act.

I was starting to talk about the TIGER programs. This is an opportunity for our local county, city, State to put forward innovative projects. For example, the systems that you were talking about, the transit hubs, those can be proposed. They can be graded based upon their utility, on their usefulness.

Those are then grant programs—public, local, State, together with the Federal Government. This is a substantial increase. I know these are very popular in California. We keep lining them up, but there hasn't been sufficient money. In the GROW AMERICA Act, there is a significant increase. Some \$5 billion would be available for these innovative transportation projects.

What is there not to like in this? It is fully paid for—interesting. It is fully paid for in two ways—one, on the existing excise tax on gasoline and diesel. It is not increased, but is still the same. Then the balance—that is, the increase—is to be paid for by closing tax loopholes on corporations.

It is interesting that today, as the President was talking about this and also talking about closing tax loopholes on corporations that are

offshoring American jobs, The Wall Street Journal—that rather famous and quite good newspaper—carried on its front page, “The Race to Cut Taxes Fuels Urge to Merge,” a cute headline.

Then, in The New York Times, another headline on the very same subject reads, “Drug Firms Make Haste to Elude Taxes.”

So right here in these two national newspapers are examples of the kinds of tax avoidance games that are being played by American corporations to avoid paying their fair share of the American taxes.

The President, in the GROW AMERICA Act said stop it, stop these kinds of tax loopholes, tax breaks, that American companies are taking to avoid paying their share of the burden of transportation. He wants to close these loopholes, and here are two that clearly ought to be closed immediately.

Mr. TONKO. When you look at that strategy, Representative GARAMENDI, you sense the fundamental fairness.

I look at projects like the efforts in New York where Governor Cuomo is leading this effort to make certain that we invest in the rebuild of the Tappan Zee Bridge. That takes traffic from the greater Metro New York area, the New York City area, and moves it along into upstate New York and into the Northeast area of our country—a major thoroughfare with a huge price tag.

Now, if we partner with our States, that is helping those individual States to endure, to provide for the resources needed to build these major projects and to do them well. Otherwise, it falls upon the local taxpayer and on State income taxes and what have you—or whatever the State revenue supplies are—so that there is this partnership that is strengthened when the Federal Government leads with a strong commitment to infrastructure improvements.

Now, in looking at the safety, the stretch is miles long as we travel from that metro area on the Tappan Zee Bridge into upstate New York. It was in need of improvement for quite some time, and I applaud the Governor for leading the effort now in putting it together, but, again, the Federal partnership here is important.

For us to continue to ask middle-income America to pay the bill—they are already saturated with these efforts. They know that they have been stressed out.

What this measure does is provide fundamental fairness again. It is not just about the projects done, the vision shared, the implementation of a plan. It is about a revenue side that comes together in a progressive fashion, in socially and economically just fashions, to make certain that there is an equal sense of responsibility to bear in terms of providing for the infrastructure improvements that we as a Nation, as an American society, require.

Let's go forward and be the bold pioneers, if you will, of this generation

and show people that we didn't miss the opportunity to invest in America. This Nation, as great as she is, with this economy as strong as it can be, requires assistance through our wonderful history, and this is not a surprise. It should not be a surprise. We need to constantly upgrade and improve and maintain our infrastructure.

Tonight, we have spent a lot of time, Representative GARAMENDI, talking about projects and initiatives that can move us forward, but there is also a commitment that needs to be made to the maintenance and operational costs of these systems.

If we don't commit to that, it sooner or later catches up with us, and then there are requirements for huge bond acts, or there are various ways to come up with strategies, and when you come into moments like this, you will have resistance from certain thinking, philosophical approaches in government, and it makes the job all the more difficult.

We know what needs to be done. We have been bolstered by our rich history. We were at our best when we invested in America. Let's learn from that. Let's seize the moment.

Let's go forward and commit to commerce, to safety, to the general public—to the needs of the general public. Let's provide for that strength of America, for that pioneer spirit that has always driven us.

I know I have talked about this so many times when I have been with you on the floor, but the pioneer spirit was on display when we built that Erie Canal. It was on display when those manufacturing towns built their factories.

It was on display when so many of our ancestors as immigrants came here and tethered their American Dream. They climbed that economic ladder. They ascended with those opportunities to provide for their families, for their children and grandchildren to go forward.

That is us. That is the synergy of this Nation. That is the passion of the American public. We deny that when we deny the vision, the plan, the investment, the policy, the initiative driven right on this floor that ought to be bipartisan in nature. Make no mistake about it—bipartisan in nature.

Let's move forward. Let's have that plan. Let's have that vision, and let's commit to this future.

Mr. GARAMENDI. We certainly can do it. We certainly ought to do it. Our predecessors have done it. There are 435 of us here in the House of Representatives, and the question is: Are we willing to do it?

It can be done. This plan, GROW AMERICA, is fully paid for. Yes, some corporations that are skipping out on their taxes would have to participate, and they should. They ought not be tax dodgers.

This is a very interesting plan put forward by our colleague JOHN DELANEY, a Representative from Mary-

land, that would take those profits that these corporations have stored overseas—profits that they have not paid taxes on in America—to repatriate, to bring that money back to America.

His program would generate, over a period of 10 years, \$720 billion to be used in public-private partnerships to build our infrastructure. There are many, many ideas about how this could be paid for. The President has laid out a plan not to raise the gasoline and the diesel tax, but rather to bring about some tax fairness, and corporations would be required to pay their fair share—all of it good.

I suspect we have maybe another 5 minutes or so, but I want to bring up one of our favorite subjects. I am going to put this up.

Here we are with the GROW AMERICA Act and all of the things that could be done. This is back to Make It In America. I love this photo. It is one of my favorites.

I know, often, you travel on the train from New York down to Washington, D.C.—or back—right about now. This locomotive, which is the most advanced electric locomotive in America, made in America, was paid for by a Make It In America strategy.

Part of the transportation program—the American Recovery Act—back in 2008 said that they put aside about \$700-plus billion for Amtrak all across the Nation to be used for improving the Amtrak system.

They said that that money would be used to build locomotives, and they said 100 percent American-made. Siemens, a German company, said, oh, \$700 billion for locomotives made in America, we are a German company, we can build those in America.

So in Sacramento, California, in the infrastructure program, Siemens has built a 100 percent American-made locomotive, and it is going to be operating very soon on the Northeast corridor.

This is a good thing. This is how we can rebuild the American middle class. This is how we can create jobs, using our infrastructure investments to build jobs in America.

It is a fundamental piece of our Make It In America strategy of rebuilding our manufacturing sector where you do have good, solid middle class jobs, where a family can earn a living without both husband and wife having to work all the time or maybe two or three jobs.

We are talking about the American Dream being restored, and the infrastructure is a fundamental piece of that—not just because it moves the economy, not just because it is foundational to economic growth, but because it is American middle class jobs.

□ 2000

It is the hardhats. It is the welder putting together the new locomotive. It is the engineer designing the system.

It is the accountant. It is the secretary handling the paperwork. It is America building each future.

The President has laid out a good plan. Is there some way better to do it? Put your ideas on the table, my colleagues, put your ideas on the table.

How can you do better than this GROW AMERICA Act? Let's get about doing it. This is our future. This is America's opportunity, and it is fully paid for, doesn't increase the deficit. In fact, it will grow the economy and provide us with those middle class jobs.

I know, Mr. TONKO, you have been at this for your entire career, as have I, and to be here in Congress, at this moment, when we had an opportunity, we missed it today. We missed the opportunity today to grow the American economy, and instead, we kicked the can down the road. Better than nothing, but not good enough—nothing to be proud of.

Mr. TONKO, a few seconds—I don't know how much time we have.

Mr. TONKO. I believe we probably have about 5 minutes now. I think we go to about 7 minutes after.

Look, I think what you point to—the gentleman from California is absolutely right on. It is a ripple effect. It is not just the rail tracks that are developed, the railways that are developed. It is not just the highways and bridges. It is incorporating rail cars.

Now, here is a ripple effect. As we have grown the efficiency of the system, now we are building, manufacturing rail cars, putting people to work, alternatively-fueled vehicles that can enable us to continue in that effort to reduce carbon emission and methane emission, making certain that, again, we go through this whole process, coming out more environmentally sound.

So, yes, today's vote was a big disappointment, in terms of what we could have accomplished. It was that short term, get out of this immediate challenge, and let's go forward.

There is not that vision. There is not that full in-depth plan that is required of us, and certainly, we fell short—far short of the mark that should have brought us across the finish line and enabled us to say, hey, we scored really well here, we put together a sound package.

This is about putting a strategy together that enables us to advance all of these cutting-edge technologies that enable us to strengthen the manufacturing base of America where these ripple effects reach us into our communities.

You talk about the locomotives of today and the future that are driven by the intellectual capacity of workers and researchers in this country. I think back on the industrial heritage of Schenectady, New York, that I represent here in the House.

The American Locomotive Company, ALCO, was producing tremendous cars that enabled us to again have that richness of rail history.

Well, you know, all through our history, there have been those decades and chapters that have inspired us because we met the task, we came ready to deliver, and we were not going to let any force stop us.

That is the greatness of America. That is how we achieved. That is how we climbed to our mountains, where people noticed America, where we were that beacon of hope, where the best things came from this Nation.

Are we ready to settle for second best? Fifth best? I don't think so. So let us move forward.

Other nations are investing in their infrastructure. You hear it all the time, about rail systems in Europe and Asia. You hear about the improvements that people have made with subway systems and the like.

We know that we have got the smarts to do it. We have got the intellectual capacity to lead not only this Nation, but the world, and as we go forward, let us be proud of the fact that we can come together, make things happen, and have that long-term strategy, which was just not here today for that vote. It was not here today for that vote.

I will repeat myself. The Republican majority didn't have their votes enough to pass the measure, so they obviously didn't believe in what they were doing, and it is unfortunate. It was the only game in town. It was the only plan placed on the table.

We need to do better than this, and we can. So our bright days of tomorrow lie ahead of us, only if we are ready to muster up the boldness to make it happen.

Representative GARAMENDI, to you to close.

Mr. GARAMENDI. It is time to close. We can build America. We can build our infrastructure. The President has laid out a worthy plan, comprehensive, and all of the elements of the infrastructure that we must do. It is fully paid for. It is a good starting point.

Maybe there is a better way of doing it, but we cannot get it done with short-term, kick the can down the road bills, such as was passed today, but that is better than not doing anything.

This is the American future, and the question for all of us, 435: Why did we come here? Did we come here just to pass the time, or did we come here to really build America?

We are going to Make It In America. We are Americans, and we will make it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

THE VIOLENCE IN ISRAEL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized until 10 p.m. as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I greatly appreciate that recognition.

First of all, I would like to direct attention to the Middle East, to our dear

friend and ally, Israel, and the fact that I pointed out to Prime Minister Netanyahu twice, a few years apart, that going back to the very inception of Israel as a nation more than 3,000 years ago, there has never been a time when Israel gave away land trying to buy peace, that that land was not ultimately used as a staging area from which to attack it.

It has been true all those years, the original founding of Israel, the promised land, going through the division of Israel into two kingdoms, northern and southern, and then the rejuvenation really of that nation in the late 1940s.

No matter which President, no matter which party the President was from, no matter which Secretary of State was pushing to get a Nobel Peace Prize by trying to bring people together, anyone that pushed and forced Israel to give away land ended up bringing about attacks on Israel because they gave away land that should have been Israel's.

Southern Lebanon has been the source of so many attacks and kidnappings, intrusions into Israel. The Gaza Strip had so many Israeli families living peacefully, greenhouses, methods of taking care of themselves.

In an act—a unilateral act by Israel to attempt to secure a bit of peace, Israel gave away the Gaza Strip, now governed by Hamas, a terrorist organization that the United States through this administration is funding because we are funding the Palestinians and they have the relationship now with Hamas.

So we are taking American tax dollars from many people in the United States who do not believe it is a good idea to curse Israel and to supply money to its enemy, so Israel can be attacked, and yet, that money is being taken and given to them.

They can say because money is fungible, where we are not actually using the money you give us to attack Israel, and they can also claim they are not actually using the money that we give them to teach hatred in textbooks and all kinds of ways actually, including the naming of holidays after barbarians who have committed attacks on innocent people and killed innocent people. They name holidays after them. They name streets after them.

Here in the United States, we tend to name holidays or streets after people like Martin Luther King, Jr., who subscribed to peaceful means of protest, who would never encourage killing or attacks to achieve what Hamas and the PLO have utilized.

It is time to cut off the money. Until they quit teaching hatred, they quit utilizing funds to attack Israel, you cut off their funds. You cut off the teaching of hatred, and you have got a shot at some semblance of peace in the Middle East.

In the meantime, Israel is being attacked—every day, the rockets flying, hoping—the Palestinians hoping that maybe they will kill some innocent Israeli people.

Wouldn't that be great, they are thinking, if we could just kill maybe some children, maybe blow off some legs and arms? What a great accomplishment Hamas and the PLO can be thrilled about.

Of course, Hamas took over from the PLO in governing, but the area is no more peaceable, and it is time to cut off all American funding to any area that subscribes to the shooting of rockets to kill innocent people, as is going on in the Middle East, enemies of Israel attempting to kill innocent Israelis.

There was an attempt by Israel to enter into an Egyptian-brokered ceasefire with Hamas, but according to The Jerusalem Post story, by Yaakov Lappin, that collapsed Tuesday when Gazan terrorists continued to fire rocket barrages on the south, center, and north of Israel.

A fragment from a mortar shell killed an Israeli man, Dor Chanin, 37. Chanin had come as a civilian volunteer to distribute food to soldiers at Erez.

□ 2115

It is time to quit aiding and abetting the attacks on our friend Israel. It is time to start helping them.

And when it comes to the disastrous effort to negotiate with terrorist leaders in Iran—they are developing nuclear weapons. They are developing the ability to develop nuclear weapons because they have their centrifuges spinning. And I think those who say they want enough nuclear material to produce several nuclear weapons at the same time, they are not going to just do one. They are going to wait until they have enough to do several so that they can spread out, be difficult to track and be difficult to stop before they utilize them to destroy Israel, as the Little Satan, as they see it, and the United States, as the Great Satan.

It has been described in one of Joel Rosenberg's novels far too accurately: Even though Iran is developing intercontinental ballistic missiles that could carry nuclear warheads to the United States—"the Great Satan" they call us—they really don't even need those. They could put them on a cargo ship, a yacht, whatever, and bring them over—have one in New York, have one in Chicago, have one up the Potomac. And they could pretty well devastate American economic powerhouse cities. If they put one in New Orleans, the Houston ship channel, there goes most of our refined gasoline.

It is time for America to wake up. This administration is not adequately protecting us, and that is why our Attorney General has now finally admitted this month, in an ABC interview, that, in effect, he is extremely concerned and in fear more now of a terrorist attack than he has been at most any time in his time as Attorney General. And this is a guy that knows terrorism. I mean, he has helped terrorists in his role prior to working for this administration. He is quite familiar with