

Mr. REID. Madam President, we yield back any time left on the minority side.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING
BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is now closed.

TRANSPORTATION, TREASURY,
AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2004

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now proceed to the consideration of H.R. 2989, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2989) making appropriations for the Department of Transportation and Treasury, and independent agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama is recognized.

Mr. SHELBY. Madam President, I send a substitute amendment to the desk at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Alabama [Mr. SHELBY] proposes an amendment numbered 1899.

(The text of the amendment is printed in the RECORD under "Amendments Submitted.")

Mr. SHELBY. Madam President, I am pleased to present to the Senate the Transportation, Treasury, and general government appropriations bill for the fiscal year 2004.

The reorganization of the Appropriations Committee earlier this year substantially changed the jurisdiction of this subcommittee. While the jurisdiction of this subcommittee is not as wholly different as the new Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security, the bill before the Senate is quite different from the bill the Senate has considered in the past.

For the first time, programs outside the Department of Transportation have to directly compete against certain Transportation programs. This bill is within the subcommittee's 302(b) allocation. Despite being \$300 million below the President's request, I believe we have included adequate resources to meet our responsibilities in a balanced and responsible manner.

The goal of the subcommittee is to allocate scarce resources to the administration and our Members' highest priorities, to glean out savings where possible, and to apply those savings to programs that save lives, improve America's competitiveness, and programs that create jobs. I am pleased to report that the bill before the Senate does just that.

I wish to provide a brief overview of the highlights of the bill. The budget request proposes an 8-percent raise. I

am proud to report that the bill rejects the proposal and has included a historically high \$33.8 billion for highway infrastructure investment.

It will come as no surprise to anybody that my highest priority for the Transportation portion of this bill is to provide adequate investment in our highway system. Highway investment creates jobs through infrastructure development, fuels economic growth by reducing the transportation costs associated with American goods and services, and improves the quality of life of our citizens and enhances their ability to move around this country easily.

The bill before us also includes \$20 million for AMBER Alert grants to expand and improve the Nation's ability to quickly recover missing children. We know the alert system has worked in Texas. This investment will provide additional infrastructure across the country to notify the public to immediately begin looking for missing children and suspects.

While many of Treasury's law enforcement functions were transferred to the Department of Homeland Security, Treasury continues its important responsibility for combating terrorist financing and other financial crimes both domestically and abroad. The bill includes funding to establish the Office of Terrorist and Financial Crimes.

We have also included additional resources to support Treasury's policy responsibilities pertaining to counter-terrorist financing and financial crimes. I believe these are essential functions in our Nation's war against this fight on terrorism.

The bill includes an additional \$20 million for the HIDA Program. Over the years, the HIDA Program has been effective in coordinating Federal, State, and local law enforcement to disrupt drug trafficking. We have also included language to, once again, make the National Youth Antidrug Media Campaign an effective investment for the Federal Government.

While a few of my colleagues may disagree with the direction the bill proposes to take in regard to the media campaign, there are many more who believe a more stringent approach is necessary. I believe this bill strikes the appropriate balance between responsible congressional oversight of the campaign and allowing it to move forward in an attempt to effect change among our Nation's youth. Further delay in the courthouse construction process would only hamper the effort to meet the growing caseload demands on the Federal judiciary.

The bill includes \$500 million to fund the Help America Vote Act. This funding, in addition to the \$830 million appropriated in fiscal year 2003, will allow more than \$1.3 billion to be distributed to States in fiscal year 2004. I am pleased the administration has finally sent up its nominations for the commissioner of the Election Assistance Commission.

It is my understanding the Rules Committee plans to hold a hearing on

these nominees next Tuesday. I believe it is important that the Senate expedite this process so the resources we appropriate can be distributed to the States in a reasonable manner.

The recommendation also includes funding to continue the student and parent mock elections. I know many of my colleagues are very interested in this important program and truly believe in the merits of this valuable hands-on civic lesson. That is precisely why we have included the money.

The bill retains the so-called pay parity provision for Federal employees and uniform personnel and sets the adjustment at 4.1 percent.

Finally, the bill includes \$1.3 billion for Amtrak. I reiterate what I said during the committee consideration. I am deeply concerned about the offsets that have been included in this bill to pay for the additional \$400 million above the budget request. We are barely keeping up with the demand for transit, highway, and airport infrastructure investment and maintenance. Amtrak, on the other hand, can hardly keep up passenger demand for its current routes. That is not just rhetoric. Amtrak provides roughly the same number of passenger trips as it did 20 years ago, while all other modes of transportation have more than tripled.

I hope we can move this legislation quickly through the Senate and into the conference with the House. I look forward to working with the Senator from Washington, the former chairman of the committee, and also the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on Appropriations, and with interested Members, to consider and pass this important legislation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ENZI). The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I rise in support of the Senate amendments to H.R. 2989, the Department of Transportation, Treasury and General Government Appropriations bill for fiscal year 2004. This is the first time that the Senate will debate an appropriations bill that combines these critically important Government functions.

As my colleagues know, at the beginning of this year, the Appropriations Committee combined the Transportation Subcommittee with the former Treasury, Postal and General Government Subcommittee. We were particularly fortunate to have Senator SHELBY as our chairman, especially since he is perhaps the only Senator who has chaired both the Transportation Subcommittee and Treasury Postal Subcommittee at different times.

Ever since the Senate adopted this year's final budget resolution, I have worried that the Appropriations Committee would not have sufficient resources to meet our needs and to make the investments we must make to improve our country. Today it is clear that my concerns were well-founded, not only with this appropriations bill, but with others the Senate has debated this year. However, despite the limited