

specific challenges that individuals in their community face. Public and private, resources are used to create these programs. A balance is created between individuals and organizations which makes these programs all the more better because everyone has contributed.

Thanks to the Mayor, the City Commissioners, the City Manager, the City workers, and community organizations, churches, businesses and residents, the City of Delray Beach is once again an All America City. It is an accomplishment to be named once, but being named twice is a true distinction, which serves as an inspiration to every city in the State of Florida and sets a standard of civic responsibility that serves as a reminder to us all that the effort always counts.

INTRODUCING THE ELECTION
WEEKEND ACT OF 2001

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2001

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, the National Commission on Federal Election Reform released its report highlighting a variety of reforms that need to occur in our country's faltering election system. While I do not agree with all of the Commission's views, I do agree with the report's recommendation to establish a federal holiday on Election Day.

Today, however, I am taking the Commission's recommendation one step further and introducing the Election Weekend Act. My bill changes our nation's election day from the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November to the first consecutive Saturday and Sunday in November. Furthermore, it expresses the sense of Congress that private sector employers provide their employees with one day off during Election Weekend to allow them ample opportunity and time to cast their ballot without having to leave work.

Each Election Day, employees are faced with the difficult task of balancing their work schedules with their family responsibilities, while trying to find time to make it to the polls. My bill recognizes the undue amount of pressure Americans face when trying to participate in the democratic process. It acknowledges the fact that a great deal of Americans are unable to leave their jobs in the middle of the day and vote because our elections occur on a Tuesday, a day when almost all Americans are working.

As more and more Americans enter the workforce, the choice they are forced to make between working or voting has resulted in decreased voter turnout. In the last election, barely 51 percent of our country's eligible voters actually voted. Also, consider that in the last election, only 48 percent of those who voted cast a ballot for our current President. That means that 48 percent of the 51 percent of people who actually voted last November voted for him. To put it in a different perspective, less than one-quarter of all those eligible to vote voted for our current President—talk about pitiful. Even more, the percentage is even smaller in low and middle income communities where individuals do not enjoy the luxury of taking a three hour lunch to eat and

vote. For many, the hour they lose in wages when they go to the polls may mean the difference between paying the bills or finding themselves out on the street.

It is irresponsible of us to continue forcing Americans to choose between a pay check, family time, or democracy. It is the Constitutional privilege of every American to vote. In moving our nation's election day to the first full weekend in November and extending it from one day to two days, we recognize the responsibility that we have to our constituents and our democratic heritage. We should be doing everything we can to protect the integrity of our election system by not only encouraging Americans to vote, but making it more convenient for them to do so.

CONGESTION THREATENS U.S.
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

HON. ROBERT A. BORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2001

Mr. BORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to alert my colleagues to the growing danger of gridlock in our transportation system.

Many of the nation's major transportation corridors, both rail and highway, have become increasingly congested in recent years, to the point that congestion already threatens the ability of those modes to provide reliable transportation to the U.S. economy.

Major metropolitan areas that are gateways for U.S. international trade, and hubs in the rail and highway systems, are thick with freight traffic as other vehicular traffic also increases.

Increased international trade—expected to double in the next ten years—and continued growth in the domestic economy will further burden our rail and highway systems in the years ahead, with some question that, despite the best efforts and support of Congress, existing infrastructures in those modes can grow to meet those demands.

Existing rail and highway infrastructure cannot handle all of the projected growth in container movements, and there are obvious limits to how much we can increase the capacity of interstates and rail lines. Major expansion of rail or highway infrastructure in corridors such as that along 1-95 on the U.S. East Coast has become both economically and physically difficult to do.

In the coastal corridors a "capacity crunch" is likely in this decade. Federal Highway Administration data indicates average annual increases in highway freight miles of 3 to 4 percent nationally in that period.

For example, it has been estimated that by 2010 there will be an increase of 11,000 fortyfoot containers arriving each day on each coast. While rail may be able to handle approximately 1,000 such units, absent a viable waterborne option, the remaining 10,000 containers would have to be moved by truck. On 1-95, this would equate to an additional truck every 270 yards between Boston and Miami.

As corridor densification increases so too will the cost to the economy in lost productivity. This is prompting transportation planners, shippers and transport operators to look for ways to relieve the pressure on moving freight (and passengers) in impacted regions. For the domestic transportation system to

meet the needs of our economy in the 21st Century, we must maximize the efficiency of that system, including, where possible, increasing reliance on waterborne transportation to complement rail and highway systems. The potential options range from increased use of vessels to transport bulk materials to short or long haul intermodal shipping, including high-speed ferries such as are in wide use in Europe and Asia. As transportation agencies and the private sector focus more attention to this option, the federal government should look to means by which to eliminate the barriers to, or to create potential incentives for, development of this complementary means of moving freight and passengers.

The waterborne option presently has unused capacity. Studies to date suggest that as vessel and cargo transfer technologies improve and new vessels come in to service, coastal shipping would be able to provide increasingly competitive service. Such vessels can be built in U.S. shipyards that now have the capacity to construct new designs and do it competitively. One such yard is the Kvaerner Shipyard in Philadelphia. In fact, a shift to the waterborne mode would foster a resurgence in Jones Act shipping and in the process create a new market for U.S. shipyards and American labor.

The expanded use of the coastal waters for moving cargo has some obvious benefits:

It would provide a measure of highway congestion relief,

Some hazardous material movements could shift to coastal vessels,

Vessels have the fewest accidental spills or collisions of all forms of transportation;

The movement of trucks/containers on vessels could foster increased use of intelligent transportation technologies;

Job growth would be stimulated in U.S. shipyards and on vessels;

A healthier U.S.-flag industry assures a future supply of vessels and trained crews for military sealift missions.

With few exceptions, the maritime sector largely has been left behind in Congressional and Administration attention to the transportation modes over the past decade. Policy innovations such as ISTE, TEA-21 and AIR-21 have served to prepare surface and air transportation for the demands of the next decades. The maritime sector is due the same in order for the national transportation system to meet the demands of the new century. Expanding the use of the waterborne option should be viewed as an enhancement of the nation's transportation system, responding to market demands for relief of congested rail and highway routes, and not as a matter of one mode competing against another. Coastal shipping will not supplant road and rail because of their inherent and respective advantages, e.g. speed of service and flexibility, but it can provide an essential element of new capacity with comparatively smaller investments of public capital.

Analysis to date indicates that there are some likely barriers to an expansion of intermodal coastal shipping such as the harbor maintenance tax on domestic movements, thus requiring the attention of the next Administration and Congress. Likewise, incentives no doubt would facilitate private and public sector investments into establishing coastal corridor operations. It is our duty to do what we can to facilitate and foster coastwise shipping.