

we need to make big plans to address these tremendous capital needs. In order to sufficiently fund our country's freight rail infrastructure needs, the Federal Government should create a new significant and dedicated stream of funds for rail projects. Just as we have a Highway Trust Fund and an Aviation Trust Fund, the legislation I introduced last week, H.R. 1617, would create a National Rail Infrastructure Program.

As in all things here in Washington, the big question on everyone's mind is where can we get the funds to support these needs? H.R. 1617 would fund these improvements through various funding streams including a reallocation of the 4.3 cents per gallon diesel-fuel tax that railroads currently pay into the general revenue fund. I believe that putting these funds into a rail infrastructure program that would benefit the public is the only logical thing to do. The total revenue stream in my legislation would amount to about \$3 billion per year.

There are some who may disagree with such a proposal; however, it would be a serious mistake to ignore our country's growing rail infrastructure needs and the gridlock that will result if we fail to expand our freight rail capacity. So let us heed Daniel Burnham's remarks. Let us think big and make some big plans to address the growing national problem facing our rail system. I hope my colleagues will join the 25 bipartisan co-sponsors and me and support H.R. 1617, the National Rail Infrastructure Program.

Remember, this Nation is great because we dare to dream great dreams. Please support this bill because this bill can do what we need to be done for freight movement in this Nation.

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

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina appeared hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO AIRLINE WORKERS

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, today, finally, 18 months after it was promised, the United States House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly, almost 2 to 1 when finally forced, to provide some financial assistance to the 150,000 airline workers who have lost their jobs as a result of 9/11 and the horrendous recession in the United States. It is expected that as many as another 70,000 will lose their jobs because of the slowdown in travel due to the war in Iraq and even more probably with the threat of SARS and other problems.

It is time that we recognize the service of these people to our country and the fact that they need a little bit of help in their time of need. The Congress rushed through a \$15 billion airline bailout shortly after 9/11 to try to help keep the industry in the air when people were afraid to fly. And that bailout provided more funds in one day than the entire deregulated industry has made in its entire history. Its entire 26-year history was eclipsed, their profits, by that one bill.

But the bill glaringly omitted any assistance directly to workers and it meaninglessly pretended to limit the salaries of CEOs. I have seen the results of the meaningless limits adopted by that legislation 2 years ago, or 18 months ago, in bailing out the airlines with the huge compensation packages and salaries and specially protected retirement that is being made available to the executives. It is defended. They said how could we get execs to work here if we did not pay them these outrageous salaries and if we did not totally protect their retirement? Guess what? All of the line workers, all the flight attendants, all the pilots, all the mechanics, all the gate agents, all the ticket agents, none of those people have specially protected pensions, and yet there has not been support from the industry or from this administration or from the majority in this House of Representatives to help those distressed workers.

And finally today, in one of those opportunities that rarely comes, a week ago when we were taking up the supplemental bill I tried to offer an amendment to help the workers; in fact, a Republican Member had gone earlier to a press conference with me and others to announce the legislation, and I asked him if he would go to the Committee on Rules and ask to have it made in order during the bill, and he said absolutely. Guess what? He did not show up. He did not show up because he was intimidated by the Republican leadership.

I came to the floor and offered that amendment, but the Republicans struck it down on a procedural technicality. They said we cannot take up a bill here to help the workers. We will get to it soon. Just like the 18 months we had promised previously, soon. Soon when?

Today, because we had one opportunity, which was a motion to instruct, usually a technical sort of thing in the House of Representative, we focused in on assistance to workers that has been long overdue; and when forced to vote, we find that nearly two-thirds of the United States House of Representatives supports that, but their leadership and the White House leadership has been preventing us from taking that step.

Congratulations to the House for that vote today and shame on the leadership and shame on the leadership downtown that did not allow that vote, and shame on them if they find some way to try to kill this in the con-

ference committee because the White House is objecting that there is too much money in the bill to help the airlines now that we have added a little bit of money to directly help the workers. We will all be watching to see what comes in that final conference report, and we will know who killed the assistance to workers if it is stripped out of the bill.

After this overwhelming vote here and the overwhelming vote in the Senate, let the majority work its will and let us help these workers and their families.

AUTISM AND VACCINATIONS

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

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, on a regular basis I come down here and talk about children who are autistic and the reasons for it. We have been receiving letters from across the country from literally hundreds and probably thousands of parents who have autistic children, and they do not know what to do about it, and all of them believe their children were damaged by the mercury that is in vaccines. It has been in children's vaccines for a long, long time.

Children get between 25 and 30 vaccinations before they go to school, and up until just recently almost all of them contained thimerosal which was 50 percent mercury. We all know mercury is toxic to the brain, and yet they had it as a preservative in vaccines. And our children, in my opinion, and scientists and doctors from across the globe and here in the States believe that mercury in the vaccines was one of the major causes.

Here on this easel I have pictures of probably 50 or 60 or 70 kids who were damaged by the mercury in the vaccines, and I have letters that I read every night. We have a system here called the Vaccine Injury Compensation Fund that is supposed to take care of these children if they are damaged by vaccines. It has \$1.8 billion in it. It is supposed to protect the pharmaceutical companies from lawsuits, and yet these parents of these kids have had a very difficult time getting satisfaction and restitution from that fund, and many of them, because there was a 3-year statute of limitations, could not even get in the fund.

The reason I bring this up right now is because we are in the process of working on legislation that would deal with this problem, that would help these kids who missed the opportunity by getting in that 3-year window of opportunity to be put in the program so that their case could be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the special master. These families are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars, they are going bankrupt, selling their homes, borrowing money, doing everything to help their children, and there is nowhere for them to turn. We need to

make sure that they have access to this fund for which it was created and not have to go to courts to have class action lawsuits. And that is what we are working on with the other body and the majority leader in the other body to get done.

I want to read just a couple of letters that come from these people who have no place to turn. Here is a letter that came from a Marcy Kelly from Mullica Hill, New Jersey, and she writes:

"My son turned 4 in October, 2002, and was diagnosed with autism after a long history of medical problems that began at 2 months, within 1 week of his first series of thimerosal-containing vaccines. His immune system, weakened to where he couldn't handle viruses (resulting in recurring ear infections and RSV), he had reflux, terrible allergies and eczema, and a reaction to his MMR shot that is documented to have caused vomiting nightly for 6 months post vaccination and 2 years of diarrhea. Medical tests show toxic levels of metals, reduced glutathione, malabsorption, maldigestion, severe allergies, and liver problems, all common in those poisoned by mercury. He regressed into autism between 18 and 24 months." As a father and grandfather, you understand the heartbreak that I felt.

This is a picture of him.

"We have spent well over \$100,000 in the last 2 years, mostly on medical visits, tests, and therapies. Our insurance company, Aetna US Healthcare, stopped paying for these funds." So they have noplacement to go.

And she ends up by saying, "I understand that you intend to take our stories before Congress, not individually but as a group. If you could take a single child (or family with more than one child on the spectrum) and pile up all of the medical and therapy bills, ADA drill books and materials, and supplements used to help them heal from the effects of vaccines, it would be quite mountainous and tell a story as well. God be with you and with other politicians as they vote on matters relating to autism. In the quiet of night, if politicians would ask themselves the question 'what is right?' the answer in their hearts would be to help their children and their families."

We have the ability to do that, and we must do something and we must do it very soon, because these families are suffering; and we have to be very diligent to make sure the other body does not put some language in the bill that would be like what was in the homeland security bill which protected pharmaceutical companies but not the children.

I yield to the gentlewoman from California.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman so very much. I caught his presentation on the screen as I was going through the cloakroom, and I cannot tell him how proud I am of him for dealing with this issue of autism and children. I commend him for his in-

terest. I commend him for the work that he is doing on it.

I came in close contact with children who were autistic when I started in the Head Start program.

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Prior to the Head Start program, we had children who were autistic and had other kinds of deficiencies that never got discovered, and that is one reason I love the Head Start program so very, very much. But the most interesting and the most challenging and the most untold story was the story of children with autism.

I join the gentleman in his efforts and will do everything that I can to bring attention and resources to help these families of children who have autism.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, we will contact the gentlewoman on that legislation. We will be down here every night that is available to talk about this issue. I thank the gentlewoman.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE HONORABLE NANCY PELOSI, DEMOCRATIC LEADER

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BURGESS) laid before the House the following communication from NANCY PELOSI, Democratic Leader:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
OFFICE OF THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER,
April 8, 2003.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to (40 U.S.C. 188a), I hereby appoint Rep. Chaka Fattah as a member of the United States Capitol Preservation Commission for the 108th Congress.
Best Regards,

NANCY PELOSI.

WILL WE WIN THE PEACE?

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

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, due to the bravery and the magnificent performance of American troops, our Armed Forces will soon win a resounding victory over Saddam Hussein, disarming him and eliminating the threat of his regime. Now that we are on the verge of winning the war, we must now turn our attention to winning the peace.

The morning after our military victory over Saddam, we will wake up to four challenges in Iraq: peacekeeping, humanitarian relief, reconstruction, and governance. How we face those challenges will determine whether we win the peace, win the battle for the hearts and minds of the people of Iraq, enhance our status in the Muslim world, and maintain our credibility as the leader of free and democratic nations.

I fear we could fail to meet those challenges if we pursue an aggressive,

antagonistic diplomacy that makes demands of our allies, but does not listen to them. We could fail if we embrace unilateralism and abandon our traditional reliance on multinational action. We could fail if we allow the reality or even the appearance of an American military colonial government in Iraq.

To meet these challenges and best serve American national interests, as well as the best interests of the citizens of Iraq, I suggest eight steps:

First, the State Department, not the Defense Department, must be in charge of American policy after the military victory.

Second, whenever and wherever possible, we must internationalize the stabilization and reconstruction operations and not try to do it all ourselves.

Third, American troops in the field will be needed to keep the peace, but we should move quickly to spread the burden of peacekeeping by giving NATO the task. NATO is a robust military alliance that defeated one tyrant in Kosovo and surely could keep order in a post-Saddam Iraq.

Fourth, emergency relief authority must begin with the State Department and USAID, but there is no better chief administrator for the humanitarian challenges than the United Nations. Its vast resources, experience and expertise are unparalleled.

Fifth, we must engage expert multilateral organizations like the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank in the reconstruction of Iraq's infrastructure. A debt restructuring is needed to deal with Iraq's financial burden of \$383 billion including foreign debt, compensation claims, and pending contracts.

Sixth, we should convene a donor's conference soon after the military victory. Funds will be needed right away for quick start reconstruction projects. This could provide a funding opportunity for the Arab League.

Seventh, Iraqis must establish corruption-free control over their own oil. We should advocate for a transparent and reformed industry that accounts for oil revenues and devotes profits to rebuilding the country.

Eighth, we should urge the United Nations to sponsor a conference on the formation and direction of a transitional Iraqi-based government. Iraqi provisional leaders, internal Saddam opponents, exiles and the international community should be brought together to establish a stable representative government of Iraqis.

We must seize this opportunity to stabilize and unify Iraq and demonstrate to the entire world our commitment to democratic values, personal liberties, and social justice. That is how we win the peace in Iraq.

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