revenue shot up 13.5 percent, and ridership increased 4.6 percent. If we were to improve our national system, revenue and ridership would surely increase, easing congestion on our highways and runways.

Transportation by rail is vital to the economy. Businesses depend on it, workers depend on it, and industry depends on it. It is vital to the environment. Trains use less fuel, emit less pollution, and cause less commuter congestion.

For much too long, we have ignored the great potential that a world-class rail system could bring to our country's economy and security. I encourage all Members of Congress to join me and my colleagues in passing the National Defense Rail Act and support the future of expedient travel in the United States. The time has come to invest in the future of high-speed rail transportation by overhauling our Nation's passenger rail infrastructure.

I share the vision of the gentlewoman from Indiana (Ms. CARSON) and urge all of my colleagues to join with us as we propose and develop a national rail system second to none in the world.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING A FEDERAL COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT AMTRAK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SANDLIN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SANDLIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight. And the Democrats rise tonight, to stress the importance of maintaining a Federal commitment to support Amtrak. I, along with 150 of our colleagues, support providing Amtrak with the $1.2 billion it needs to maintain its current success on into 2003.

A working national passenger rail network is essential for east Texas and America, but the Federal Government must provide resources for capital improvements if Amtrak is to continue to service the Nation at affordable, competitive rates.

According to Amtrak, without this funding Amtrak will be forced to eliminate nearly all long-distance passenger trains by October 2002, which would be disastrous for rural America. Rural America and east Texas support a national rail service. We do not approve of shutting down rural routes while funding only a northeast corridor commuter route.

Under Amtrak's proposal, service between Boston and Washington will remain, while lines like the Texas Eagle route will be shut down if Congress fails to provide sufficient resources for fiscal year 2003. Amtrak's long-distance passenger line provides critical transportation options for rural areas like east Texas, allowing rural residents as great an access to transportation as residents of fully urbanized areas.

In many cases, Amtrak's Texas Eagle is the only means east Texans have to travel long distances. If Amtrak is forced to close its long distance lines, the main links between Texas and cities would be severed, crippling the local economy and retarding rural development in my district and across the Nation.

Mr. Speaker, the people of east Texas use and support Amtrak. Ridership of the Texas Eagle line and revenue from the Texas Eagle line has increased by 9 percent since January, 2001, exceeding budget projections.

□ 2000

These positive developments have been achieved through bold steps taken by the people of East Texas to do everything in their power to keep the Texas Eagle line running and bold steps from Amtrak to reduce its management to maximize efficiency.

In March, Amtrak announced that its CEO and president George Warrington was resigning to move on to another project after raising Amtrak's revenues to a record $2.1 billion for the 2001 fiscal year. Capitalizing on this vacancy as a new opportunity, Amtrak's board hired David Gunn to continue improving Amtrak's record. This new administration lead by Mr. Gunn is making radical changes to increase its ridership and revenues to achieve fiscal responsibility in a common sense way.

Mr. Gunn has wide experience with the commuter rail industry both in America and in Canada serving as the president of the New York City Transit Agency from 1984 to 1990 and the chief general manager of the Toronto Transit Commission from 1995 to 1999. He carries with him an exceptional international reputation based on his ability to unite labor, business, local communities and governments to successfully improve financial stability and plan for the future. With this strong track record, Mr. Gunn brings to Amtrak the ability to overcome its financial difficulties through progressive policies and realistic plans for the future.

Just yesterday, Amtrak's governing board approved changes to consolidate authority and remove unnecessary oversight. These measures include cutting the number of vice president titles from 84 to approximately 20, clearly assigning the authority over cars and locomotives to five people when 16 currently share the responsibility, and consolidating Amtrak's three operating divisions and its mail and express business into the company headquarters in Washington. The new streamlined chain of command will vastly improve Amtrak's decision making and efficiency. But any attempts to solve Amtrak's crisis will be for naught without strong Congressional support to match Amtrak's bold new policies.

Now, Amtrak's opponents argue that the Federal Government has bailed out Amtrak before to no effect, and that private passenger lines are the only solution. Not so. In 1997, Congress reauthorized Amtrak for 5 years at $5.2 billion. However, only $2.7 billion was actually appropriated, barely 52 percent of the money. This does not constitute a bail out. In fact, this latest figure is only the continuation of a decades old pattern of underfunding Amtrak while at the same time demanding that it become profitable. In essence, under the guise of supporting Amtrak, Congress has instead set it up for failure, providing Amtrak with just enough money to survive another year but not giving it the capital to develop necessary infrastructure projects that could make it self sufficient by 2001.

No other publicly funded transportation system in America, much less a comparable national passenger rail system in the world has succeeded without significant public capital investment to modernize systems, enhance security and fund long distance service. In fact, no private passenger line could succeed under those same circumstances. Privatization of long distance passenger service would be tantamount to termination of long distance passenger rail service. It would result in the loss of rail service in many rural communities and would result in the lay off of many, many dedicated Amtrak employees. Only short distance commuter routes would remain. The people of East Texas need and deserve access to a national rail network as much if not more so than communities in the Northeastern United States. They do not need a multitude of new rail bureaucracies without adequate resources.

Importantly, if Amtrak is to be reduced to servicing the Northeast corridor alone, as a regional transportation network, it should operate without Federal support.

With proper funding Amtrak can succeed. H.R. 4545 will provide that funding. With $1.9 billion Amtrak can make necessary changes. America and East Texas deserve a strong passenger rail system and I will continue to fight for Amtrak.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JEFF MILLER of Florida). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HOLT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SOCIAL SECURITY AND THE DEBT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, this evening I would like to dedicate my remarks to Social Security, its trust funds and our growing national debt.

In January of last year, our Nation finally moved to an annual balanced budget after decades of being awash in growing debt as far as the eye could see. Many of us fought very hard to

bring that budget back into balance and, in fact, the Congressional Budget Office at that time projected that we were on course to have the publicly held debt, the over MMMM$6 trillion of accumulated debt, paid off in about 10 years, by 2011.

Now, not even one and a half years later the Congressional Budget Office projects that under the Republican budget passed here in March, there will be a $1.8 trillion in budget deficit over the next 10 years. So instead of paying off our Nation's debt by 2011, under the Republican budget the publicly held debt will stand at nearly $3 trillion.

I can remember when they took the debt clock down in Time Square and everybody across America cheered. Well, I would encourage those folks up on Wall Street to put it back up because it is growing again.

Now, what is the biggest reason for this radical reversal in our Nation's financial health? Primarily, the Bush tax gives away mainly to the super rich.

Now, what does this burgeoning public debt represent? First and foremost it means Social Security trust funds are being drawn down to pay for those tax breaks. And what is really amazing is that the Republican majority here in this Congress voted seven times to protect the Social Security trust fund in a lockbox. They said they wanted to ensure that not a penny of the Social Security surplus would be used for other programs. They have vowed that every penny of the surplus would be used solely to buy back outstanding Treasury bonds in a manner that would shore up Social Security for the future. So the Republican budget they passed in March does not simply break the lockbox and dip into the Social Security surplus, it calls for a grand and extended raid, tapping the surplus every year of the next decade. The timing could not be worse. We must balance the Federal budget and protect Social Security surpluses for the 44 million baby boomers set to retire over the next ten to 15 years. Working families have earned a secure retirement and we must put Social Security solvency first. Congress is the main protector of Social Security. It is the people's program intended by Franklin Roosevelt and every Democratic president since, to allow generations of retirees to live with independence and dignity. And it is time for the Republican majority to stop raiding Social Security. But so long as they continue to do so I will be down here every week telling the American people exactly how much they have taken from the one remaining portion of the Federal budget that is in surplus and that is the trust funds.

Last week we reported that they had taken as of June 5, $207,232,876,712, which last week amounted to about $717 per American. This week, they have now taken over $5 billion more.

As of June 11, 2002 they have now dipped into the trust fund $212,246,575,342 averaging about $754 per American. I do not think that this is responsible budgeting. I do not think this is what the Republican majority promised. I am generally not quite this partisan on the floor of this Congress. However, when it comes to Social Security and Medicare, and what it has meant to lift half a Nation out of poverty, there is absolutely no reason that Kenneth Lay and his likes should get a $350 million tax refund while average Americans are having their future retirement funds raided every single week. So I would just ask those who may be listening in New York City, if you could find that old debt clock and put it back, I think we need to tell the truth to the American people. It is time that we begin putting money in the trust fund, not drawing it down for purposes that are unrelated to the purpose for which it was originally organized.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks through the Chair.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

WOMEN AND SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. THURMAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. THURMAN. Mr. Speaker, before the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) leaves, I want to congratulate her on her presentation. Social Security is a very important issue, and certainly I think she laid out to the public what is happening here in Congress. And I agree with her that we should not be spending the Social Security money on anything other than Social Security. And quite frankly, this is something that almost every Member of Congress, both Democrats and Republicans, agreed to last year by overwhelmingly passing the lockbox for Social Security and Medicare. Unfortunately, as has been pointed out, the Social Security trust funds would lose two-thirds of its surplus under the President's budget. And the Congressional Budget Office projects that $740 billion of this money would be used to fund things other than Social Security benefits such as the tax cuts.

In the Nonpartisan Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, they estimate that the size of the tax cut is more than twice as large as the Social Security financing gap. So we could have used these resources that we were talking about and we continue to talk about to actually fix the Social Security instead of being used for this tax cut.

I think we all need to remember that our seniors continue to remain secure in their retirement, and I particularly want to talk about women as we have potentially come on a debate about the privatization proposals that many of us believe needs to be talked about a little bit, and certainly the concerns. But let us look at women in this country and how they rely on Social Security.

Women rely actually more on Social Security income than men. Almost two-thirds of all women 65 years and older get at least half of their income from Social Security. For one-third of these women, Social Security makes up 90 percent or more of their income. Guess what? Women, we live longer than men. We all know this. And, in fact, we live about 7 years longer. Fully 72 percent of Social Security recipients over 85 are women. And on average, women over age 85 rely on Social Security for 90 percent of their income. I will repeat that, 90 percent of their income. Traditional Social Security continues to pay benefits as long as the beneficiary is alive.

Now, when we start talking about private accounts, we honestly believe that women risk exhausting their savings in their most vulnerable years. Women take time out of the workforce to care for children and elderly parents. We have all been there; we have heard those stories. As a result, they rely much more heavily on their husband's Social Security benefits. Over 60 percent of women on Social Security receive spousal benefits while only 1 percent of men receive such payments.

So why is it important that we preserve traditional Social Security for women? Unlike private accounts, Social Security is automatically adjusted for inflation. For women, who live longer lives, private accounts run the risk of being worth less due to inflation or devalued accounts.

Well, then why are we having this debate? Well, the President in his guidelines for the Social Security Commission stated that we, in any proposal we create, must not invest Social Security dollars in the stock market. He also stated that the Social Security payroll taxes must not be increased. However, the President wants people to be able to use a portion of their payroll taxes for investing in stocks. The commission, which was commissioned by the President, recommended three options for reforming Social Security. But let me warn you that all three options divert at least some percentage of payroll tax to private accounts.

□ 2015

Diverting as little as 2 percent to private accounts the commission, and the commission recommended as much as 4 percent will result in a loss of trust funds of $1.1 trillion dollar over 10