Since it is money taken from those States, it would seem we would want to give the States the option to make the best priority choice for those dollars for their individual citizens.

I am very appreciative of Senator MURRAY's agreement to take two of our amendments that are based on transparency to the American public. One requires HUD to report to Congress on homes that are owned and the cost to taxpayers so the American people see what the Department of Housing and Urban Development is doing. The other is an amendment to make available to the public all the reports—and there are numerous reports required in this bill of the Transportation Department—to make those available to the public as well so it is in the light of transparency. I am very thankful for Senator MURRAY's agreement on those two amendments.

I have two other amendments I will talk about when Senator MURRAY gets to the floor. Otherwise, Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2010

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3288, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3288) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Coburn/McCain amendment No. 2371, to remove an unnecessary and burdensome mandate on the States, by allowing them to opt out of a provision that requires States to spend 10 percent of their surface transportation funds on enhancement projects such as roadkill reduction and highway beautification.

Coburn/McCain amendment No. 2370, to fully provide for the critical surface transportation needs of the United States by prohibiting funds from being used on lower-priority projects, such as roadkill reduction programs, transportation museums, scenic beautification projects, or bicycle paths, if the Highway Trust Fund does not contain amounts sufficient to cover unfunded highway authorizations.

Coburn/Mccain amendment No. 2372, to fully provide for the critical surface transportation needs of the United States by prohibiting funds from being used on lower-priority projects, such as transportation museums.

Coburn amendment No. 2374, to determine the total cost to taxpayers of Government ownership of residential homes.

Coburn Amendment No. 2377, to require public disclosure of certain reports.

Wicker modified amendment No. 2366, to permit Amtrak passengers to safely transport firearms and ammunition in their checked baggage.

Vitter amendment No. 2376, to affirm the continuing existence of the community service requirements under section 12(c) of the United States Housing Act of 1937.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, we are now here on our fifth day of considering the transportation and housing appropriations bill. We do have a number of amendments that have been offered. The Senator from Oklahoma is here. He has the first 30 minutes under the previous order. I have the following 10 minutes. I would like all Senators to know that if all time is not used, we intend to yield back and we expect that these votes may occur as early as 11:30.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I join with my colleague, the Senator from Washington, in saying please let's get on with it. This will fill out a full week now. This will be Thursday through Wednesday we have been on the floor. We want to bring these amendments forward. I understand we may not need 40 minutes, and we certainly would like to get these votes started so we can wrap them up before we break for the scheduled lunches.

Again, if the Senators could be ready for a vote, we hope as early as 11:30, no later than 11:40, and we will have a series of votes. We look forward to dealing with these amendments and moving on to others.

I thank our colleagues for their attention and let's get on with it. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

AMENDMENT NO. 2370, AS MODIFIED

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I believe the desk has a modification to amendment No. 2370, and I ask unanimous consent for that modification.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to modifying the amendment?

Without objection, the amendment is so modified.

The amendment (No. 2370), as modified, is as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. (a) None of the funds made available by this Act may be used for any purpose described in subsection (b) until the date on which the Secretary of Transportation certifies, based on the estimates made under section 9503(d)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 of unfunded highway authorizations in relation to net highway receipts (as those terms are defined in that section) for the period of fiscal years 2010 through 2013, that the Highway Trust Fund contains or will contain amounts sufficient to cover all such unfunded highway authorizations for those fiscal years.

(b) The purposes referred to in subsection (a) are——

(1) transportation museums;

(2) scenic beautification projects; and

(3) pedestrian or bicycle facility projects.

AMENDMENT NO. 2371

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I wish to talk about all three of the amendments I plan on getting votes on. I will give a little summary on amendment No. 2371.

The way the highway trust fund spending is set up now is that if we send your State $100 million, $10 million of that $100 million has to be spent on enhancement projects, regardless of the condition of your roads, regardless of the condition of your highways, regardless of the condition of the bridges in your State. All this does is allow States to not have to follow that in this, No. 1, tough economic time; No. 2, when we know highway deaths related to roads and bridges alone account for 13,000 deaths a year. So we will intend to ask for a vote on that. It does not prohibit the States from doing these enhancements, much as was claimed in debate yesterday but, rather, gives an opportunity for the States to make good value judgments about what is in the best interests of their State in terms of highways, roads, and bridges.

AMENDMENT NO. 2372

Amendment No. 2372 is an amendment which requires us to prioritize. Unbeknownst to most Americans, money that is collected from the purchase of your gasoline has been used—$28 million of it, as a matter of fact—to fund transportation museums. That may be a great use in a time when we are not in the economic situation and circumstances we find ourselves in today. What this amendment does is say, until we get out of the trouble we are in and until the trust fund gets back to where it needs to be, we shouldn't be prioritizing and we shouldn't be earmarking money for transportation museums. It goes back to common sense. The money we are collecting in gas taxes ought to be used to repair and build highways and bridges and roads, not fund museums.

As a matter of fact, several of the museums that have been funded in the last 5 years are already closed. They came through earmarks. We spent millions of dollars. Nobody had any interest in them; consequently, they were closed. In this one bill we have one that has been earmarked. It may be the right thing to do, but now is not the right time to do it.

So what this amendment simply does is say that for this year—this year only—we are not going to allow lower priority items such as a transportation museum to displace money that could be used to enhance somebody's safety or protect their life. I don't know what the outcome on this will be, but I think it will be a telling statement for the Congress that if we decide museums

are more important than somebody's life—more important—the priority is there—it will show a disconnect in this Congress as to whether we are willing to make good priorities with Americans' taxpayer dollars or do we continue to ignore common sense and spend the money the way some or one or many individuals would like to do it, without regard to what the original intended purpose for the money was and without regard to the very serious situation we find with our roads, highways, and bridges.

Senator MCCAIN and I asked the Government Accountability Office to look at where the money was spent over the last 4 years prior to this year, and $3.7 billion of highway money went for transportation enhancements, of which museums are one. Granted, it wasn't a lot of money, but when you take $38 million and apply it to defective bridges in Oklahoma, what you can do is fix 75 of our defective bridges—bridges that are putting people's lives at risk and money that Oklahomans paid out that ought to come back and take care of the problems we have. The same for Colorado. The same for Missouri. The same for all these States. We are behind.

We have 137,000 or so bridges that are suspect in this country. We recently had an individual in Tulsa, OK, who was seriously injured when a chunk of concrete fell from a bridge through his windshield. So it wasn't the people driving over the bridge; it is the people going under the bridge who are put at risk, simply because we have focused money on things other than highways, bridges, and roads. So it is by law right now that we have to spend 10 percent of that money, and some of it goes to museums.

All this amendment says is, right now, let's not spend money on museums and let's fix roads and highways and bridges. We authorized $4.1 billion over the last 5 years for transportation enhancement set-asides. All of that comes out of the 10 percent mandatory—and I have the other amendment I talked about before.

Let me go through what the GAO report said: $850 million had to be spent on scenic beautification and landscaping projects. Well, $850 million could have built a lot of highways in this country. It could have repaired a lot of those 137,000 bridges. Yet we mandated that the money got spent on something other than roads, highways, and bridges. We allocated $488 million for behavioral research. There is no question that some of that is absolutely necessary in terms of us making decisions. We allocated $224 million for 366 projects to rehabilitate or operate historic transportation buildings—$224 million. That is half of what Oklahoma spends a year on what they get from the trust fund, and we did it to preserve historic buildings and transportation novelties rather than spend it on highways, roads, and bridges. We allocated $84 million for road-kill prevention, wildlife habitat connectivity; $28 million, as I said, to establish 55 transportation museums; $19 million to control outdoor advertising.

What this GAO report says is we refuse to make the hard choices about priorities. All this museum amendment says is not now. For 1 year, let's spend the money we were going to spend on museums and put it into real infrastructure, real highways, real bridges.

AMENDMENT NO. 2370

I have one other amendment I wish to discuss—and then I will reserve the remainder of my time and give the chairman her time—and that is amendment No. 2370. We know, because of the increased price of gasoline, and we know because of the economic recession we find ourselves in, that dollars going into the highway trust fund have been added. As a matter of fact, twice in the last 2 years, we have borrowed money from our children and grandchildren to keep the trust fund viable because the taxes coming in off the trust fund have not kept up with the pace of spending we have authorized and subsequently obligated to be spent. We know the highway trust fund is on the brink of insolvency. Within a year, if we don't get the 18-month extension which I think is being planned, we will go back and steal another $7 billion or $8 billion from our kids to keep this system viable.

What this amendment says is, if we are going to do that or until it becomes viable on its own, we should preclude the transportation enhancement program. We know we don't have enough money to take care of the very serious problems we have on our roads, on our highways, and with our bridges. Yet we continue to force the States to spend 10 percent of their money not on highways, roads or bridges. That doesn't make any sense. So this is a much stronger amendment than my earlier amendment that says, until the highway trust fund becomes solvent, until we quit stealing money from our kids and our grandkids and actually pay as we go, pay for what we are wanting to do, at least that 10 percent of the money is going to get spent on real roads, real bridges, and real highways, not on enhancements.

I know many do not agree, and I am readily perceptive of their disagreement. The fact is, if you go out and poll the American people and you ask them: Should we fix the highways that allow 13,000 people a year to die because of the quality of the highway or should we build a walking trail or a sound barrier, they will all say: Fix the highways first.

Come back and do these other things later. Should we build a museum when we have roads in disrepair? No. They will all say that—unless they are the ones benefiting directly from the money going to an earmarked project for a museum.

So it is not a question of common sense, and it is not a question of priority; it is a question of whether we will break the chain of how things are done here and, in fact, say: American taxpayers, you are paying this money every time you pump a gallon of gas, and we are going to make sure that goes for roads, bridges, and highways first; and when we get extra money, we will then enhance the areas around or surrounding the highways.

I reserve the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington is recognized.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, the Senator from California will be here shortly to respond to a number of these amendments, since they fall into the jurisdiction of her full committee.

The Senator from Oklahoma has offered three amendments to this bill that are related to transportation. Each of those amendments would limit the ability of States and local governments to spend their highway grants on activities that are eligible for funding under the Federal aid highway program.

Those limitations would not only apply to funds that have been earmarked in this bill. I think Senators should understand they would also apply to the formula grants that go to our States and local governments, which plan their own transportation investments.

The Senator's amendments would take away funding from transportation enhancement, especially streetscaping, bike and pedestrian paths, and the mitigation of highway runoff pollution.

Today, all of these activities are eligible for funding under the current highway authorization law, the SAFETEA–LU Act. Under that act, communities are required to prepare and provide comprehensive transportation plans in order to receive their Federal highway and transit grants. Those plans have to include the communities' plans for bike and pedestrian pathways, because those transportation plans are meant to be comprehensive, and our national policy, which has been debated on the floor of the Senate and the House, has been to recognize bike and pedestrian paths as one component of a complete transportation system. They cannot constitute the largest part of the system but a plan that ignores that element is incomplete.

When we provide bike paths and walkways, we help keep our families and our neighbors safe. Without these paths, many more bicyclists, pedestrians, people who commute to work that way would compete with vehicle traffic. Everybody on a bike or footpath is vulnerable when they are mixed in with heavy traffic. But school-age children are the most vulnerable.

When we debated this policy under SAFETEA-LU, we determined that bikeways and walkways are an important part and are components of our transportation system for people who cannot afford a car and have to walk to work. People who walk to school are impacted by the Senator's amendment.

I don't believe that this bill—the current transportation appropriations bill—is an appropriate time that we should be debating and changing our highway policy, which is so important to all of our communities across the country.

The chairman of the appropriate committee is on the floor. I know she wants to respond. I yield the floor to her at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California is recognized.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, what is the order right now? How much time remains before we vote?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Six-and-a-half minutes remain.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I thank the chairman of the subcommittee for setting aside some time for me because, as the chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, I am concerned about the Coburn amendment. I want to discuss why.

The particular program that the Senator is going after is the transportation enhancements program, created in 1991, in a very bipartisan way in the transportation bill. The purpose of the program is to encourage investment in some very important priorities for the Nation. I want to talk about that.

I particularly want to say that, on average, this program provided $650 million for these important activities each year. I want to point out that if you relate that $650 million to jobs, we are talking about many jobs, because $11.5 billion was made available since 1992, and that translates to 400,000 jobs—good-paying jobs, jobs that do important things, jobs that can't be shipped overseas. And of all the times to come to the floor and go after a program that is a job creator and, in addition, does many important things that actually save lives, I don't think this is the time. Frankly, I don't think there is any time for that.

For example, one of the uses of these funds is that we try to stop highway runoff—runoff that has very harmful chemicals and pollution in it, and it goes right into waterways. That is something we should not stop. That is something we owe to our children, to protect them from pollution.

We also use the funds to reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality. Anybody who has seen the result of a collision with a deer or other large animal, as I have in the county where I have lived for 40 years, knows you are dealing with danger for all the parties involved. Why on Earth would we come down here and strike the funding for a program that protects our kids from pollution and saves lives by making sure that our local people do the right thing and make sure these animals don't have ready access or easy access to our freeways?

Let me put this into exact numbers. I know my friend is an exacting debater, and he is a great debater. A study under the National Cooperative Highway Research Program estimated that each year wildlife collisions are responsible for 200 human deaths, 29,000 injuries, and more than $1 billion in property damage. So even with the funding that we have, this is an issue, and we don't want to make matters worse.

I am going to be specific. In Washington State, $75,000 in TE funds, which my friend wants to strike, provided in 1999 for radio collars for elk and an alert system for motorists to reduce elk-vehicle collisions on Highway 101 in the Sequim Valley. As a result of the project, elk-vehicle collisions have dropped from an average of 2.5 every year to only 1 in the past 7 years. Why on Earth do we want to pull money from a fund that saves lives?

In Colorado, $108,000 in TE funds were provided in 2007 to remove broken one-way deer gates and replace them with escape ramps and extend the fencing, which was first set up in 1980, to guide wildlife off of U.S. 550. So those funds certainly are improving safety and saving lives.

Bicycle paths, pedestrian facilities are provided, and the chairman spoke about that. In Georgia, TE funds helped transform the 5th Street bridge span over Atlanta's I–75/I–85 into a pedestrian/bicycle-friendly park, hovering 17 feet above the highway that safely connects buildings of Georgia Tech's campus. The bridge was widened to incorporate bicycle paths, landscaping, lamp posts, trellises, and benches.

I guess there is a different view of what is essential. I think saving lives is essential. These funds are used to save lives. Also, if I could say it, because I know my friend doesn't think it should be a priority to beautify our highways, freeways and roads, I point out that the taxpayers of this country care about their communities, care about how their highways and freeways and their roads look. It is a big difference when you have a highway and a freeway that is taken care of, just as we take care of our homes. That is our job.

In Illinois, a tunnel was constructed beneath the busy Center Grove Road that will provide safer passage for students walking between their school and a nearby sports complex. The tunnel was constructed with the help of TE funds—the very funds my friend wants to cut.

In Plymouth, IN, they can now enjoy 2.2 miles of paved trails that meander throughout the community, connecting schools, parks, rivers, and neighborhoods. And a TE award of $1.2 million helped fund the trail. It was matched by local dollars.

In Minneapolis, TE funds helped construct the Midtown Greenway project that provides a safe bicycle commuter freeway for up to 4,500 cyclists a day.

In Oklahoma, new and existing businesses and shops are thriving after a streetscaping project in downtown Norman. TE funds helped to renovate the downtown area, which included improvements in historical lighting.

I hope we will vote against the series of Coburn amendments. I think they hurt, they will stop creation of jobs, and they will make us less safe.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

Mr. COBURN. I think, first, the Senator doesn't understand amendment 2371. It doesn't eliminate any money. It allows the States to opt out of the enhancement if, in fact, it is better.

The Senator talks about life. With 13,000 people killed on bad roads last year, that didn't have anything to do with driving skills or the cars or anything else, other than we didn't put good roads into place. It is a question about priorities.

There will be no job loss at all. There will be no decrease in spending under amendment No. 2371. What it simply says is that you don't have to take 10 percent of your funds anymore and spend it on enhancements, if you know you have people who are going to die because you don't fix a road.

She talks about 200 deaths versus 13,000 deaths. There are 137,000 deficient bridges. Should we fix the roads or build a sound barrier? Which one is important? Should we fix the roads or build another museum? Should we fix the roads or enhance walkways? It is not as if we don't have walkways and trails. The question is, where is the greatest need? And will we make prudent judgments about giving freedom back to the States and say if, in fact, they don't want to enhance in this tough economic time, they don't have to? It doesn't preclude California or Washington State from doing enhancements. They still can. It just says that in those States that have significant critical infrastructure needs and roads that are at high risk, under amendment No. 2371, they get a chance to opt out and do what is best for their citizens and their State, and to fix some of the bridges, instead of building a walkway or a bicycle trail. They will be able to fix a bridge or fix a road and take a curve out where people are dying, instead of building a museum. It is not onerous. The arguments are specious.

The fact is, we are giving back to the States and saying they can prioritize this. If you think enhancements are not as important as the risks you have on your highways, you can opt out—this year only—and put it into roads, bridges, and highways.

Mrs. BOXER. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. COBURN. I want to finish my point. The Department of Transportation in every State is not run by idiots. Their No. 1 goal is for the protection and enhancement of their citizens. We are now saying to Oklahoma or Colorado or Delaware, you don't get to make the decision about what the priority is because 10 percent of the money you get has to be spent this way.

All this is saying is for this year alone—for this year alone—you can opt out of certain provisions. Some you

may want to do, some you may not want to do. But if you choose to put $7 million in to take a curve out of a road that is killing people versus building a bike trail or a sound barrier, you can do it. You are actually going to save more lives. It will make no difference in the number of jobs created or saved. It has no effect on that whatsoever. The exact same amount of money is going to be spent, and it is all going to be spent on construction of what the highway trust fund was—I am not saying these are not good ideas. I am saying it is the priority of placing them ahead of safety and improving roads, improving bridges. How do we explain to the family of the person who was injured in Tulsa, OK, that we are going to build a sound barrier rather than the bridge where a piece of concrete fell through his windshield and critically injured him? That noise is more important than that individual's life?

I say give the freedom back to the States for this one year to not require a mandatory 10-percent allocation to enhancements. Most of the States probably will not take that. But I can tell you, in my State, where we have the second or third largest number of deficient bridges, we are going to build bridges, we are going to fix the broken bridges, we are going to save people's lives, and we are going to save more people's lives.

By the way, our taxpayers put the money into the highway trust fund for this with every gallon of gas. Oklahoma has never gotten more than 94 percent back and over the last 20 years has averaged less than 80 percent of what we send here. So it is highly insulting in this year of tough, difficult times for us to get less than what we send up, one, and then say: 10 percent of it you cannot spend on the greatest need in your State; that we know better, Washington knows better. Washington does not know better.

We do not preclude any of the enhancements anywhere else. If the State departments of transportation want to do every enhancement and go to the 10 percent, they can go to it. What we are saying is, if your State has a need that is critical to saving people's lives, maybe you don't build a sound barrier right now but, in fact, you fix the road or you repair the bridge. It is common sense.

The question will be, Do we do what is best for the American people or do we stand with the dogma that says we know better? Can we trust Governors and State departments of transportation to make good decisions for the safety of their individual citizens in their States? I think we can.

I am not excited about what will be the outcome of this vote, but I tell you that this kind of common sense—it does not eliminate it. It just says we should do that.

To save the Chamber time, I will ask unanimous consent to withdraw—Mr. President, I want Chairman MURRAY to hear this, if she will. I would ask unanimous consent to withdraw amendment No. 2370 which puts a limit until the trust fund is stable. I will stop that. I will withdraw it, if I can have unanimous consent to do that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KAUFMAN). Is there objection?

Mrs. BOXER. Yes. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. COBURN. We will spend the time voting on something I don't think will be adopted anyway.

On amendment No. 2371, none of the claims the Senator from California made are accurate. They are not accurate. There will be no decrease in jobs. There will actually be the opposite of what she said—enhancement and saving lives. There will be a real ability for the States to make the best decisions for their citizens.

With that, I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 2 minutes of debate equally divided on amendment No. 2374, offered by the Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 2374 AND 2377

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I have talked with the Senator from Oklahoma, and two of the amendments he has offered, No. 2374 and No. 2377, are amendments the committee agrees to. I ask unanimous consent that both of these amendments be adopted.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendments (Nos. 2374 and 2377) were agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2371

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, what is the pending amendment?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending amendment is No. 2371, and there will be 2 minutes of debate equally divided.

The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, we just had the debate. All it does is allow States to opt out, if they find critical infrastructure needs, from the mandatory 10-percent enhancement rule.

I reserve the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, the Senator does not describe his amendment properly. I ask colleagues to read it. The amendment says:

None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to implement section 133(d)(2) of title 23, United States Code.

That means none of the funds could be used for this very important part of our transportation program which has created 400,000 jobs since 1992. This is not the time to cut these good jobs. This is not the time to say to the States: In your purpose, you can do whatever you want, but then in the real amendment they cannot get any Federal funds anymore to keep wildlife off the freeways, they cannot get funds anymore to do highway beautification, they cannot get funds anymore to stop runoff from highways that will pollute our waterways.

I say the purpose may be what the Senator says, but because he is forced into doing this on an appropriations bill, he says none of the funds can be used for these TE programs, and that will cause injuries and death.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, the amendment is very carefully written so it will not allow the enforcement of administration of funds. If you will carefully read public law—that is how we got it germane—it does not allow the enforcement. It doesn't mean they can't do it. The money can still go out. If you still want to do the enhancements, you can. It simply says you may not have to if you don't want to.

I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 2371. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. BYRD) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 39, nays 59, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 277 Leg.]

YEAS—39

Alexander	Ensign	LeMieux
Barrasso	Enzi	Lieberman
Bayh	Feingold	Lugar
Bennett	Graham	McCain
Brownback	Grassley	McCaskill
Bunning	Gregg	McConnell
Burr	Hatch	Risch
Chambliss	Hutchison	Roberts
Coburn	Inhofe	Sessions
Corker	Isakson	Thune
Cornyn	Johanns	Vitter
Crapo	Klobuchar	Webb
DeMint	Kyl	Wicker

NAYS—59

Akaka	Conrad	Lautenberg
Baucus	Dodd	Leahy
Begich	Dorgan	Levin
Bennet	Durbin	Lincoln
Bingaman	Feinstein	Menendez
Bond	Franken	Merkley
Boxer	Gillibrand	Mikulski
Brown	Hagan	Murkowski
Burris	Harkin	Murray
Cantwell	Inouye	Nelson (NE)
Cardin	Johnson	Nelson (FL)
Carper	Kaufman	Pryor
Casey	Kerry	Reed
Cochran	Kohl	Reid
Collins	Landrieu	Rockefeller

Sanders	Specter	Voinovich
Schumer	Stabenow	Warner
Shaheen	Tester	Whitehouse
Shelby	Udall (CO)	Wyden
Snowe	Udall (NM)	

NOT VOTING—1

Byrd

The amendment (No. 2371) was rejected.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. BOND. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2370 WITHDRAWN

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 2 minutes of debate equally divided on amendment No. 2370, offered by the Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw the amendment; amendment No. 2370.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2372

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 2 minutes of debate equally divided on amendment No. 2372, offered by the Senator from Oklahoma.

The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, 13,000 people died on American roads last year because of the quality of the roads and bridges. We have spent $48 million in the last 4 years on museums, some of which are already closed. The money we collect from taxpayers should be prioritized to build roads, bridges, and highways. This amendment is a simple amendment. It says we should be spending right now, this next year only, no money for museums until we get the roads back.

I reserve the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington is recognized.

Mrs. MURRAY. I yield my 1 minute to the Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, when you take the train up the Northeast corridor and the train stops in Wilmington, DE, you are in the middle of what was, 60 years ago, a vibrant shipbuilding area. We built ships to help win World War II. When the war was over, what had been a vibrant shipbuilding industry turned into an industrial wasteland.

Fifteen years ago we began transforming it, and today it is river walks, it is places for people to live, work, recreate, we have parks—it is a beautiful place, an urban wildlife refuge. We are going to build a children's science museum there as well. It costs $11 million. We raised the money from our local sources.

In this bill is the HUD funding, $190,000, to help us complete the package. It is a small amount of money for a great payoff for a lot of kids, tens of thousands of kids who will visit that science museum, who will be excited about science and, hopefully, will go on to have careers as scientists, inventors, and engineers. I ask you to help me defeat this amendment.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second? There is a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing on the amendment. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. BYRD) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 41, nays 57, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 278 Leg.]

YEAS—41

Barrasso	Enzi	Lugar
Bayh	Feingold	McCain
Brownback	Graham	McCaskill
Bunning	Grassley	McConnell
Burr	Gregg	Murkowski
Chambliss	Hatch	Risch
Coburn	Hutchison	Roberts
Collins	Inhofe	Sessions
Conrad	Isakson	Snowe
Corker	Johanns	Thune
Cornyn	Klobuchar	Udall (CO)
Crapo	Kohl	Vitter
DeMint	Kyl	Voinovich
Ensign	LeMieux	

NAYS—57

Akaka	Feinstein	Nelson (NE)
Alexander	Franken	Nelson (FL)
Baucus	Gillibrand	Pryor
Begich	Hagan	Reed
Bennet	Harkin	Reid
Bennett	Inouye	Rockefeller
Bingaman	Johnson	Sanders
Bond	Kaufman	Schumer
Boxer	Kerry	Shaheen
Brown	Landrieu	Shelby
Burris	Lautenberg	Specter
Cantwell	Leahy	Stabenow
Cardin	Levin	Tester
Carper	Lieberman	Udall (NM)
Casey	Lincoln	Warner
Cochran	Menendez	Webb
Dodd	Merkley	Whitehouse
Dorgan	Mikulski	Wicker
Durbin	Murray	Wyden

NOT VOTING—1

Byrd

The amendment (No. 2372) was rejected.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mrs. BOXER. I move to lay that motion upon the table.

The motion to lay upon the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2366, AS MODIFIED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 2 minutes of debate, equally divided, on amendment No. 2366 offered by the Senator from Mississippi, Mr. WICKER.

The Senator from Washington is recognized.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I would let all fellow Senators know, we have two more votes remaining. If the Senators would allow the speakers to speak, we will be able to move through these expeditiously.

I ask unanimous consent that the remaining amendment votes be 10 minutes in length.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I would urge all Members to stay around and vote and we can get on with the business and anybody who wants to have lunch can have lunch.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, very simply, this amendment would allow law-abiding Amtrak passengers to securely transport firearms in their checked baggage. Under current practices, all the American domestic airlines permit firearms in their checked luggage. Other American passenger railroads also allow checked firearms.

Only the federally subsidized Amtrak prohibits law-abiding American citizens from exercising their second amendment right in checked baggage. On April 2 of this year, the Senate passed a similar amendment to the budget with 63 votes in favor of the Wicker Amendment and only 35 against.

During the time since then, Amtrak has made no efforts to respond to this overwhelming bipartisan vote. It is my hope that we get a similar overwhelming bipartisan vote today which results in Amtrak ending this unfair practice. I urge a vote in favor of the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. I would ask all our Senators to pay attention to what we are being asked to vote on. We did vote on a similar amendment during the budget debate. But these amendments are very different. The amendment to the budget resolution never put Amtrak's funding at risk. That amendment would have only prohibited an extra reserve fund from going to Amtrak if it did not allow firearms.

The amendment we are now considering does something much more drastic, it will put at risk Amtrak's appropriations. In order to receive any Federal funding under this amendment, Amtrak would have 6 months to build a process for checking and tracking firearms, it would have to find the manpower necessary to screen and guard firearms, and would have to purchase the equipment necessary.

There is nothing in the underlying appropriations to pay for any of that. So this amendment is going to put a severe burden on them, and if they do not comply, Amtrak will shut down.

I think it is very important that we be careful what we are voting on. I ask my colleagues to oppose the Wicker amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the Wicker amendment.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second? There appears to be.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. BYRD) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HAGAN). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 68, nays 30, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 279 Leg.]

YEAS—68

Alexander	Ensign	McConnell
Barrasso	Enzi	Merkley
Baucus	Feingold	Murkowski
Bayh	Graham	Nelson (NE)
Begich	Grassley	Nelson (FL)
Bennet	Gregg	Reid
Bennett	Hagan	Risch
Bingaman	Hatch	Roberts
Bond	Hutchison	Sanders
Brownback	Inhofe	Sessions
Bunning	Isakson	Shaheen
Burr	Johanns	Shelby
Casey	Johnson	Snowe
Chambliss	Klobuchar	Tester
Coburn	Kohl	Thune
Cochran	Kyl	Udall (CO)
Collins	Landrieu	Udall (NM)
Conrad	Leahy	Vitter
Corker	LeMieux	Voinovich
Cornyn	Lincoln	Warner
Crapo	Lugar	Webb
DeMint	McCain	Wicker
Dorgan	McCaskill	

NAYS—30

Akaka	Franken	Mikulski
Boxer	Gillibrand	Murray
Brown	Harkin	Pryor
Burris	Inouye	Reed
Cantwell	Kaufman	Rockefeller
Cardin	Kerry	Schumer
Carper	Lautenberg	Specter
Dodd	Levin	Stabenow
Durbin	Lieberman	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Menendez	Wyden

NOT VOTING—1

Byrd

The amendment (No. 2366), as modified, was agreed to.

Mr. BOND. I move to reconsider the vote.

Mrs. MURRAY. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2376

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 2 minutes of debate equally divided on amendment No. 2376, offered by the Senator from Louisiana, Mr. VITTER.

The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. VITTER. Madam President, this should be a noncontroversial amendment. It simply retains in present law the current community service requirement which Congress passed into law for public housing tenants who are able-bodied over a decade ago. The House has tried to take out this requirement. It is a very modest 8 hours per month of community service for able-bodied tenants. Automatically exempted are folks over 62, folks who have a disability, caretakers, folks who meet the TANF work requirements, et cetera. It is a modest, reasonable work requirement which has been in the law for years. I urge all Members to retain it through this vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. The Senator from Louisiana is offering an amendment that would require continued enforcement of public service for people who live in public housing. I oppose this amendment for two reasons. First, it is current law. Secondly, I am concerned, in this economic downturn, when we have a lot of families struggling, the most struggling families, we are putting this requirement on them. Therefore, I am going to oppose this amendment and will be voting no.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana has 6 seconds remaining.

Mr. VITTER. This excludes folks who have a work requirement under TANF.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator from Louisiana has expired.

The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 2376.

Mr. BOND. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. BYRD) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 73, nays 25, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 280 Leg.]

YEAS—73

Alexander	Ensign	McConnell
Barrasso	Enzi	Merkley
Baucus	Feingold	Murkowski
Bayh	Feinstein	Nelson (NE)
Begich	Gillibrand	Nelson (FL)
Bennet	Graham	Risch
Bennett	Grassley	Roberts
Bingaman	Gregg	Rockefeller
Bond	Hagan	Schumer
Boxer	Hatch	Sessions
Brownback	Hutchison	Shelby
Bunning	Inhofe	Snowe
Burr	Isakson	Specter
Chambliss	Johanns	Tester
Coburn	Kaufman	Thune
Cochran	Klobuchar	Udall (CO)
Collins	Kohl	Udall (NM)
Conrad	Kyl	Vitter
Corker	Leahy	Voinovich
Cornyn	LeMieux	Warner
Crapo	Lieberman	Webb
DeMint	Lincoln	Wicker
Dodd	Lugar	Wyden
Dorgan	McCain	
Durbin	McCaskill	

NAYS—25

Akaka	Inouye	Pryor
Brown	Johnson	Reed
Burris	Kerry	Reid
Cantwell	Landrieu	Sanders
Cardin	Lautenberg	Shaheen
Carper	Levin	Stabenow
Casey	Menendez	Whitehouse
Franken	Mikulski	
Harkin	Murray	

NOT VOTING—1

Byrd

The amendment (No. 2376) was agreed to.

Mrs. MURRAY. I move to reconsider the vote and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, we have made great progress on the transportation and housing appropriations bill, and I thank all Senators for working with us. We have several amendments left to do.

I now ask unanimous consent that Senator LANDRIEU be given 5 minutes to speak on amendment No. 2365, followed by Senator GREGG with 20 minutes equally divided on amendment No. 2361.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, at this time, then, we will move to those two amendments. We have several other Senators who have notified us they wish to offer amendments.

For the information of all Members, we hope to have votes on at least the two amendments I have just spoken of, the Landrieu and Gregg amendments, at 2:30. If there are other amendments we are able to move at that time, we will then vote on those as well. But, again, we are making great progress. We have a few amendments left, and I urge any Senator who has an amendment, you have a few hours left to get it to us so we can work it out.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

AMENDMENT NO. 2365

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, I appreciate the chairman allowing me the opportunity to offer this amendment, and also working with Senator BOND, who I understand supports this amendment as well.

I offer this amendment on behalf not only of myself but Senator HARKIN, Senator HUTCHISON, Senator GRASSLEY, and Senator CORNYN. So we have a strong bipartisan group of Senators who are coming to the floor to ask our colleagues to approve an amendment that has to do with a change and modification in the Community Development Block Grant Program that has been put in place to help communities prepare for and recover from disasters. This amendment is going to affect all communities in a positive way across the country that received community development block grant funding and in a very significant way. If this amendment is passed by this body today and continues in this bill, the communities that have received special allocations of community development block grant money will be able to use those funds to match other Federal funds available.

This is the way the normal Community Development Block Grant Program has operated, I understand, since its inception. As my colleagues can see from this chart, in every single situation, except for two, in the last 17 years, that has been the case. So my amendment is basically allowing the floods and natural disasters of 2008 to be included in this effort; in other words, to say, if you received community development block grant funding, you can use those funds as a local and State match for other Federal funding.

This is important for two reasons. One, it has been done in that way the

last 17 years for good reason. For good reason because these communities, you could argue, have even greater challenges than normal, considering that in any time it is tough to provide housing or to build roads or to help their small businesses get back on their feet, but after a catastrophic disaster it is sometimes 5, if not 10, times harder. So why restrict their money at a time when they need the greatest flexibility? That is all this amendment does.

Again, this is the way it has been done in general community development block grants since the beginning of the program. It is the way it was done with disaster community development in every case. Our amendment would simply make that uniform policy for the States affected by the 2008 disasters.

This will be a great help to Texas that is still recovering from the storms of Ike. I will be visiting and having a field hearing through my Committee on Small Business as well as Disaster. Senator HUTCHISON will be attending that field hearing to visit Galveston just on Friday. So approval of this amendment would bring a lot of hope and encouragement to the people on the Gulf Coast, not just in Louisiana but, as I said, in Texas as well. California will be benefited as well as Iowa and some of the States that were affected by the floods.

So, again, this is amendment No. 2365. I think my explanation is sufficient about what this amendment does and what a great help it will be to mayors and parish officials and county officials struggling to rebuild and what a smart way to use and to leverage moneys to get these communities rebuilt quickly in these very difficult economic times.

I ask unanimous consent that the CDBG allocation chart to which I referred to be printed in the RECORD at this time.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

CDBG ALLOCATIONS

(Prepared by Ben Billings)

FUNDING SUMMARY

Rank	State	Total CDBG received	First allocation	Second allocation
1	Texas	$3.058 b	$1.315 b	$1.743 b
2	Louisiana	1.059 b	438 m	620 m
3	Iowa	798 m	281 m	516 m
4	Indiana	415 m	162 m	253 m
5	Illinois	187 m	59 m	127 m
6	Wisconsin	124 m	49 m	75 m
7	Missouri	104 m	25 m	79 m
8	Arkansas	95 m	25 m	70 m
9	Tennessee	92 m	21 m	72 m
10	Florida	81 m	17 m	64 m
11	California	39 m	0	40 m

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, I see my good friend, Senator GREGG. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Has the Senator offered the amendment?

Ms. LANDRIEU. Yes, I believe I have, but if I have not, let me submit it at this time. It is amendment No. 2365.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Louisiana, [Ms. LANDRIEU], for herself, Mr. HARKIN, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. CORNYN, proposes an amendment numbered 2365.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with. I suggest we don't have to read the whole amendment and we will leave it lying until we can vote on it later today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To amend the Disaster Relief and Recovery Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008)

On page 318, between lines 11 and 12, insert the following:

SEC. 234. The matter under the heading ''COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FUND'', under the heading ''COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT'', under the heading ''DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT'' in chapter 10 of title I of division B of the Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2009 (Public Law 110–329; 122 Stat. 3601) is amended by striking '': *Provided further*, That none of the funds provided under this heading may be used by a State or locality as a matching requirement, share, or contribution for any other Federal program''.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

AMENDMENT NO. 2361

Mr. GREGG. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment and call up amendment No. 2361.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the amendment.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New Hampshire [Mr. GREGG], for himself, Mr. COBURN, and Mr. BENNETT, proposes an amendment numbered 2361.

Mr. GREGG. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To prohibit the use of stimulus funds for self-congratulatory signage that allows lawmakers to promote their spending of taxpayer dollars on stimulus projects)

On page 194, after line 23, add the following:

SEC. 1_____. (a) This section may be cited as the ''Axe the Stimulus Plaques Act''.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, none of the funds made available under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Public Law 111–5) may be used for physical signage to indicate that a project is being funded by that Act.

Mr. GREGG. Madam President, this is an amendment that shouldn't have to be offered, to be very honest with you. Today there are a lot of projects being pursued under the stimulus package, and every one of those projects that is a road project, unfortunately, finds itself having to put up a sign that says this is a good project being paid for with tax dollars. These are self-congratulatory signs. They are political signs. They are there so lawmakers can pat themselves on the back and say: Wow, look at this project we are doing.

But these signs cost money. Actually, when you add them all up, they cost a lot of money. They are a total waste of money. There is no reason to have these signs by every project that occurs in America. It is projected there will be somewhere around 20,000 to 22,000 projects. The signs cost about $400 in New Hampshire, and they cost as much as—I think it was around $3,000 in New Jersey for each sign. New Hampshire is a little more efficient. I suspect in North Carolina they probably don't cost much more than $400, but if you add that up, we are talking about a cost of somewhere between $6 million and $15 million being spent on signs. That is an inexcusable waste of money. That money could be used for something valuable, for example, rather than a sign.

The practical effect of this is, the signs should say ''Wasting taxpayers' dollars; project funded by the future generations of Americans,'' if they are going to be honest signs. But I am not asking for any signs. There shouldn't be any signs.

Instead, the highway departments across this country are being basically required to put up these signs as the projects are built. In fact, there was one example in New Hampshire—there were lots of examples in New Hampshire, but there was one community in New Hampshire where the leadership of that community said: We don't want to put the signs up because we think they are a waste of money, and they were told, if they didn't put up the signs, they wouldn't get the money. That is happening all across the country.

So this amendment should be unnecessary. It should be obvious—obvious—that we don't have to put these signs up; that we shouldn't be spending money in this way. If we are going to spend $6 million to $18 million to $20 million on something, let's spend it on what actually produces some value rather than creates a self-congratulatory event for the local political leaders and for the Congress. We do enough self-congratulating around here. We shouldn't have to make the taxpayers pay for it. Instead, we should be a little more responsible with the taxpayers' money.

It is a very simple amendment. That is why I am not going to spend a lot of time on it, because I think it is so obvious it should be accepted and passed, that it should occur. It is one of those amendments where you sort of scratch

your head and say: Why did we even have to offer this? Why should we have to offer this amendment saying you don't put up signs spending taxpayers' dollars to congratulate yourself for a project the taxpayers paid for. But we do, of course, in this instance because the Department has insisted on these signs across America.

That is what the amendment does. I reserve the remainder of my time, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I rise in opposition to Senator GREGG's amendment and I wish to say why I think there are many reasons not to support it. I started off my political career as a county supervisor. It is through that agency that when we are undertaking a major road project, we put up a sign first of all to let people know work is underway and what it is about because a lot of times people don't know if it is going to be a month-long project or a day-long project. We would put up a sign to let people know who is funding the program, to let people know whether it is a State project, a local project. No big deal. We did this—and we do this—under Republican leadership, under Democratic leadership. It is information.

I think the true source of this amendment is a frustration. This is my own opinion. I am sure my friend absolutely would not agree with me, but it is my sense that there is a frustration by the people who voted no on the Economic Recovery Act, the stimulus bill; there is a frustration that it is working. They predicted gloom and doom.

Let me tell you what is happening in this great Nation of ours. We have a long way to go to get jobs up and running, there is no question about it, but the stimulus bill has already saved or created a million jobs. Let me tell you what else. We are looking at growth for the first time in this economy. When we were faced with the worst recession since the Great Depression—and I know it because the Presiding Officer had the same issue as she looked at what to do—we had to decide whether it made sense to do some job creation here, and we didn't get many Republican votes, but thank goodness we got three. Thanks to those good people for joining us because I can tell you this: In my home State, we are starting to see it happen. We are going to get tens of billions of dollars.

So now I think the issue is a frustration with the fact that we won that vote and we got that done and those jobs are being created as we speak. Slowly but surely we are being lifted out of this darkness.

Here we have a small amendment, I agree. You know what. If it passes, no harm. But I have to say, why on Earth would you want to hide from the American people the fact that the recovery package we passed is putting people to work? People want to know. Not everybody has a computer. Not everybody is going to follow up on the transparency this administration has put in place. They are showing that every day it is working, where it is happening, and so on and so forth—not by name but how many jobs are created and the like.

It seems to me, if you are improving our highways, our transit systems, our water infrastructure, our government buildings, and the source of funding is the stimulus program, the Economic Recovery Act, let people know. Why would we prohibit funds under this act from being used for these signs that simply inform taxpayers that a project is being made possible by taxpayer dollars from the stimulus program? I think it is a question of making our people more informed, giving them information.

My friend says it costs money to do a sign. I couldn't agree more. Everything costs money. It costs money to do a sign. Guess what. People work in those places where those signs are made. People proudly work on those jobs and get paid a good amount and can support their families. So this is a jobs program. Part of it is to tell the people, yes, the funding for this project is paid for by the stimulus program, the economic recovery program, and, yes, people were paid to work in places that make these signs. I don't think it is logical to keep this information from the people. What purpose is served? It is going to save a little bit of money, but the fact is, the purpose of the stimulus bill was to create jobs, and you are going to take away jobs from people who are making those signs. I think this is an antijobs amendment we have before us.

Look, the Recovery Act is working. I think it is frustrating those who predicted it would never work, and they will predict it will never work until they have their last breath because that is the nature of politics; you have to spin it one way or another. But we know the economy is turning around. We also know we need to create many more jobs, and this amendment will not create one more job. I don't believe it will. The fact that we are doing some good things with this funding, including making buildings more energy efficient, upgrading flood protection, let the American people know that their funds are being spent well. I think that is money spent well.

Some people may see a program, by the way, I say to my good friend, and they don't like it. They say: Why on Earth are they using my money to do this particular project? Let them know. Let them know. So if they like what they see, they understand where it came from. If they don't like what they see, they understand where it came from.

I urge my colleagues to oppose the Gregg amendment. I agree with my friend, it is not a major amendment, but I think it speaks to the point that the American people should have an easy way of knowing where these funds are going and the projects they are building. We certainly had a big enough battle on the floor of the Senate—oh, boy, did we have a battle—trying to find those three votes. So it passed. It was controversial. Some in America don't support it; others in America do. I think they should have a right to know if a project is being brought to them by way of this important bill that I think is helping turn our economy around.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire is recognized.

Mr. GREGG. Madam President, the issue isn't the stimulus package, although I have reservations about that. I would be happy to debate that with the Senator from California at some length because I think adding almost three-quarters of a trillion dollars of new debt to our children's backs on a package that will spend out through 2019 is hardly stimulus, especially when we see only 20 percent of that package will spend out by the end of this year, and maybe 50 percent next year.

We had Chairman Bernanke saying, essentially, that we are out of the recession. That all comes from borrowing that our children will have to pay. In my opinion, it is not fair to pass that debt on to our children, that $787 billion. That is not the debate. This debate is about whether we should be congratulating ourselves with tax dollars. It is self-aggrandizement at the expense of the taxpayer. This is going out and buying advertising to promote ourselves and having the taxpayer pay for it.

We can clearly spend these dollars more efficiently doing something else. Sure, it is not a lot of dollars, but when we add it all up, $18 million is a lot of money. We can do something more constructive besides putting up a sign that says we are wonderful because we are spending their money. If we want to say we are doing great things for them, we can say here is a sign telling them that. But rather than having the people pay for that sign and telling them they are going to have to pay for it, let's have the Democratic Senatorial Committee or the Republican Senatorial Committee pay for that sign. Let's do that if we think it is that important as a piece of political promotion. But it is not. I don't think the Democratic Senatorial Committee would pay for that sign because they would see it as a waste of money. I don't speak for them, but I don't think the Republican Senatorial Committee would pay for this either. I would recommend that they not do it.

These signs are a waste of money. Do they create jobs? Well, actually the signs in New Hampshire are made in prisons. They cost money because the materials cost money. I guess that is why we get them for $300. In New York,

it is $3,000 a sign. As a practical matter, I don't think we can argue that making these signs is somehow stimulating the economy. All it is doing is saying: Hey, we are wonderful; we are going to take your money and use it to tell you what a wonderful job we are doing with your money. It is not fair or appropriate.

I hope people will support the amendment. As has been mentioned by the Senator from California, this is not a major amendment, but it is one that states an attitude toward how we spend money. I think it is important in that context.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Mr. ENSIGN. Madam President, I will have a motion momentarily. I will wait for the manager of the bill to come on the floor.

I will be offering a motion to recommit the bill back to the Appropriations Committee at last year's spending level. On the front of this bill, it says that last year's spending level was at a level which included last year's spending, plus the stimulus money. So when they say this year's spending level, it looks as if there is a huge cut, when in fact, there is actually a 23-percent increase in this year's spending bill over last year's.

So the motion I am about to make is asking to report the bill back to the committee, where the committee can make whatever specific recommendations within that level but to do that at last year's spending level.

I have heard the rhetoric from politicians in the House, Senate, and the President talking about how serious a problem we have with the deficit and how serious a problem we have with the debt in our country. That is one of the reasons you saw hundreds of thousands of people on the Mall here this last weekend. People are really concerned about the direction of our country. We have heard economic experts talking about America actually approaching its borrowing capacity. If our country ever reaches its borrowing capacity, it will be an economic disaster. It would be like a business having many expenses and no cash in the bank. The bank and all its lenders saying: Sorry, we are not giving you any more money.

Well, we owe people from all over the world. We owe sovereign wealth funds. We owe China, Japan, European countries and other sovereign wealth funds all over the world. They hold a lot of our debt. The more we continue to borrow, the more we become beholden to these other countries. And when the next trillion dollars needs to be borrowed, what if these other countries say to us: No, we are not going to do it. The other thing they could also say is: Yes, we will give you that next trillion dollars. We will loan the money to you, but it is going to be at a higher interest than you want to pay. And by the way, the other debt we also hold that you owe us, we are going to raise the interest on that.

You see, we are not going to be in a position to say: No, that is not exactly what we want to do. The more debt we run up, the less of a position we will be in as a country to be able to bargain. We literally cannot sustain the level of debt we are developing here in the United States.

I see the pages down in front of us here—this younger generation. The younger generations across our country are being saddled with the debt this Congress, this President, the past President, and past Congresses have run up. Unfortunately, instead of slowing that borrowing down, we are increasing it at a faster and faster rate.

So this is a very simple motion. This just says: Let's start taking these appropriations bills and let's at least start freezing spending. That is basically what this motion suggests. It just says: Freeze spending.

By the way, a lot of the programs that are in this bill were already dramatically increased in the stimulus bill. So not only did we increase last year over the previous year with the regular appropriations process, we then added money to the stimulus bill on top of that.

So what did they do this year? Instead of being fiscally responsible and saying: Let's at least freeze spending—which I will bet the American people would even suggest since we are in tough economic times, that maybe we should do a little haircut and cut spending a little bit—no, no, the majority has said we are actually going to increase the level of spending in this bill by 23 percent, way above inflation, and this is at a time in our country when we cannot afford it. So I think this is a place to start showing some fiscal responsibility, and there will be other opportunities where we can as well.

We all know entitlement spending is out of control in this country. We all know that needs to be addressed. Medicare and Medicaid alone can bankrupt the country. The President talked about that the other night. That is one of the reasons we need to actually get entitlements under control in our health care bill—which, by the way, none of the health care bills do.

We need to get entitlement spending under control, but we also need to get what is called discretionary spending, or these annual appropriations bills, under control as well. We are not talking about small amounts of money anymore. Even though the entitlements are the biggest part of the budget, the discretionary or the annual spending bills are a very significant amount of money these days.

As I mentioned before, this year's bill is a 23-percent increase over last year's. The committee report says it isn't, that it is actually a cut from last year. But let me explain exactly how they do that. They took last year's bill and added on the money we spent in the stimulus bill to last year's bill. They say that is what we spent last year, so that this year we are going to spend less than we did in the combination of those two bills. They call that a cut in spending. Well, that is phony Washington math. That is how we end up with the kinds of deficits and the debt we have in this country. People claim a cut in spending when it is actually, if you compare apples with apples, a 23-percent increase over last year.

So I think it is time. It really is time. Republicans and Democrats should join together in thinking about not even the next generation, but let's think about today. Let's think about what we are doing to this country today. Let's start showing some fiscal responsibility around here. Let's start joining together as Americans in not running up this massive amount of government debt. Let's start saying no to some of the special interests that come into our office. Let's start by saying that.

So, Madam President, I have a motion at the desk, and I ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. ENSIGN] moves to recommit the bill (H.R. 3288) to the Committee on Appropriations with instructions to report the same back to the Senate with changes that reduce the aggregate level of appropriations in the Act for fiscal year 2010 by $12,713,000,000 from the level currently in the Act.

Mr. ENSIGN. So just to summarize, this is a motion to recommit the bill back to the Appropriations Committee. It does not take away the power of the Appropriations Committee. It does not say that it cuts any one individual program. The Appropriations Committee would have the authority to be able to put its priorities within the bill. But it does say we are not going to spend more money than we spent last year. That is, very simply, what it says. We are going to freeze the level of spending to last year instead of having a 23-percent increase over last year.

To reiterate, in the stimulus bill last year, tens of billions of dollars were added to these very same programs that are in this spending bill. So I believe the responsible thing to do is for us to vote on this motion and to show we are really serious about controlling the debt and the deficit in the United States of America.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCAIN. 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.

AMENDMENT NO. 2403

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending business before the Senate be set aside in order to consider amendment No. 2403.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the amendment.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Arizona [Mr. McCAIN] proposes an amendment numbered 2403.

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that further reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To prohibit the use of funds to carry out the Brownfields Economic Development Initiative program administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development)

On page 318, between lines 11 and 12, insert the following:

SEC. 2_____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to carry out the Brownfields Economic Development Initiative program administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, the amendment is very simple. It prohibits, as recommended by the President, the use of funds under this act to carry out the Brownfields Economic Development Initiative grant program that is administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

In May of this year, President Obama released a list of 121 programs that he recommended be terminated or reduced. One of the programs the President recommended for termination is the Brownfields Economic Development Initiative.

The administration stated specifically that this grant program is extremely small relative to other programs that address this need. They added that local governments have access to other public and private funds that can address this same purpose.

In justification for the termination, the administration wrote—and I quote from the document ''Terminations, Reductions and Savings, Budget of the U.S. Government, Fiscal Year 2010,'' that is issued by the Office of Management and Budget. In other words, it is a number of terminations and reductions that the administration wants carried out, with justification for doing so.

So far I have had amendments on several of these and they have all been overridden. Our amendments have not carried and I imagine I will lose this also. The moral is why didn't OMB stop this? Because clearly it is being totally disregarded by the appropriators. The American people pay attention to the President's recommendations. But now I have had a number of amendments that have been in keeping with the President's request—the same President who said we will go line by line in the appropriations bills and eliminate those that are unnecessary.

Again, the Office of Management and Budget has said:

The Brownfields Economic Development Initiative (BEDI) is a competitive grant program whose purposes are served through much larger and more flexible Federal programs. BEDI is designed to assist cities with the redevelopment of abandoned, idled, and under-used industrial and commercial facilities where expansion and redevelopment is burdened by real or potential environmental contamination. These funds are targeted for redevelopment of brownfield sites for the purposes of economic development and job creation. While these are very important objectives, the program is very small, and local governments have access to other public and private funds, including the much larger Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). The 2010 Budget funds CDBG as $4.5 billion, or 14 percent above the 2009 enacted level.

We are talking about trying to reduce spending and the CDBG program is now 14 percent, $4.5 billion, above 2009-enacted levels.

A 1999 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report (RCED–99–86) found that about $469 million was planned and $413 million in Federal funds were obligated for brownfields activities in 1997 and 1998. Of the planned total, BEDI appropriations ($25 million) contributed just five percent of the planned expenditure.

By terminating this program, the Department of Housing and Urban Development is also able to reduce the administrative workload associated with managing a small and duplicative program. Focusing staff on higher impact and higher return activities is a priority for the agency.

I am sure that the opponents of my amendment will argue that the Senate did not include funding for this program in the underlying bill. The committee report states that ''The Committee does not recommend an appropriation for the Brownfield Redevelopment program, consistent with the budget request. The Committee notes that other Federal appropriations are available for the same purpose through the Environmental Protection Agency. Communities may also use CDBG funds to redevelop Brownfield's sites''

If that is the case, and the committee agrees with the President that Brownfield Redevelopment under HUD is duplicative, then why does the committee report also contain three specific earmarks totaling $1.3 million for the redevelopment of Brownfields properties as Economic Development Initiatives? It makes no sense. In here, despite the committee saying they are eliminating the program, we have $600,000 for the redevelopment of Brownfields property into a business park in Cincinnati, OH; $500,000 for the redevelopment of Brownfields properties in Waterbury, CT; $200,000 for Brownfield redevelopment in Pittsburgh, PA.

Americans are hurting. The Nation's unemployment rate is nearly 10 percent, the deficit for this year is estimated to be $1.6 trillion, the projected 10-year deficit jumped from $7.1 trillion to $9.1 trillion, our public debt is expected to reach $12.1 trillion by mid-October. When is it going to stop?

Again, I urge my colleagues to listen to the American people. The American people are rising up everywhere. Although it is a bit derided and underestimated, at the TEA parties and demonstrations and the marches last weekend, at conservative estimates 70,000 people came from all over the country to march. In Yuma, AZ 1,000 to 2,000 people decided to demonstrate and it is still pretty warm in Yuma, AZ this time of the year and all over my State.

So what did we do? We say we are going to terminate a program in the committee report and then of course we cannot resist earmarks and porkbarrel spending which has led to corruption.

There is a trial going on right now of a lobbyist who some years ago engaged in paying off legislators for earmarks. That person, if convicted, will be the 23rd person convicted or who pled guilty in the Abramoff scandal. I would like to tell the American people that things have improved, that things have improved since the Abramoff scandal broke and people pled guilty and went to prison, but I can't. I can't tell them there has been any improvement. I can't tell them that corruption doesn't go on here in Washington. I can't tell them that there are no more Duke Cunninghams out there who are residing in Federal prison.

You know what, they are sick and tired of it. This is only $1.3 million. That is less than chickenfeed around this place. But we have to start somewhere and we might start with implementing the recommendations of the President of the United States and the Office of Management and Budget and get rid of a program that is obviously unneeded.

I don't want to take too much more time of the body, except to again say there is a peaceful revolution going on out there. It is not just over health care reform. It is over the out-of-control spending and the trillions and trillions of dollars of debt we are laying on future generations. Our children and our grandchildren are inheriting an unsustainable situation while we do business as usual here in the Senate.

I could go back to Coast Guard vessels that the Coast Guard and the Navy never needed. I could go back to museums that were funded that are now closed all over America, and a lot of other abuses that have taken place. But I hope my colleagues will vote in favor of this amendment. Those who do not, I hope people at home will pay attention, will pay attention to the out-of-control spending that continues here and the mortgaging of our children's futures and what we are doing in the commission of generational theft.

I ask for the yeas and nays.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there a sufficient second? There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

Mrs. MURRAY. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, there seems to be some possibility of ambiguity in the amendment. I appreciate the Senator from Washington bringing that to my attention. I ask unanimous consent, if necessary, to be able to modify the amendment before the vote with the intent of the elimination of these three earmarks as I have argued on the amendment.

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I say to the Senator, he doesn't need to ask unanimous consent. We are happy to work with his staff so as to modify it with the intent of what he was trying to do. I will not object.

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

Mr. MCCAIN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DEMINT. 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.

AMENDMENT NO. 2410

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment and call up DeMint amendment No. 2410.

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

The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Carolina [Mr. DEMINT] proposes an amendment numbered 2410.

Mr. DEMINT. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 2410

(Purpose: To limit the use of funds for the John Murtha Johnstown-Cambria County Airport)

On page 179, between lines 4 and 5, insert the following:

SEC. 118. LIMITATION ON USE OF FUNDS FOR JOHN MURTHA JOHNSTOWN-CAMBRIA COUNTY AIRPORT.

None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this title (including funds derived from the Airport and Airway Trust Fund) may be obligated or expended by the Secretary of Transportation, the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration, or any other officer or employee of the Department of Transportation for use at, or in connection with operations (other than air traffic control operations) at, the John Murtha Johnstown-Cambria County Airport, including to provide subsidized air service to or from that Airport.

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, I will take a few minutes to talk about this amendment to the transportation-HUD bill we are on this week. I think if there is one expenditure by the Federal Government over the last 10 years that has drawn the attention of the American people more than the ''bridge to nowhere,'' it is probably the $200 million that has gone to the John Murtha Airport in Johnstown, PA.

Americans are greatly concerned about the level of spending and debt, particularly the spending they consider wasteful or maybe even corrupt. There have been a number of media documentaries on the John Murtha Airport.

I would like to talk about it a little bit today because my amendment would disallow the use of any funds in this bill to be used to administer any additional subsidies or grants to this particular airport.

We disagree a lot on Federal spending; here and there are different things, different priorities we can debate about. But if there is any such thing as waste, it is this airport. I will tell you why. Over the last 10 years, or actually 20 years, this little airport in Johnstown, PA, has received about $200 million in Federal funds, $150 million of that was steered directly by Congressman MURTHA himself, who uses the airport to come back and forth to Washington and for campaign stops.

It only has three commercial flights a day to one destination and that is to Washington, DC. Only an average of about 20 passengers a day use this airport. The American taxpayers are on the hook for about $1.5 million a year in Federal subsidies. Every ticket to Washington and back is subsidized for about $100, which means the American taxpayers pay almost as much for the ticket as the passenger does, not just for one trip or two but continually year after year.

In spite of the fact that major media outlets for a number of months have used this as an example of the fleecing of America, this continues to go on. In effect, when the stimulus bill was passed with all the promises of transparency and priority use, $800,000 of funds went to this airport to repave an alternate runway which is seldom, if ever, used.

A lot of us in the Congress and the Senate have worked for years on small rural airports to try to get some money to extend a runway so corporate aircraft could come in, so maybe businesses could locate in areas where there was not commercial air traffic. Getting $100,000 for an airport is a major accomplishment sometimes, but $200 million for an airport that averages 20 passengers a day, that many times there are more people handling security at this airport than there are people going through the lines, is something we need to stop.

If we cannot stop it, we cannot stop anything. Last Saturday in front of the Capitol, hundreds of thousands of people gathered. It was not a Republican gathering, I can tell you that because I was there. It was average Americans, moms and dads with their children, grandmas, grandpas, people who had never been involved in politics before who were very concerned about the level of spending, not just this administration.

This is not a criticism of this administration. We are talking about the last 15 or 20 years. People are concerned about the level of spending and borrowing and debt, taxes and government takeovers in all areas of our economy.

Health care is certainly something that brought it to a head, but these people are here concerned by the fact that they believe our country is on the edge of the cliff. They would like to see us in the Congress begin to move back away from the cliff and take some of the things that are not necessary here in Washington and begin to trim them back.

But I think we can say here, if we cannot cut the funding for this little airport in Pennsylvania named after the Congressman who has helped to get $200 million, if we cannot stop funding it, stop subsidizing tickets, if we cannot look at the facts in this particular case and decide as a Congress to stop this, then there is nothing we can cut. Then there is no such thing as waste, and there is no such thing as fraud and corruption throughout this Federal Government. If we cannot agree, as Members of the Senate, to stop this—we are not taking away the $200 million they have already gotten, the $800,000 for the alternative runway which they have there, which did not need repaving in the first place, we are not closing down the airport or stopping any air travel there. We are just saying: Enough is enough.

We have bought equipment there, radar equipment, spent millions of dollars that is not even being used. It is not being staffed. It is time we at least focus on one thing and say that we can begin the process of moving this country away from a cliff of economic and financial disaster.

I hope on this bill, with this amendment, that we can, in a bipartisan way, agree this is one thing we do not have to have at the Federal level, that we can begin to shift priorities to those things we are supposed to do at the Federal level. It is certainly not to fund a pet project of one Congressman to the tune of $200 million.

I encourage all my Senate colleagues, Republican and Democratic, to

support an amendment that would simply disallow the use of any funds in this bill to be used to continue the administration of subsidies or grants to this airport.

I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. MURRAY. 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.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, we are about to set up a series of votes to occur shortly. We will make that unanimous consent agreement in the next few minutes.

In the pending time, I will speak against one of the amendments that will be considered; that is, the one that was offered by the Senator from Nevada. It is a motion to recommit and reduce spending for our transportation and housing bill.

I would like to point out to all our colleagues, the funding levels that are contained in this bill are consistent with the budget resolution this entire Senate agreed to in the spring and are $1.2 billion below the level of funding that was requested by the President in his request.

The majority of the funding increases that are contained in our bill support our Nation's vulnerable citizens and the needs of the communities. Those increases include funding to support rental assistance for low-income families, elderly and disabled tenants who use Section 8 vouchers, living in project-based housing or those who live in public housing.

The funding provided ensures that families receiving assistance will maintain that. This is critical because, without assistance, these individuals and families would be at the risk of homelessness, at a time that all of us know that many of our citizens are struggling today.

We have increased funding for homeless programs, which will help prevent more families from becoming homeless. Last year we should all note there was an increase of 9 percent in family homelessness in this Nation.

We have increased funding to support our States and our local communities to address their housing needs and support economic activities ties through the Community Development Block Grant Program. We increased funding in our Nation's infrastructure that will both improve the safety of our Nation's roads and bridges and create and sustain critical jobs.

We have increased funding for safety inspectors at the Federal Aviation Administration, as well as funding for a new program to invest in railroad safety technologies such as positive train control.

In comparison, there are drastic consequences, we should note, to freezing funding for this bill at last year's level. Funding frozen at the fiscal year 2009 level could result in tens of thousands of people who currently hold vouchers to lose their housing. During this economic crisis, we should not be putting our low-income families at risk and out on the street.

In addition, a funding level frozen at the 2009 level would put at risk our critical funding for air traffic controllers. My colleague from Missouri has talked about the importance of increasing the air traffic controllers, and we know the Federal Aviation Administration is facing a shortage of experienced air traffic controllers. We cannot afford to ignore the safety needs of the aviation system.

This subcommittee carefully weighed the merits of all programs before us. We cut programs below the President's request and achieved additional savings. Further reductions now requested by this amendment would seriously undermine critical transportation safety activities. I ask colleagues to reject the amendment when we vote.

We should have a unanimous consent agreement shortly to have votes begin in the next several minutes.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to vote in relation to the following amendments and motion in the order listed; that no amendments be in order to the amendment or the motion prior to a vote; that prior to the stacked votes in this sequence there be 2 minutes of debate equally divided and controlled in the usual form; that after the first vote, the succeeding votes be limited to 10 minutes each: the Gregg amendment, No. 2361, and the Ensign motion to recommit.

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

Mrs. MURRAY. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GREGG. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

AMENDMENT NO. 2361

Under the previous order, there will be 2 minutes of debate equally divided prior to a vote on the Gregg amendment.

The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, this amendment does a very simple thing. It says taxpayers don't have to pay for signs which tell them their money is being spent well. It makes no sense that taxpayers should be spending millions of dollars to put up signs to tell them their money is being spent well. It has to be extraordinarily frustrating to taxpayers to see that happening. It certainly is not a good use of their money. The money can be used on a lot of other things—building a road, repairing bridges, improving buildings that need to be improved, improving parks. Let's not put up signs on every one of these sites across America saying we congratulate ourselves for doing the project. It is self-congratulatory, it is political, and it is inappropriate. These truly are signs to nowhere. A total waste of money. They should not be required. We should reject them as being required. That is what the amendment does.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The time of the Senator has expired. Who yields time in opposition?

The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, this is a most political amendment. I got to thinking, after Senator GREGG said we can't show a sign where economic recovery funds are being put to use on a road or a bridge or highway. We should keep it from the people because he says it is self-congratulatory.

It is not self-congratulatory. Some people may not like the project; some people may. It is about transparency and openness.

I have to say to you, this makes no sense. Where were Senator GREGG and his friends on the Republican side when George Bush and the Republican Congress spent $33 million to send out a letter telling everyone their Economic Recovery Act was working by way of refunds? I never heard one word out of the Senators from the other side of the aisle. That cost $33 million.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the tax rebate letter that went to every American be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

TEXT OF IRS TAX REBATE LETTER

NOTICE OF STATUS AND AMOUNT OF IMMEDIATE TAX RELIEF

We are pleased to inform you that the United States Congress passed and President George W. Bush signed into law the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001, which provides long-term tax relief for all Americans who pay income taxes.

The new tax law provides immediate tax relief in 2001 and long-term tax relief for the years to come.

As part of the immediate tax relief, you will be receiving a check in the amount of $XXX during the week of XX/XX/01.

Your amount is based on information you submitted on your 2000 federal tax return and is just the first installment of the long-term tax relief provided by the new law. The amount of the check could be reduced by any outstanding federal debt you owe, such as

past due child support or federal or state income taxes. You need to take no additional steps. Your check will be mailed to you. You will not be required to report the amount as taxable income on your federal tax return.

On the reverse side of this letter is information on how your check amount was calculated. If you need additional information, please visit the IRS web site at www.irs.gov or call 1–800–829–4477. Please keep a copy of this notice with your tax records.

Mrs. BOXER. I would say to you, this is politics. This is going to save—Senator GREGG's amendment—$4 million. This cost $33 million.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator's time has expired.

Mrs. BOXER. I yield the floor. I hope we vote ''no.''

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask for one point of personal clarification.

I did not vote for President Bush's stimulus package either.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask for a rebuttal.

This is not about whether you voted for the stimulus. It is about whether you objected to spending money to tell people what the stimulus does. It seems to me, under Republican leaders we did not hear anything. Now we hear it.

I yield the floor.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, do two wrongs make a right?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. All time has expired.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, regular order.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the Gregg amendment.

The yeas and nays have been ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. BYRD) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SANDERS). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 45, nays 52, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 281 Leg.]

YEAS—45

Alexander	Ensign	Lugar
Barrasso	Enzi	McCain
Bennett	Gillibrand	McConnell
Bond	Graham	Murkowski
Brownback	Grassley	Risch
Bunning	Gregg	Roberts
Burr	Hatch	Schumer
Chambliss	Hutchison	Sessions
Coburn	Inhofe	Shaheen
Cochran	Isakson	Shelby
Collins	Johanns	Snowe
Corker	Klobuchar	Thune
Cornyn	Kyl	Vitter
Crapo	LeMieux	Voinovich
DeMint	Lincoln	Wicker

NAYS—52

Akaka	Cantwell	Feinstein
Baucus	Cardin	Franken
Bayh	Carper	Hagan
Begich	Casey	Harkin
Bennet	Conrad	Inouye
Bingaman	Dodd	Johnson
Boxer	Dorgan	Kaufman
Brown	Durbin	Kerry
Burris	Feingold	Kohl
Landrieu	Murray	Tester
Lautenberg	Nelson (NE)	Udall (CO)
Leahy	Nelson (FL)	Udall (NM)
Levin	Pryor	Warner
Lieberman	Reed	Webb
McCaskill	Reid	Whitehouse
Menendez	Sanders	Wyden
Merkley	Specter	
Mikulski	Stabenow	

NOT VOTING—2

Byrd	Rockefeller

The amendment (No. 2361) was rejected.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mrs. BOXER. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, we have one more vote right now. We expect to be debating several amendments over the next hour or so. I believe there are about four or five amendments left. We want to finish this bill this afternoon. If you have any issues, please bring them to the committee during this vote or when this vote is over so that later this evening or early this evening, I hope, we can move to the final votes on this bill.

With that, I believe the motion to recommit by the Senator from Nevada is in order.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time on the Ensign motion to recommit?

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, this is a committee report here. It says, ''2009 appropriations, $117 billion.'' This is the kind of fuzzy math we deal with here in Washington, DC. Last year's appropriations bill was $55 billion, it wasn't $117 billion. It is only $117 billion if you count in the money from the stimulus bill. That looks as if it is being counted here so that they can claim they are actually cutting last year's bill. This bill has a 23-percent increase over last year. What this motion to recommit says is, let's show some fiscal restraint around here and let's freeze spending to last year's level.

So we want to recommit the bill back to the Appropriations Committee. The Appropriations Committee can determine where it wants the spending to go, but it needs to be at last year's level.

Every State in our country right now is—they are not freezing their budgets, they are cutting their budgets. Yet here in Washington we have an appropriations bill in front of us that increases spending by 23 percent. This is outrageous. We need to show some fiscal discipline in this case, so I urge my colleagues to vote for this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington is recognized.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, for the information of my colleagues, the funding levels contained in the bill are consistent with the budget resolution the Senate passed and agreed to this Spring. We are $1.2 billion below the level of funding requested by the President.

We worked very hard to balance the important safety, transportation and accounting needs of this Nation. We urge you to defeat this amendment.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I join with my colleague in urging a defeat of the amendment.

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second? There is a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. BYRD) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 33, nays 64, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 282 Leg.]

YEAS—33

Barrasso	Enzi	Lugar
Bayh	Graham	McCain
Bunning	Grassley	McCaskill
Burr	Gregg	McConnell
Chambliss	Hatch	Risch
Coburn	Hutchison	Roberts
Corker	Inhofe	Sessions
Cornyn	Isakson	Snowe
Crapo	Johanns	Thune
DeMint	Kyl	Vitter
Ensign	LeMieux	Wicker

NAYS—64

Akaka	Feingold	Murray
Alexander	Feinstein	Nelson (NE)
Baucus	Franken	Nelson (FL)
Begich	Gillibrand	Pryor
Bennet	Hagan	Reed
Bennett	Harkin	Reid
Bingaman	Inouye	Sanders
Bond	Johnson	Schumer
Boxer	Kaufman	Shaheen
Brown	Kerry	Shelby
Brownback	Klobuchar	Specter
Burris	Kohl	Stabenow
Cantwell	Landrieu	Tester
Cardin	Lautenberg	Udall (CO)
Carper	Leahy	Udall (NM)
Casey	Levin	Voinovich
Cochran	Lieberman	Warner
Collins	Lincoln	Webb
Conrad	Menendez	Whitehouse
Dodd	Merkley	Wyden
Dorgan	Mikulski	
Durbin	Murkowski	

NOT VOTING—2

Byrd	Rockefeller

The motion was rejected.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote, and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Ms. CANTWELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I am concerned that we in this Congress are not properly attached to reality. I spent time in my State over the recess, and people talked to me repeatedly about their concerns about excessive government spending. It is a real national issue.

We know our national debt, the total debt is on track to double in 5 years and triple in 10. That is the public debt this country owes, and we have to pay interest on it to countries such as China and individuals all over the world. We pay a lot of interest every year. The interest is going to surge over the next 10 years under this proposal.

I feel as if we are not connected, we are not hearing it. We think it is business as usual, and it is not business as usual. States throughout our country, cities throughout our country are cutting spending, trimming budgets, finding more ways to be efficient, looking for ways to save money and be within their budgets. Most States have a balanced budget amendment, and they have to stay within their budget. We do not. We came within one vote several years ago passing out of the Senate a balanced budget amendment, but it failed. Now we are proceeding on a stunningly reckless course of spending.

I have always tried to support agriculture. It is a big thing in my State. But I could not vote for the last agriculture bill we had. There was a 14-percent increase in agriculture spending. We know the rule of 7—most people do. If you increase something at the rate of 7 percent a year, it will double in 10 years; at 14 percent, it will double in 5 years. So the entire agriculture bill of the United States is on track to double in 5 years at that rate, and that does not include the extra money that came out of the stimulus bill, which is significant. If you include that, it would amount to a 67-percent increase in agricultural funding. I just bring that up. This is a bill I care about.

The transportation and HUD bill that is before us today is worse. It has a 23-percent increase in spending which is on top of a 13-percent increase in spending in the bill last year. That does not include the stimulus package spending. At a 23-percent rate, spending on Housing and Urban Development, and Transportation would double in 3 to 4 years. If you include the stimulus package money which we passed in February it is a 165-percent increase in spending from fiscal year 2008 to fiscal year 2010. That is a stunning increase, at a time when we do not have the money, and the American people know it.

That is one of the complaints about health care. It is all part and parcel of a concern by the American people. What I understand them to say to me is: Have you guys lost your minds up there? Do you no longer feel a sense of responsibility? You are going to triple the national debt in 10 years? How can you justify that? We have vote after vote and they fail. We need to be containing spending.

We had an amendment that was offered to deal with a shortfall in transportation money. We have a problem. We have a real problem. People are using less gasoline, and the taxes for our highways primarily come from people paying a tax per gallon. If they use less gallons, we have less money coming into the basic highway fund.

I would like to see that number lifted. How can we do it? Senator VITTER proposed a very commonsense amendment. He said: Let's put up, I think it was $18 billion, out of the stimulus bill—most of which was promised for roads anyway, but they have not been fixed—he said take that money and fix the shortfall in the transportation bill. I voted for that. It failed because they preferred to fix the shortfall in transportation by borrowing more on top of the stimulus bill; every penny of it is borrowed. We don't have the money. We have to borrow it. We pay interest on it. Somebody has to pay that for the indefinite future because the 10-year budget the President has submitted to us has no hint it will contain spending. In fact, the deficits grow in the out years, which is why we have such a terrible problem.

Earlier today we had an amendment by Senator ENSIGN that said: Let's freeze spending. Let's show some restraint such as our States are doing, such as our families are doing. No. Just flat spending. You see, transportation and these other programs that are in this bill, they are getting stimulus money out of the $800 billion on top of that. So why do they need a baseline increase of 23 percent? Next year, we will be hearing: We are only going to do a 15-percent increase on the baseline and be proud of that.

I don't like the way we are doing this. I don't think we are listening to the American people. It is not the right thing to do.

I have a few charts I would like to share that bear repeating because I am not making up these numbers. These are numbers by the Congressional Budget Office. They are basically a nonpartisan group of fine folks who try to give us honest data on which we can make decisions. The chairman of it is selected by the Congress. Of course, the Congress is a Democratic majority, and they were able to select a Director. This is what they scored President Obama's budget. This is the public debt of the United States of America, much of it held by China and other countries around the world, individuals around the world. They buy our T-bills, and we pay them interest.

This chart is in trillions. In the entire history of our country up through 2008, we had accumulated a public debt of $5.8 trillion. A lot of people think that is too high. I think that is too high. We are carrying a big debt, and we do not need it to continue. Under the budget that is before us today, that we passed, it looks like we are spending at least on that level, if not more, based on the bills we see coming forward. Our spending will double the entire national debt in 5 years to $11.8 trillion, and in 10 years, according to the Congressional Budget Office, it will be $17.3 trillion.

That is a stunning figure. It should put chills through the backbones of everybody in this Congress. How can we justify this? States are trimming their budgets, and we had a 14-percent increase in agriculture, which we not long ago voted on, and now we have a 23-percent increase in HUD. This is not responsible.

We came into this year with a deficit. The President said we had to rush through a stimulus bill, and they passed it by just a couple of votes—$800 billion, every bit of it borrowed because we did not have the money. We were already in debt. If you spend more money when you are in debt, how do you get it? You borrow it. You have to get people to buy your Treasury bills. The interest rate on 10-year Treasury bills was over 2 percent in January. In July, they reached 3.6 percent or so because people are getting worried. They think we might have an inflationary spiral. They think interest rates may go up. So they are not so willing to loan money at a low interest rate for 10 years like they were at the beginning of the year. This causes a problem.

Let me show this chart, which I think brings the numbers home in a way we can comprehend them because it is difficult to comprehend numbers this big. People assume, when I throw these billion-dollar figures around, surely people up there know what they are doing, and, SESSIONS, you are just exaggerating. You don't like to spend money, and you are exaggerating.

It is not an exaggeration. I am talking about the entire debt of America tripling in 10 years.

Look at the interest. We spend approximately $100 billion now on highways. I said $40 billion, but I think with the stimulus and the spending from gas taxes, we spend about $100 billion on our highways. We spend about $100 billion on education. On September 30, 2009, the estimate is that we will pay $170 billion in interest. We get nothing for it. It is just like paying interest on your credit card. The bank gets it. You don't get it. They loaned you money. You owe them money—interest—to keep the money they loaned you.

As the debt increases and we have a modest adjustment in the interest rate—not a big adjustment but one the Congressional Budget Office projects will occur, a raising from the relatively low interest rates we have today—as those go up, the interest we will pay each year, the burden we pay first before we can buy anything with the taxpayers' money is increasing.

We see the numbers here. In 2019, 10 years from today, the Congressional Budget Office estimates the U.S. Government will be paying out $799 billion

a year in interest. We don't get anything for that. It goes out to people all over the world who bought our Treasury notes, and we send out this interest. We send it to some Americans who buy it. They get this interest. It is money we do not have to do things we want to do for our constituents. And, in essence, as a moral matter, we are reaching into the future and we are taking money from the future and spending it today to meet our desires today, without doing what our States and cities and counties are doing—figuring out how to get by with less in tough times and looking forward to the day they will be able to see growth again and be able to not have to be on such a spare budget. But that is life. We are not able to pass a law to reverse life and the challenges and difficulties and uncertainties we face every year in our personal lives and in our national lives and in our economic lives.

So that is the lower number. That is assuming things are going pretty well. Look at the interest rates that the blue chip forecast of economists, who are a good group of people—and they make forecasts that are pretty accurate. They have been more accurate than the government over the years. The Blue Chip Forecast says the interest rate is going to be more than CBO scores. They say the interest rate in the tenth year would be $865 billion. And interest rates could surge to the level of the 1980s, which would be 10 percent interest rates. If you had that kind of interest rate, we would spend $1.29 trillion on interest before we could do anything to purchase things for our constituents.

Remember, the highway money is about $100 billion; education is about $100 billion. We will be spending $800 billion on interest—$600 billion plus more than we spent this year, just on interest, because of irresponsible spending. So I would say, count me as somebody who is getting the message, both from my own study of what is occurring here, being on the Budget Committee, and from what I am hearing from my constituents. They say: It is time for you guys to get responsible. We are upset. And why shouldn't they be upset? Somebody comes to a town meeting and they are a little hot with their Congressman or their Senator. Are we supposed to think this is a threat to democracy, when we have this kind of behavior going on in the Congress? They ought to be hot. There is every reason to be hot. We do not need to be doing this.

You may say: Well, we are having a hard time economically, Senator. We have to spend a little money now to get this thing going. The outyear budget projection, according to the Congressional Budget Office, assumes robust growth. In 2012 and 2013 they are projecting over 4 percent growth. We may not have 4 percent growth. If we don't have 4 percent growth, we are going to have larger deficits than they are projecting. And in the outer years they are projecting a solid 2- or 3-percent growth out there. No recession in this. So this is not a projection based on the assumption of a recession putting us in this kind of debt.

How much do we spend each year? Well, it is about $3.5 trillion. That is how much a trillion dollars is. We have $1.8 trillion in debt this year. We will be short this year $1.8 trillion. We will spend $1.8 trillion more than we take in. That is $1,800 billion. And those are things that should cause us to think about what we are doing. We have done nothing like this before, I don't think, except maybe a life-and-death struggle in World War II, when people all over the country were drafted. I would note that 43 cents out of every dollar we are spending this year is borrowed. That is not acceptable.

We have heard from administration officials, from Alan Greenspan and other experts, that this whole budget picture is unsustainable. That is what they say. TV commentators, editorial writers say it is unsustainable, the debt cycle we are in. Let me ask this: What does unsustainable mean? It means just that. It cannot be allowed to continue.

I had somebody ask me recently in the airport: Well, when are you going to start paying it down? When are you going to start paying the debt down? The same way I have to do in my house with my credit cards, my mortgage. The answer is: There is no prospect of paying it down. Last year was the highest deficit we have had—$450 billion in 1 year. This year it will be $1,800 billion. In the next 10 years, according to CBO, the least deficit we will have—and they are projecting 2 or 3 years from now—is $600-plus billion. That is the lowest. Then it starts back up again, and in the tenth year it is over $1 trillion.

There is no prospect of a balanced budget anywhere out there, and we act as though it is business as usual. We can spend and spend—so 23 percent on this bill, 14 percent on that bill on top of the stimulus money we put in. What we should do is have at least level funding with the stimulus money piling into the economy—the $800 billion there.

In closing, I would say we are not getting it. We are not listening to the American people. We are not even reading our own budget numbers, and we are hurting our country. This $800 billion in interest every year? This will devastate our ability to fund the government. Not only that, it will require either more and more and more borrowing or more and more and more taxes, neither one of which is good for this economy. It is not good for America.

We do not have to do this. I don't mean to be partisan about it. Republicans' hands are not clean on this either. But the leadership in this Senate needs to understand these fundamental principles and needs to send some signals that they understand it and are prepared to do something about it. And that includes the President of the United States of America. He needs to understand what is happening to this country as a result of his budget and take some steps that will show in reality we are going to bring this ship back on course again.

You say: Well, you have this health care bill and that is what is driving it. The health care bill is not in there. This budget analysis was done before health care even came up. It will cost more, of course, and make these numbers look even bigger. So we have to grow up and be responsible. Our Republic is depending on us to lead and tell the truth, and the truth is we are on an unsustainable course. The truth is this administration and the leadership in this Senate and the House of Representatives has no plan to get us off this unsustainable course. The American people are the only ones, it looks like, who have sense enough to know what is occurring, and I hope they will continue to make their voices heard.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TESTER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2359, AS MODIFIED

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I ask that any pending amendment be set aside and that amendment No. 2359 be called up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I ask that the modified version of the amendment be made pending.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Louisiana [Mr. VITTER] proposes an amendment (No. 2359) as modified.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To prohibit the use of funds for households that include convicted drug dealing or domestic violence offenders or members of violent gangs that occupy rebuilt public housing in New Orleans)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. PROHIBITION ON USING FUNDS FOR CERTAIN HOUSEHOLDS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—No funds made available under this Act may be used for or provided to a household that—

(1) includes a covered offender; and

(2) resides in federally-subsidized housing in New Orleans, Louisiana.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

(1) the term ''covered offender'' means an individual that—

(A) has been convicted of an offense under Federal, State, or tribal law involved in manufacturing, distributing, or possessing

with intent to manufacture or distribute, a controlled substance (as defined in section 102 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 802)); or

(B) is a member of a criminal street gang, as defined in section 521 of title 18, United States Code;

(2) the term ''federally-subsidized housing'' means any housing for which housing assistance is being provided; and

(3) the term ''housing assistance'' means any assistance, loan, loan guarantee, housing, or other housing assistance provided under a housing-related program administered, in whole or in part, by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

Mr. VITTER. This amendment is very straightforward, and it is very narrowly drawn. First of all, it only affects public housing assistance in New Orleans, LA, nowhere else, and it prohibits funds in this bill from going to any housing assistance to benefit drug dealers or members of violent gangs, folks who have actually been convicted of these offenses—drug dealing, not simple possession, drug dealing, a conviction of that—or convicted of crimes that involve a member of a violent gang.

After Hurricane Katrina, there was an enormous rebuilding effort in New Orleans that continues. Part of that effort involves public housing in New Orleans. Quite frankly, that system has been plagued for many years with tremendous problems, the biggest of which is crime in those projects. There has been an ongoing effort to rid those projects of violent crime. That effort continues and certainly that battle has not yet been won because, unfortunately, New Orleans continues to be a capital in the country for violent crime, with very high violent crime levels.

As we are rebuilding these projects using a fundamentally different model—a mixed-income model, less density—certainly one of the changes we need to make is to ensure that drug dealers and members of violent gangs do not set up shop once again in those public housing projects and do not get other taxpayer assistance.

In this bill is $7.25 billion for public housing assistance. Some of that will go to New Orleans. Certainly it is reasonable and productive and positive that we simply say we are not going to send this assistance to folks who have been convicted of being a violent gang member, have been convicted of drug dealing, not simple possession but drug dealing.

This is very important policy, very important for the continued recovery of New Orleans coming out of Hurricane Katrina. I urge my colleagues to accept this amendment and support this amendment and pass it into law.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

WTO RULING

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, 2 weeks ago, the World Trade Organization handed down a ruling in one of our Nation's most important trade cases to date. The ruling was in a case that the U.S. Government, through our Trade Representative, brought against the European Union for providing market-distorting subsidies for the European aerospace company, Airbus. It was a case brought against the EU not because of minor trade infractions or insignificant manipulation of the international market. It was brought because of decades of playing outside the rules, billions in government subsidies, and repeated warnings by the United States to end the unfair practice of providing a damaging subsidy called launch aid. What the WTO ruled by all accounts is very clear. Launch aid is illegal. It creates an uneven playing field. It has harmed American workers and companies. It needs to end.

For me, this is an important decision that is long overdue. That is because in my home State, the State of much of our country's aerospace industry, the consequences of competing with the treasuries of large European governments has been very real for a very long time. It has been felt in communities, in local economies, and in lost jobs. That is why, as my colleagues know, I have been speaking out against Europe's market-distorting actions in commercial aerospace for many years. I have raised my concerns with other Senators, with foreign leaders, and administrations of both parties.

In 2005, I helped pass a unanimous resolution in the Senate on the need to level the playing field for fair global aerospace competition. In that same year, after the European Union mocked our efforts to negotiate in good faith by continuing to provide launch aid, I urged the Bush administration to move forward with this WTO case. Make no mistake about it, I understand the value of healthy competition in the international marketplace. But I also believe that competitors must abide by the same set of rules.

One reason I have fought so hard to end illegal subsidies is because I know there is a fundamental difference in how our country and Europe view the aerospace industry and fair competition. For us in America, commercial aerospace is seen as a private business. Some companies will win; some companies will lose. But we allow the marketplace to decide. American aerospace companies, such as Boeing, take tremendous financial risks when they develop and market a new aircraft. Their workers and developers and researchers put their jobs and billions of dollars on the line each time. They literally bet the company with each new plane they develop. But in Europe, aerospace is a jobs program. To fund that program, they use billions of dollars in what is called launch aid. So they are not quite as concerned when Airbus loses money. In fact, they don't even require Airbus to repay that launch aid, if the aircraft they develop is unsuccessful. It is no risk, all reward.

But as the WTO has now ruled, it is also a violation of international trade rules and fair competition. The plain truth is that these illegal subsidies have cost American jobs. The commercial aerospace industry employs well over half a million Americans with family-wage salaries. But in the past 20 years, as Airbus has continued to grow, thanks to billions in subsidies, we have lost hundreds of thousands of American aerospace jobs. These are scientific and technical jobs. They are jobs that keep the economies of communities large and small stable in States all throughout the country. They are jobs that support families to pay mortgages and create other jobs. They are jobs that are increasingly precious at a time when we are facing double-digit unemployment.

American innovation led to the birth of the aerospace industry over 100 years ago. Since that time, we have made air travel safer and brought growth and innovation to our economy. Although we led in the first century of flight, unless we recognize the damages these subsidies pose and fight for our workers, we might not have a major role in the next century in aerospace. That is why the WTO ruling is so important. This ruling is much more than a confirmation that Airbus has been breaking the rules. It is a victory for American workers who produce the world's best planes and who have been forced to fight an uphill battle. It is a warning to other countries considering entering the aerospace marketplace that launch aid is the wrong example to follow. It reaffirms the spirit of free and fair trade in the international marketplace and reminds us that we have to be vigilant because this is certainly not the end of this fight.

In fact, there are already signs that the EU and Airbus will flaunt the will of the WTO. Already, very publicly, the Governments of France, Germany, and the United Kingdom have said they will move forward with plans to provide Airbus with nearly $5 billion in launch aid for the development of Airbus's latest generation of airplane, the A350, despite any ruling by the WTO. In other words, in the face of a clear condemnation of their practices, they said they will do as they please. That is why, on Monday, I wrote to President Obama urging him and his administration to take the strongest possible actions to prevent European governments from providing Airbus with an additional illegal trade-distorting subsidy. But it will be all of our responsibilities to ensure that the rules are followed, American jobs are not further endangered, and the future of the aerospace industry is protected.

Unless we wake up to the threat that continued illegal subsidies pose, we will lose an industry we created that is critical to our economic recovery and will help sustain our Nation's continued growth.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, while we have an opportunity, there are some important comments I want to make about this bill.

We have heard from some people who are concerned about the deficit and the national debt. They are tremendous concerns. Any discussion of our overall economy must take into consideration the debt we are running up that will be on the backs of our children and our grandchildren. I have opposed many spending packages that have come through and many of the things that have gone on.

But when we are looking at priorities—which are funding ongoing programs which are within the budget of our committees—then we need to focus on spending that will prove beneficial for the American people and the economy.

The bill before us, the Transportation and Housing and Urban Development appropriations bill, funds infrastructure development for everything from roads, to bridges, to airports, which is critical to attracting businesses, creating jobs and economic growth in our communities.

The bill also provides funding to help the Nation's most vulnerable populations: the homeless, low-income families and seniors, housing for the disabled, and housing for our returning veterans who have served overseas.

This bill provides increased investment in the Federal Aviation Administration. The FAA gets money for 200 additional safety inspectors. I have spoken on this floor about the need for safety inspectors because we have airlines flying with very subpar qualifications, and too often they get away with sending out people who are not qualified, should not be pilots, have not been properly trained. For all of us who fly and all of our constituents, that is a major concern. But we need to accelerate programs as well related to reducing congestion and increasing safety. That means getting us to the next generation air traffic system.

Nobody will claim this is a perfect bill, but it is one that provides needed funds for programs that not only make a difference in the lives of everyday Americans but also enables job creation, economic growth, and the kind of treatment we wish to provide for those in need, especially in the housing area.

I have asked my colleagues, and will continue to ask them, to support this bill. There have also been attacks—and there will be some more before we get out of here—on earmarks. Every year we have a debate about whether Congress should have a role in setting priorities or simply pass the buck to those in the executive branch of government.

Within my State are State and local experts I turn to, as well as people whose lives are inextricably linked to housing, transportation, and economic development. Most of these people know a great deal about these issues. They know a lot more about these issues and how they affect the people of Missouri than most folks sitting in a bureaucracy in Washington, DC, who may never have been there, do not know what the challenges are, do not know where the local people are putting their priorities, do not know what their plans are, do not know how they see their communities grow, their State grow. I think a lot of these people know more about housing, transportation, and economic development than people at OMB and those who ultimately produce budget submissions from their distant Washington offices.

We have heard a lot of talk about bad earmarks. I am opposed to bad earmarks, and people who abuse the system, who do so criminally, should be punished and put in jail, as they have been. There is no debate there. The debate is not what is written about, but it is who should earmark because every dollar that is spent by the government is directed by somebody. Who is making the decisions?

Some argue it should be a mix where Congress earmarks roughly 2 percent of discretionary funds, with the balance, roughly 98 percent, being earmarked by agency employees of the executive branch. I think you could make a good argument that it should be even higher.

However, under this scenario, with full disclosure, elected officials have a role in listening to and speaking for the people of their State, the leaders of their communities, the leaders of the institutions. We can make those recommendations, and the full Congress can look at them and the President can ratify them. This is reflected in the bills before us this session.

Others argue Congress should have no role; executive branch officials, elected by no one, should have 100 percent monopoly power over spending. Their position is people unaccountable to the voters should have this monopoly power. Congress can, however, and does set criteria, but the more criteria we set, the more it becomes a congressional earmark. The less criteria we set, the more it remains an executive branch earmark.

In executive agencies, people have their own agendas and political leanings. Their own political bosses—in either the Bush administration or the Obama administration—have their own agenda. I do not like monopoly power of the Obama administration on spending and I did not support it during the Clinton or either Bush administration as well.

I have to admit I find it puzzling to hear some of my self-professed conservative friends suggesting that the way to reform spending is to turn it all over to the Obama administration to earmark. I am not arguing they should have no role. I am arguing today that Congress should have a role.

The Constitution, in article I, section 9, says very clearly that it gives the Congress the power of the purse. It states:

> No money shall be drawn from the Treasury but in consequence of Appropriations made by law.

Guess what. That is what we are supposed to do, as stated in article I, section 9. I think it would be extreme, probably excessive, to suggest that Congress should earmark all money, just as I believe it would be extreme and wrongheaded to suggest that the Obama administration should earmark all money.

A bad earmark is a bad earmark, no matter who does it. Frankly, when I left the governorship of my State, one of the reasons I believed it was important to run for the Senate was to be able to exercise the voice and the views of Missourians in the spending process because I had seen too many instances where bureaucrats in Washington made very bad decisions.

They made bad decisions that absolutely turned the priorities around. They told us we had to spend all of our money for cleaning up wastewater, putting tertiary treatment on major metropolitan sewer systems, which would then have to put cleaner water into the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers than was already there.

The State's priority was to clean up many of the pristine streams in our State which had, in too many instances, raw sewage flowing into them—streams which were vital parts of our scenic rivers, our scenic waterways, places for hunters and fishermen, where people would like to swim and boat but could not.

But we have seen even more instances of bad earmarks. I thought it was a horrible Pentagon earmark to award an Air Force tanker project worth billions of dollars to a European company—a process which, under pressure, has since been subjected to review and will cost thousands of Missouri jobs if undertaken.

Fundamentally, I see this as a role of Congress and one that should be transparent, self-limiting, and subject to scrutiny. We get that scrutiny. I accept it. I am happy to argue with anybody who disagrees with my views, but at least we do so out in the open. When earmarks are made in the executive branch, nobody knows who did them. If you don't like a decision, you don't even know whom to yell at because it is somebody who is not appointed, not accountable, not obvious to the people we are supposed to serve.

A lot of people criticize me for putting out statements, news releases, when I get some funds for the State, which is another way of saying I was too transparent. I use this process to help empower local people who have local ideas on how best to improve their local communities after having set their own local priorities.

If a Senator doesn't want to request an earmark, that is fine. Some people request earmarks and then vote to strip them out. I think that is a little bit self-contradictory, but I will leave that to the Senators who choose to request them and then move to strike them. If a Senator thinks it is inappropriate or does not trust himself or his local leaders to establish priorities and petition Congress for funding, that is his or her business. But I do trust local officials who answer to their voters and neighbors, as I do, who invest their money and the tax money at the local level, and who understand their own conditions better than anyone else, over the geniuses at OMB who may or may not have had the privilege of traveling to Missouri, to Washington State, to Pennsylvania, to Minnesota, to wherever the Senator comes from.

In short, someone earmarks discretionary money, and I am glad that a small fraction of that earmarking is reserved for those who can be questioned and disparaged and voted out of office if people disagree. I disagree that earmarking and making all spending decisions should be a responsibility exclusive to the typically anonymous executive branch people.

I ask my colleagues to ensure that bureaucrats and politicians in the executive branch are not the sole source of power when it comes to setting spending priorities. In this case, local citizens outside of Washington who live with the project purposes and who are not agency officials should have a stronger voice in setting local priorities, not a weaker voice.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill and to oppose efforts to take away from Congress not only our constitutional power and authority over the purse but what I view as a high responsibility of someone who holds an office and carries out the duties of a U.S. Senator.

Mr. President, I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FRANKEN). The Chair recognizes the Senator from Pennsylvania.

AMENDMENT NO. 2410

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise today in opposition to an amendment proposed by my colleague from South Carolina. The amendment is No. 2410. I believe this amendment sets a dangerous precedent for a number of reasons.

First of all, it singles out one airport, which happens to be an airport in southwestern Pennsylvania, in Cambria County on the southwestern corner of our State.

It is important to note about this particular debate on this amendment that none of the funds in the underlying bill we are talking about here provide for direct funding to this airport. In my view, the decision as to whether this particular airport should receive funding should be left to the Federal Aviation Administration.

The Senator from South Carolina noted that the airport received funding under the America Recovery and Reinvestment Act, known as the stimulus bill. Let me read something from the spokesperson from the U.S. Department of Transportation. This spokesperson said: ''The bottom line is it,'' meaning this airport, ''deserved the money based on the merits.'' ''It,'' meaning the funding under the recovery bill, ''is not an earmark.''

The Essential Air Service Program, which as many here know was created by Congress in 1978 to help small airports—we have a lot of them in Pennsylvania, and we need them—to survive after airline deregulation. That is the primary source of Federal funding for the airport in this case, not an earmark, not a congressional earmark.

According to Congressional Quarterly, more than 150 airports across the country qualify for this assistance and many of the 150 airports have a higher per-passenger subsidy with lower passenger loads than the airport we are talking about here, the Johnstown Airport.

Let me say in conclusion, the city of Johnstown, as well as the wider Cambria County region but especially this county—and so many places have been hit hard in this recession, but historically this particular community has been hit very hard. In the 14 labor regions of our State where they measure unemployment, very often the Johnstown labor market has the highest in the State. If it is not the highest unemployment, it is often in the top three. This is a community that has suffered tremendously over many decades with job loss.

When we consider what happens when people go to an airport, sometimes it is not just civilians. A lot of military personnel leave from an airport such as this. Johnstown, PA, including Cambria County, PA, has transported on a per capita basis as many or more soldiers in Iraq, for example, than almost anyplace in the country.

So this is a community that has contributed mightily to the success of this country under adverse economic circumstances. The least we should do is not target this community and target this airport in the midst of a debate on such a significant Transportation appropriations bill.

So we are grateful for this opportunity.

I yield the floor.

Mrs. MURRAY. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I have sought recognition to speak on the pending amendment relating to the Mount Washington Community Development Corporation. There has been an effort to delete an appropriation of $200,000 to help the Mount Washington Community Development Corporation clean up and remove hazardous waste and prepare the site for future development.

In phase I, there will be a cleanup of asbestos and hazardous waste, with a total cost of $1.2 million. On phase II, there will be construction for a total cost of $90 million to $100 million.

The project is a brownfield redevelopment site preparation for the future construction of One Grandview Avenue in the city of Pittsburgh.

The site currently includes a blighted structure in a state of total disrepair. The dilapidated building has been vacant since 1979 and was recently condemned by the city of Pittsburgh.

Historically, this property has been the hub of illegal activities and has been a public safety hazard for the city. Since 1989, there have been over 30 documented incidents of assault, vandalism, and theft at the location.

The residents of the area have signed a petition in favor of the Grandview apartment development, which cites the chaotic history of this particular locale. Three hundred people have signed on urging that the development take place, and the petition reads in part:

> Since the summer of 2008, the developer and his representatives have attended countless meetings with the MWCDC [the development project].

It goes on to recite the details of what is needed there. What the $200,000 will be designed for is, arguably, a responsibility of the Federal Government for failure to take steps to avoid that kind of contamination or, once the contamination occurs, to make remedial action to improve it. The total cost is going to be in the neighborhood of $1.2 million. The Federal contribution, which we are asking for on this earmark, is, I submit, a very modest matter and a good reason for the Federal Government to undertake greater responsibility than $200,000.

In addition to the citizens, the request has been made by the mayor of the city of Pittsburgh. I ask unanimous consent that the petition from his chief of staff be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

PETITION IN SUPPORT OF THE ONE GRANDVIEW AVENUE DEVELOPMENT

We the undersigned hereby support the development at One Grandview Avenue (the location of the former Edge restaurant) proposed by Mr. Steve Beemsterboer.

Since the summer of 2008, the developer and his representatives have attended countless meetings with the MWCDC and individual residents concerned about implications of this development. Mr. Beemsterboer

has had many private meetings with residents who have had the most concerns about this project, and countless times, the developer has responded to concerns of size and scale, storm water runoff, height, traffic flow and property values. The developer has gone out of his way to listen to concerns and make changes to his plans to accomodate a few residents. As an example, the size and scope of the proposed development has changed three (3) times due to the concerns of a few residents.

The former Edge restaurant has been vacant for three (3) decades. It has sat condemned by the city of Pittsburgh for over one (1) year. Historically, the property has been a hub for illegal activity and has been a public safety hazard for the City of Pittsburgh for 30 years. Since 1989, there have been over 30 documented incidents of assault, vadalism and theft at the location, not to mention countless accounts of suspicious and illegal activities like drug deals and prostitition.

There have been many development plans for the former Edge restaurant over the years, but resident resistance has been strong. In fact, so strong, the community put an end to plans for a Ritz Carlton. That was several years ago, and things are different today.

There will be hundreds of City residents upset and outraged if the developer meets all of the city's code and legal requirements and somehow cannot get this project moving forward. Our City leaders have an obligation to support the neighborhoods that are asking for assistance and who are collectively behind a development such as this one. The community asks for your support and assurance that this project will not be derailed due to a few people with personal agendas.

Again, we the undersigned wholeheartedly support the development proposed at One Grandview Avenue and expect to see progress at the location.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, this has also been supported by Senator CASEY, Congressman MIKE DOYLE, in whose district it is, and by Allegheny County Executive Dan Onorato, the county council, the Mount Washington community, and by two representatives of the Pennsylvania General Assembly, Senator Wayne Fontana and Representative Chelsa Wagner.

It is hard to envisage a more appropriate use of $200,000 than is present here. It is a clear-cut matter of looking to the Federal Government to fulfill its responsibility to an area that has become blighted, a waste site that should have been cleaned up a long time ago under Federal law.

AMENDMENT NO. 2410

Mr. President, in addition to the considerations on the Mount Washington Community Development Corporation, I am opposed to the amendment No. 2410, which would prohibit the use of funds for the John Murtha Johnstown-Cambria County Airport.

A similar amendment was defeated in the House of Representatives by a decisive vote of 263 to 154. This airport supports 45,000 takeoffs and landings per year.

The Cambria County Airport receives Federal funding from the Essential Air Service, a program run by the Department of Transportation on a formula basis to rural regions. The recently passed stimulus also provides funding but on a purely competitive basis.

The Johnstown Airport is one of many airports across the United States that receive Essential Air Service annual funding. The current subsidy is $1.4 million or just over $100 per passenger. There are 152 similar regional airports around the country, including a number in my State, in Altoona, Bradford, Dubois, Lancaster, and Oil City. Johnstown Airport ranks only 40th in the per-passenger subsidies.

The majority of the $150 million that critics cite was funded for military purposes.

There are over 1,000 Guard and Reserve troops stationed at the airport, and they use these facilities daily. These troops have been involved in over 19 overseas deployments in the last 5 years alone to Iraq, Afghanistan, and other areas around the world. The upgrades funded in previous years were essential to keep these troops in a proper state of readiness to sustain such a high rate of deployment.

National Guard LTC Christopher Cleaver had this to say:

The airport is a vital part of the Guard's strategic deployment plans. In today's climate of warfare, it's extremely prudent to be able to move fast.

We have a commitment to mobilize in 96 hours. It's a great advantage to have a runway at your doorstep to quickly move to anywhere in the world.

On this basis, I think the appropriation is entirely warranted.

AMENDMENT NO. 2366

Mr. President, I have sought recognition to discuss my vote against an amendment offered to the fiscal year 2010 Transportation and Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill. the amendment, offered by Senator ROGER WICKER, would cut off funding for Amtrak unless it amends its current policy and allows passengers to transport firearms by March 31, 2010. It is my understanding that Amtrak implemented the firearm ban in 2004 after it conducted a review and evaluation of security measures following the attacks on passenger trains in Madrid on April 11, 2004.

Though Amtrak ought to have authority to set policy that is in its best interest, I am reluctant to support a policy that prohibits law abiding citizens from carrying permitted firearms. This policy was the subject of a similar amendment that Senator WICKER introduced on April 2, 2009, to the fiscal year 2010 budget resolution. The budget resolution established a reserve fund for multimodal transportation projects and Senator WICKER's amendment to the budget disqualified Amtrak from accessing this proposed reserve fund if it did not allow passengers to transport firearms. I supported that amendment and it passed 63–35. However, the passage of that amendment did not jeopardize Amtrak's regular annual appropriation.

On the other hand, Senator WICKER's amendment on September 16, 2009, to the Appropriations bill may ultimately result in a complete cutoff of Federal funding for Amtrak. The legislation we are considering includes $1.574 billion for Amtrak and this funding is critical to maintaining our national passenger rail system. Amtrak provides a vital service for the entire Nation and I have consistently advocated for robust Federal funding to support its operations. Cutting off Federal funding would cause passenger rail operations to cease and deprive millions of Americans from an important mode of transportation. I am not willing to risk stranding Amtrak users in order to compel Amtrak to amend its firearm policy.

We ought to consider Amtrak's firearm policy independently from the appropriations process. Should Congress decide to mandate a revision to this policy, Amtrak ought to be given sufficient time to ensure it has proper personnel and infrastructure in place without the threat of funding cuts for not meeting an unrealistic implementation deadline.

Mr. President, I also wish to describe an amendment I have introduced to the fiscal year 2010 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. This amendment preserves funding which has already been secured for a critical project in Pennsylvania.

The corridor along U.S. route 422 in southeastern Pennsylvania has experienced rapid population growth over the past decade including many daily commuters to Philadelphia. This population expansion has led to significant congestion along route 422 in Montgomery and Berks Counties. Transportation officials and community leaders in the area have for years worked diligently developing proposals to mitigate the congestion and expand mobility options for residents living along the corridor.

The community has made considerable progress in this effort over the past 2 years, including completion in 2008 of a study to consider the feasibility of extending an existing rail line and commencement in 2009 of a study to explore long-term financing options for a commuter rail system and maintenance of route 422. Additionally, on August 24, 2009, Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood joined me for a roundtable meeting with local public officials and transportation leaders to discuss the problem and these recent developments.

The amendment I have introduced would simply preserve funding that was included in appropriation bills from previous years to support the local effort in this important undertaking.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NOS. 2402, AS MODIFIED, NO. 2405, AS MODIFIED, AND NO. 2415

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, we have managers' amendments at the desk—amendment No. 2402, as modified; 2405, as modified; and 2415. I ask unanimous consent that the amendments be considered and agreed to en bloc, and the motions to reconsider be considered laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendments were agreed to, as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 2402, AS MODIFIED

(Purpose: To provide that amounts in the bill provided for the Transportation Planning, Research and Development program shall be used for the development, coordination, and analysis of data collection procedures and national performance measures)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. Such amounts as are required from amounts provided in this Act to the Office of the Secretary of Transportation for the Transportation Planning, Research and Development program may be used for the development, coordination, and analysis of data collection procedures and national performance measures.

AMENDMENT NO. 2405, AS MODIFIED

(Purpose: To provide the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development the authority to use previously appropriated funds to prevent the termination of housing assistance to eligible families)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. The first numbered paragraph under the heading ''Tenant-Based Rental Assistance'' in the Department of Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Act, 2009 (Public Law 111–8) is amended by adding the following before the period at the end:

'': *Provided further*, That up to $200,000,000 from the $4,000,000,000 which are available on October 1, 2009 may be available to adjust allocations for public housing agencies to prevent termination of assistance to families''.

AMENDMENT NO. 2415

(Purpose: To provide technical and financial assistance to Illinois transportation officials to conduct a feasibility study for consolidated freight and passenger rail through Springfield, Illinois)

On page 215, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

SEC. 156. The Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration, in cooperation with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), may provide technical and financial assistance to IDOT and local and county officials to study the feasibility of 10th Street, or other alternatives, in Springfield, Illinois, as a route for consolidated freight and passenger rail operations within the city of Springfield.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT WITH AMENDMENT NO. 2421

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to lay aside the pending amendment for the purpose of sending a motion to recommit with instructions to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Arizona [Mr. Kyl] moves to recommit the act H.R. 3288 to the Committee on Appropriations with instructions to report the same back to the Senate forthwith with the following amendment No. 2421.

The amendment is as follows:

(1) Any amounts that are unobligated amounts for fiscal year 2010 for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act that are available in a non-highway account receiving funds in this Act for fiscal year 2010 are rescinded.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I will take just a moment to explain what this motion is. It is very simple. Incidentally, I wish to say at the outset that because of the way it reads, as the clerk read, ''forthwith,'' there is no intention in this motion to delay the bill whatsoever. It requires the committee to report back forthwith.

Although I believe the discretionary spending increase in this bill, which is 23 percent above last year's level, excluding the stimulus bill, is far too high, my motion does not touch spending in this appropriations bill.

Let me repeat that. This amendment does not change in any way the spending in this appropriations bill. My motion simply instructs that the bill be sent back to the Appropriations Committee so it can be amended and sent back here forthwith to provide for rescissions of any amounts that are unobligated for the fiscal year 2010 in the stimulus bill that are available in nonhighway spending accounts. In other words, whatever has not been obligated under the stimulus and relates to the spending in this appropriations bill that is duplicative of that spending and does not relate to highway spending would be rescinded.

Why is it necessary? The stimulus, I do not believe, has provided what was promised—namely, jobs. A report at the end of August issued by the President's Chief Economist, Christina Romer, found that only $151.4 billion of the original $787 billion had been spent. The real total cost of the stimulus is over $1.1 trillion when you include interest.

That is a mere 19.2 percent—less than a quarter of the total package. In other words, the majority of this funding will be spent over the next several years, by which time the recession, hopefully, will be long over.

The administration claimed this spending would halt the unemployment level at 8 percent. Seven months after we passed the stimulus, unemployment levels are now at 9.7 percent and growing. We have lost over 2 million jobs.

I know the administration likes to say the stimulus has saved or created 1 million jobs, but most people recognize there is no way to measure saved jobs. In fact, Christina Romer stated recently:

You know, it's very hard to say exactly what the jobs effect is because you don't know what the baseline is.

My point is this: This discussion of the wasteful and nonjob-producing stimulus is important to this bill because our Nation is about to hit its debt ceiling of $12.1 trillion in October. This Congress will have to, again, raise the debt limit after having done so through the so-called stimulus. The public debt level is currently at $11.8 trillion.

This motion will lead to more than $11.6 billion in savings, which is less than 1 percent of our Nation's debt level. But we need to start somewhere, sometime.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment which, to reiterate, does not take one dime out of this appropriations bill. It simply says the committee should go back and rescind from the stimulus bill any funding in the stimulus bill that is duplicated in this transportation and housing bill as long as the money has not yet been obligated and does not relate to highway spending. We would save about $11 billion. That is a good thing to do.

I urge my colleagues to support this motion when we are able to call it up and vote on it.

Mr. BURRIS. Mr. President, today, this Senate will act on a sweeping Transportation appropriations bill. My colleagues have spoken about this measure as an important part of the Federal budget for 2010. And they are right. This is sound fiscal policy that represents an investment in transportation and infrastructure. But we are also talking about much more than Federal spending over the next year. With this legislation, we are plotting a course for America's future. We are investing in public transportation projects and laying the groundwork for high-speed rail. We are developing renewable energy sources such as biodiesel and ethanol, which will allow us to keep efficient cars and trucks on America's roads. All of these efforts will help us achieve energy independence and protect the environment. So this bill has implications far beyond the next fiscal year. It is the beginning of a major step toward our new renewable energy paradigm. Let's talk about what that means for America.

As a Chicagoan, I am fortunate to live in a city with a world-class public transportation system. Millions of people ride the CTA trains and buses every year. This reduces traffic on the streets, cuts greenhouse gas emissions, and saves money. Unfortunately, it also places a strain on the existing infrastructure. That is why we need to increase our support for the CTA and other public transportation systems across the country. We need to help the CTA and similar agencies expand service, refurbish aging infrastructure, and continue to operate safely. This will make our cities more accessible for everyone. It will help usher all urban centers into a new era of prosperity.

But we should not stop there. It is time to renew our focus on transportation between cities and towns. As just about anyone can tell you, America's highways are heavily congested. Additional roads would be expensive to build, and they wouldn't make it any easier to get around. We need a solution that is both affordable and energy

efficient. For me, this means only one thing: high-speed rail.

I am proud to be a member of the Midwest High Speed Rail Association. And I believe it is time to weave this country together, from coast to coast, with a new network of clean, safe high-speed trains. This will create thousands of jobs, serving as a boon to the national economy. It will also save money. Laying track is four times cheaper than building highways, and railroads can transport up to five times as many people. There is no question that high-speed rail will increase the ease and affordability of travel between States. This will bring fresh opportunity to every community, large or small, that touches the new rail lines.

Mr. President, 140 years ago, the great American railway first connected the east coast to the west coast. Rail travel helped give definition to this country. It is an integral part of America's past. And it will be just as important to America's future.

This Transportation bill funds important projects and initiatives like these, all across the country. But it is about more than public transportation. It also helps to lay the groundwork for a renewable energy paradigm. It is a blueprint to create jobs, protect the environment, and save money.

If we pass this legislation, it will be a significant step in the right direction. And if we build upon this progress in the years to come, we can secure a brighter future for ourselves and for our children, because it's not just a matter of dollars and cents, and it's not just about jobs or the environment. It is about all of that, and it is about national security. It is about reducing our dependence on foreign oil. It is about renewable energy, safer modes of transportation, and an electric grid that is more secure and more efficient. This Transportation bill is a piece of that puzzle. It is a great start. So I urge my colleagues to join with me in supporting this measure. Let's invest in America's future once again.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that except for the amendments provided for in this agreement, no further amendments be in order to H.R. 3288; that the following be the only first-degree amendments and motion to recommit remaining in order to H.R. 3288; that second-degree amendments which are relevant to the first-degree to which offered be in order but not prior to a vote in relation to the first-degree amendment; that the listed Kyl motion to recommit be the only motion to recommit in order, except motions to reconsider votes or motions to waive applicable budget points of order; that a managers' amendment that has been cleared by the managers and the leaders also be in order, and that if the amendment is offered, then it be considered and agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; Landrieu amendment No. 2365, which is pending; Vitter amendment No. 2359, pending and as modified; DeMint amendment No. 2410, pending; McCain amendment No. 2403, pending, as modified; Kyl motion to recommit with instructions, pending; that upon disposition of the amendments and the motion to recommit, the substitute amendment, as amended, if amended, be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the bill, as amended, be read a third time and the Senate then proceed to vote on passage of the bill; that upon passage, the Senate insist on its amendment, request a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses, and that the subcommittee and Senators INOUYE and COCHRAN be appointed as conferees; further, that if a point of order is raised against the substitute amendment, it be in order for another substitute amendment to be offered, minus the offending provisions but including any amendments which had been agreed to prior to the point of order; that no further amendments be in order; that the new substitute amendment, as amended, if amended, be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the remaining provisions beyond adoption of the substitute amendment remain in effect; that on Thursday, September 17, following a period of morning business, the Senate then resume consideration of H.R. 3288 and proceed to vote in relation to the amendments and motion as specified above, with 2 minutes of debate equally divided and controlled prior to each vote, and that after the first vote in a sequence, the remaining votes be limited to 10 minutes each; further, that the cloture motion be withdrawn.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, with that, I would like all Members to know that what we have just agreed to is the final amendments of this bill. If any Senator would like to speak on any of them, they are welcome to come to the floor to do so this evening. But with this agreement, all those amendments will be voted on tomorrow morning, as will be announced at the end of the session today.

Mr. President, just to let all Senators know, with this agreement, there will be no further rollcall votes tonight.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, if there are no other Senators who wish to speak on that—I know a number of Senators are waiting to speak in morning business—I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Connecticut.

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise—and soon will be joined by Senate colleagues, Senators MCCAIN and GRAHAM—to speak about the war in Afghanistan.

For the first time since 9/11, a national debate is underway about the future of our fight in Afghanistan. This is appropriate. Whenever our Nation sends our brave men and women in uniform into harm's way, it is both natural and necessary that we should have a vigorous national conversation about why we are doing so, whether it is necessary for our national security, and what the right strategy is to achieve our objectives. The truth is, we have not had such a debate since the decision was made unanimously to go into Afghanistan after 9/11 to overthrow the Taliban, which had given safe haven to al-Qaida, which planned and trained for the attacks on us in Afghanistan.

The most direct answer to the question of why we are fighting in Afghanistan and why we must succeed there is exactly that: Afghanistan is where the attacks of 9/11 originated, where al-Qaida made its sanctuary under the Taliban, and where the same Taliban is on the offensive today in Afghanistan and has seized the initiative with the clear aim of gaining control of all of Afghanistan, or major parts of it, and once again providing sanctuary for al-Qaida. It remains self-evident to be a clear and vital national interest of the United States to prevent this from happening. It is also because, although Afghanistan may seem geographically remote, we found out on September 11, 2001, in this modern technological world where great spaces are passed over quickly, that it is not remote when it comes to the safety and security of the American people, and Afghanistan is in the heart of a region in which we have critical national interests.

The fact is, Afghanistan and Pakistan are today at the epicenter of global Islamist extremism and terrorism, with which we are at war. This is the test of our age so far as our security is concerned.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I will be glad to yield.

Mr. MCCAIN. Is it true that yesterday, when we had the hearing with Admiral Mullen for renomination as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and who I think we would all agree has done an outstanding job of serving our