

back to a quote he used to tell me as a young man. He loved Mark Twain. When we had one of those difficult decisions to make, he would always say: Son, remember what Mark Twain said. When confronted with a difficult decision, do what's right. You will surprise a few; you will amaze the rest.

A decision that is pretty simple has become very complex for this Senate. In the end, we should peel back the arguments and look back to the foundation under which all of us operate, and that is our Constitution. The question is simple and our responsibility is clear, and every judge nominated by this President, or any President, deserves an up-or-down vote one way or another. It is the responsibility of the Senate. It is the direction of the Constitution.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is now closed.

TRANSPORTATION EQUITY ACT: A LEGACY FOR USERS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3) to authorize funds for Federal-aid highways, highway safety programs, and transit programs, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Inhofe amendment No. 567, to provide a complete substitute.

Bayh amendment No. 568 (to Amendment No. 567), to amend title VII of the Tariff Act of 1930 to provide that the provisions relating to countervailing duties apply to non-market economy countries.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, we have several pages of amendments that are out there. We repeat our invitation on behalf of myself and Senator JEFFORDS. We want to invite all Democrats and Republicans who have amendments to the highway bill to bring them down. It is going to get crowded later as we go on. Now we have time for adequate consideration, for deliberation, and we encourage Members to bring their amendments to the floor.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. ALLARD. Madam President, I rise in support of the SAFETEA bill. Effective transportation is vital to our Nation, and I believe this bill will be an important step in helping to meet the country's transportation needs.

I would like to thank both Senator INHOFE and Senator JEFFORDS for working hard on this bill. The people of Oklahoma are blessed with the hard work Senator INHOFE has put forward,

both in the Senate and when I had the opportunity to serve with him in the House.

This bill has required a lot of hard work and a lot of dedication. He has put forward an effort that I think we all appreciate. Sometimes we forget to say thank you for the hard work that goes into a bill such as this, including the hard work of the staff, I might add. The staff on both sides has been helpful in putting this legislation together.

In particular, I express my support for the public transportation title of the bill. While many people erroneously refer to this as the highways bill, it is actually a comprehensive reauthorization of the Nation's surface transportation programs, including transit. A healthy, well-functioning transit network can greatly enhance the effectiveness of other transportation modes, and as chairman of the Subcommittee on Housing and Transportation of the Banking Committee, I have had many opportunities to see the difference reliable public transportation can make for both individuals and communities.

I also express my thanks to the Banking Committee chairman, Chairman SHELBY. For many years he has been one of the leading champions for public transportation in the Senate. I appreciate his dedication. It has been a pleasure to work with him as subcommittee chairman on reauthorization of the mass transit programs.

I also recognize and thank Senator SARBANES, the ranking member of the Banking Committee, and Senator REED, the ranking member of the Housing and Transportation Subcommittee. They have been actively involved in the reauthorization process, and I appreciate the thoughtful perspective they brought to all of our discussions. Together I believe we have been able to accomplish a great deal to improve public transportation in a strong and bipartisan manner.

I thank again Senator INHOFE and all the other Republicans on the Environment and Public Works Committee for their hard work and leadership. I miss not being on the committee. I was on the committee when this bill first moved forward. I very much appreciate working with my colleagues.

Public transportation is a key component of our Nation's transportation infrastructure and provides safe, reliable, efficient, and economic service. Public transportation can create jobs and stimulate economic development, as well as reduce traffic congestion and pollution.

Because I represent the State of Colorado, some people wonder why I care about public transportation. Beyond the national policy concerns, these same people are often surprised when I explain how important public transportation is to my Colorado constituents.

Public transportation encompasses a great deal beyond the stereotype of subways and heavy rail. People in the Denver suburbs can now take light rail

to their jobs downtown. Students in Boulder often use the bus system to get around town. Sick people on the eastern plains may rely on demand-responsive transit services to go to chemotherapy or dialysis appointments. Public transportation is important to many different types of people in many different locations. This bill will help ensure that all these people have access to reliable public transportation.

I believe the Senate passed an excellent transportation reauthorization bill this last year, and I was especially pleased with the transit title. I believe it made important progress in a number of areas while building upon the many successes of TEA-21. Fortunately, we come to the floor with substantially the same package, and I am hopeful this approach will speed things along and allow the bill to move forward with a minimal number of amendments.

I am very supportive of the formula changes made in the transit title. These go a long way toward addressing my longstanding concerns with the distribution of transit dollars. As my colleagues may know, one of my top priorities during the consideration of TEA-21 was to bring more equity to the distribution of transit dollars. Senator Rod Grams and I were able to make changes that allowed States such as Colorado to have greater access to this resource.

In drafting the reauthorization bill, greater equity has continued to be my top priority. While the traditional transit cities have many important needs, it is time to update the formulas to include other needs. Today's bill strikes a balance by providing for more traditional transit cities and also providing for new needs by creating several new formulas.

In particular, I strongly support the new growing States formula. Historically, many of the fastest growing areas in Western and Southern States have had a difficult time obtaining transit dollars. Yet their explosive growth makes transit all the more important. Mass transit can help growing areas reduce traffic congestion and air pollution, as well as increase access to jobs. The new growing States formula will help direct additional resources to the high-growth areas with the greatest need.

I also support the new transit-intensive cities formula. This new formula will reward smaller cities that are providing greater than average transit service. In addition to providing an incentive for cities to improve their transit service, I support the formula because it deliberately directs taxpayer dollars to areas that are utilizing them most efficiently.

Finally, I support the new rural low-density formula. This formula will help rural areas provide critically needed service. Rural areas and very small towns generally have older and less affluent citizens, the very people who often rely on public transportation. In