

a good bill for the country and a good bill for Michigan.

I am pleased the Senate is passing this critical bill today. Unfortunately, this has been delayed for over 20 months and Congress has passed six TEA-21 extensions. It is my hope that we will not have to pass a seventh and this bill will be completed before the end of the month. We have already lost one spring construction season in Michigan, and we certainly don't want to lose another.

During the budget debate, I worked with Senator TALENT on a successful amendment to help the Senate produce a well-funded highway bill and keep all the funding options on the table. This amendment was included in the final budget resolution, and I am pleased to say it helped pave the way for the additional \$11 billion that was added to the Senate bill.

As my colleagues know, this bill isn't just about improving our roads, transit systems, and buses, but it is also about creating jobs. The Department of Transportation estimates that for every \$1 billion of highway spending, we are creating 47,500 new jobs, and this generates more than \$2 billion in economic activity.

Mr. President, we need this bill. Michigan needs this bill. Over the last 4 years, Michigan has lost jobs. The SAFETEA bill will create good-paying jobs and help thousands of Michigan families make ends meet. So it is absolutely critical we pass this bill today.

We are not talking about minimum-wage jobs, we are talking about well-paying jobs that help Michigan families pay their mortgages, save for retirement, and pay for their children's education. The SAFETEA bill will create over 59,000 jobs in Michigan alone.

Mr. President, this delay has also cost Michigan additional highway funding that we desperately need. Our communities are growing, congestion is getting worse, and our roads are worn down through increased wear and tear, but we are still working under funding formulas that are over 7 years old.

In fact, Detroit ranks ninth nationally for having the worst traffic congestion. That is even worse than the delays in Boston and Philadelphia.

The Senate bill would provide Michigan with over \$6.65 billion in highway funding and \$600 million in transit investment to help address our congested roads and increase bus service throughout our State. This also is desperately needed.

We cannot fix these problems without a well-funded highway bill. Unfortunately, the House TEA-LU doesn't provide the resources we need to address our aging roads and transit systems. This also would mean fewer jobs for Michigan and the country.

I also add that the Senate bill continues to move us forward for Michigan to get its fair share. We are not there in terms of dollar for dollar, and I will continue to fight in every Transpor-

tation bill until we get there. But we need to move forward so Michigan gets a better share in this bill and a better opportunity to have the resources and jobs we need.

As this bill goes to conference with the House, I urge my colleagues to stand behind the Senate bill. Once again, this Senate will be passing a bill that is better than what has been passed in the House. It is more fair. I am very hopeful we will stand together on a bipartisan basis and insist that the Senate version ultimately be the version that is passed.

We also need for the bill to be fair and for it to meet the needs of our communities, and we need to make sure we are creating as many jobs as possible. It is time to invest in the best possible resources for our Nation's transportation needs. I am pleased that because of the bipartisan effort in the Senate we will be having a vote today on final passage of this desperately needed bill. Hopefully, we will see it going to the President in a form that is fair for Michigan, for all of our States, and that it is something that will address the future needs of our country.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 3

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the consecutive votes in relation to the pending amendments on the highway bill begin at noon today, with the additional time equally divided as before, and that no second-degree amendments be in order prior to the votes in relation to the pending amendments; provided, that following the first vote, the Senate then stand in recess as under the previous order, with the remaining votes occurring after the recess. I also ask unanimous consent that there be 2 minutes of debate equally divided before each of the votes in the stacked series.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### AMENDMENT NO. 706 WITHDRAWN

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that amendment No. 706 be withdrawn.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that following the first vote, Senator LANDRIEU be recognized for 5 minutes as in morning business prior to the recess.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. INHOFE. I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Florida is recognized.

#### ASSEMBLY TO PROMOTE THE CIVIL SOCIETY IN CUBA

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss a very important sense-of-the-Senate resolution pending before the Senate. This resolution expresses support for a historic meeting taking place in Havana, Cuba, this Friday, May 20. It is called the Assembly to Promote the Civil Society in Cuba. This resolution expresses support for the courageous individuals who continue to fight for and advance liberty and democracy for the Cuban people.

I thank my colleague from Florida, Senator BILL NELSON, for partnering with me on this important effort. I also thank and commend the 23 other colleagues who have signed on to this bipartisan effort in cosponsoring this resolution.

For too long, the Cuban people have been starved of the precious freedoms so dearly cherished in the United States and in democracies around the world. This year, May 20 provides us with a unique opportunity to highlight and support efforts to advance liberty and democracy in Cuba.

I stress to my colleagues the tremendous valor and bravery of these pro-democracy advocates who are risking their lives pursuing their natural God-given freedoms that they continue to be denied.

Already there have been reports of disappearances, state security intimidation, and of infrastructure interruptions by the regime in order to stop this gathering. For someone to travel from one part of Cuba to another, within their country, citizens must seek the government's permission before doing so. Transportation is made more difficult and the ever-present Committees for the Defense of Revolution, which stand as government watchdogs in every neighborhood and on every street corner, provide even more intimidation and fear to those who seek to attend this gathering.

May 20 has long marked an important day for the Cuban people. It was on this day in 1902 that the island first gained its independence. This is a particularly poignant moment in history, when the United States fought side by side with the Cuban people as they sought to throw off the yoke of colonialism. After 4 years of building a governmental structure and helping the Cuban people to gain its governance, in 1902 the United States ceded independence to the people of Cuba. It was on May 20, 1902, that took place. This is what we currently are looking for, for the Cuban people to be allowed to celebrate. The current Cuban Government prefers to celebrate other dates more in