

LAUTENBERG, for their efforts in negotiating this comprehensive bill and for recognizing the particular importance of some provisions to Pennsylvania, including highway and transit funding levels.

Given the difficult budget constraints faced by the subcommittee, I am particularly pleased that the bill provides \$750 million for Amtrak, including improvements to the Northeast corridor. Amtrak service is essential to Pennsylvanians and I have long stressed the importance of ensuring the viability of a truly national passenger rail service.

The conference report has also adopted a \$1.45 billion funding level for airport construction grants-in-aid, \$200 million more than the Senate version of the bill. The statement of managers directs the Federal Aviation Administration to fairly consider a letter of intent application from Philadelphia International Airport, which has sought funding for construction of a new runway.

Given the significance to Pittsburgh of the airport busway project, I am very pleased that the conference report provides \$31.6 million for fiscal year 1996 to continue construction. I urged our subcommittee to provide this level of funding because this project will ease traffic congestion between downtown and the Pittsburgh International Airport and will mitigate the impact of the Fort Pitt Bridge closing, which would otherwise create a monumental headache for Pittsburgh residents. With spending cutbacks in so many areas, we are fortunate to get this substantial amount of funds for the busway, which means so much to people who live in the Pittsburgh area.

I remain disappointed that the conference report only provides \$400 million for mass transit operating assistance, which will lead to cuts of as much as 40 percent for some transit systems. In fiscal year 1995, transit systems received \$710 million in Federal operating assistance, which they used to keep fares down and maintain service. On August 9, my distinguished colleague from Pennsylvania, Senator SANTORUM, and I offered an amendment to restore \$40 million to the \$400 million provided in this bill for mass transit operating assistance. Unfortunately, our amendment was defeated by 68 to 30.

As always, I remain committed to the millions of Pennsylvanians and other Americans who rely on public transit to commute to work, shop, and carry on their lives. Mass transit operating assistance keeps the Nation moving by keeping fares lower and maintaining existing routes. Pennsylvania's citizens and communities depend on good public transportation for mobility, access to jobs, environmental control, and economic stability. It lets the elderly visit their health care providers, shops, or friends. In rural areas, buses are essential to reduce isolation and ensure economic development. And, children use public transportation

to go to school in some areas. Without affordable mass transit people in America's inner cities can't get to work. Congress has been considering welfare reform and requirements that people have jobs. If they can't afford to get to work, or bus routes are cut, we are just making it that much harder for lower income Americans to get off welfare.

Although I am troubled by the extent of the mass transit assistance cuts, on balance the Transportation appropriations bill is a good bill, containing much else of importance to Pennsylvania and the Nation, and that is why I supported the conference report as a conferee. However, I intend to keep up my efforts next year to preserve funding for mass transit, and to work with our chairman to ensure that Congress does not go too far, too fast in reducing assistance to transit agencies throughout the Nation.

In closing, Mr. President, I would note that the conference report contains a provision on telecommuting that I authored, section 345, which requires the Secretary of Transportation to study successful private and public sector telecommuting programs and to disseminate to the general public and to Congress information about the benefits and costs of telecommuting. As my colleagues are aware, telecommuting is the practice of allowing people to work either at home or in nearby centers located closer to their home during their normal working hours, substituting telecommunications services, either partially or fully, for transportation to the traditional workplace. I believe that it is in the national interest to encourage the use of telecommuting because it can enable flexible family-friendly employment, reduce air pollution, and conserve energy. Further, as a Senator from Pennsylvania, with major urban areas such as Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, I recognize there is a real need to improve the quality of life in and around America's cities.

According to a July, 1994 Office of Technology Assessment report, between 2 to 8 million American workers already telecommute at least part time. A 1994 survey by the Conference Board found, however, that in 155 businesses nationwide, only 1 percent of employees telecommute, although 72 percent of the businesses had such an option. According to the Office of Technology Assessment, the most significant barriers to telecommuting are business and worker acceptance and costs. My provision responds to the need to broaden public awareness of the benefits and costs of telecommuting, and to identify and highlight successful programs that can be duplicated.

Mr. President, the fiscal year 1996 Transportation appropriations conference report is worthwhile legislation and deserves to be signed into law by the President.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, let me indicate to my colleagues that we are not going to proceed on the instructions to conferees at this point on the so-called reconciliation package. We may do it the next day. We may do it next week, but not today. It seems to me that we need to first talk to the President of the United States. Hopefully, we will get to do that this afternoon.

One of the things the President complained about is that we are not passing appropriations bills. I would like to now turn to the conference report to accompany the foreign operations appropriations bill, if there is no objection.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, Senator DOLE, the majority leader, and I had the opportunity to talk yesterday. It was my understanding that we were going to go to the conference. I understand his reasons for delaying the consideration of the conference matters until a later time, subject to discussion with the President.

I am disappointed that we have not had the opportunity to talk about this until this very moment. But I would hope that if we would go to the foreign operations and work through it in good faith, there is no reason why—I know there are some difficult issues out there that we are going to have to address, but I know the majority leader is cognizant of our schedule this evening. I hope we can accommodate that schedule. I will work with him to see that we can work through this bill and deal with the issues that we must confront prior to the time we resolve this matter.

This is one of the bills that the President has indicated that he ought to be able to support and sign. But, obviously, there are some troubling issues that we have to work through, and we will do that.

With that understanding, I have no objection to moving to the foreign operations legislation.

Mr. DOLE. I appreciate the Democratic leader, Senator DASCHLE's cooperation. I was not aware of the other until about 11:50. I will talk to the Senator privately about it. Senator DOMENICI came to my office, and he feels that, at least as far as today is concerned, there is something else that is more important than discussing a motion to instruct conferees. So we do now have consent to go to the foreign operations appropriations bill. There is one amendment in disagreement.

We will accommodate the schedule this evening, whatever happens.

Mr. DASCHLE. I thank the majority leader.

FOREIGN OPERATIONS, EXPORT FINANCING, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1996—CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I submit a report of the committee of conference