

will mean more dollars for transportation priorities in fast-growth areas like Florida. In the short term, this will help improve safety on our roads and make long overdue improvements, which are obviously needed for those who have been using those infrastructure areas.

In the long term, we are going to be looking for a greater share. And in Florida we say our fair share is the formulas that we find in the upcoming ISTEA reauthorization process.

But today I am also pleased that the bill provides \$1.7 billion for the airport improvement program. Southwest Florida International Airport is the third fastest growing airport in the country, and other airports nearby, like Naples and Immokalee, are also feeling the pressure of increased trade and traffic. Without Federal support available through the AIP to supplement local and State funding, these airports simply cannot respond to the need for capacity expansion programs for upgraded air traffic systems and for the runway improvements that we need for safety.

The committee has wisely increased funding levels for this program despite the opposition of the Clinton administration, and I am grateful to the committee.

Another issue on the minds of my constituents is the drug war, and it should be on the minds of all Americans. A major component of that struggle, the war on drugs, must be increased funding for drug interdiction efforts by the U.S. Coast Guard. We all know that. Everybody who reads the newspaper, watches television, draws a breath in this country, and opens their eyes and listens a little bit understands what a valuable role the Coast Guard has in drug interdiction.

Last week, a hearing was held in the Subcommittee on National Security, International Affairs, and Criminal Justice of the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight on the increase in narcotics traffic just through the State of Florida, a serious issue for Florida, obviously, with consequences for the whole Nation. The good news from that hearing is that the different agencies in the war on drugs are increasing coordination so that in south Florida the Drug Enforcement Agency, the Customs Service, and the Coast Guard are all working together. That may sound like a simple thing to say, but it is a hard thing to accomplish. And it is good news when it happens, and it is very effective and it has positive results; and I hope it continues to happen. This legislation ought to help in that direction.

Hopefully, the director of the ONDCP, the so-called drug czar's office, will review the Coast Guard's activities and ensure that these funds that we are providing are being used for their intended purpose of drug interdiction. The Coast Guard must be able to respond on the basis of good intelligence with the interdiction efforts necessary

to fight the dangerous inflow of drugs on the high seas before they reach our shores.

I think most people know that the way we get most of these drug busts is through good intelligence, through good tips, through good information, and then we direct the Coast Guard and the other enforcement agencies to go make the bust.

The rest of the time, the random searches and checks just do not have the same kind of success record. I think it is very important that we understand the link between information and the Coast Guard and the money it takes to do enforcement.

I commend the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. WOLF], the chairman, for the work he has done on this bill, and I urge the House to support this fair rule and the bill it makes in order, and I am most thankful for the time.

Mrs. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid upon the table.

□ 1415

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the bill (H.R. 2169) making appropriations for the Department of Transportation and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, and for other purposes, and that I may be permitted to include, tables, charts, and other extraneous matter.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BONILLA). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

#### DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1998

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 189 and rule XXIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 2169.

□ 1416

#### IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 2169) making appropriations for the Department of Transportation and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, and for other purposes, with Mr. BEREUTER in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered as having been read the first time.

Under the rule, the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. WOLF] and the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. SABO] each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. WOLF].

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I am pleased to present to the House today H.R. 2169, the fiscal year 1998 transportation appropriations bill.

This bill is the product of a bipartisan effort, and we have endeavored to involve the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. SABO], the ranking member of the subcommittee. Like last year, I hope this bill will have the overwhelming support of the House today.

Again this year, the No. 1 priority in developing this bill was maintaining and improving safety. In addition, we have placed a high priority on funding for our Nation's infrastructure.

In total, the bill provides \$12.48 billion in discretionary budget authority, an increase of \$400 million over the 1997 level, and the bill is \$10 million over the President's budget request. Outlays mostly needed for transportation infrastructure are up over 4 percent compared to last year. These increases respond to the calls of many Members of this body that sought to increase transportation and infrastructure spending. The bill is \$31 million below the subcommittee's allocation for budget authority.

On the safety front, the bill raises funding for Federal Aviation Administration operations by over 8 percent, an increase of over \$400 million. This level will fund the requested increase of 500 air traffic controllers and 326 additional staff in certification and regulation. The bill also includes 18 initiatives to improve air safety. These initiatives total \$153 million and include additional funds for installing airport surface detection systems, automatic alerting systems to prevent runway collisions and approach lighting systems. Additional funds are provided for research into hazardous weather conditions, aircraft safety, and human factors.

In highway safety, the bill provides more funding for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration than the President requested. In fiscal year 1998, a total of \$333 million is allocated for NHTSA. This organization does critical work in research and public education to make our highways safer. Earlier advances in reducing highway fatalities in this country have flattened out in recent years, and in some States, Mr. Chairman, fatalities are going back up with the repeal of the national speed limit last year and increased alcohol use. These increases will allow the agency to aggressively work on solving the air bag problem and focus more resources on rising alcohol-related highway fatalities. In addition, the bill also includes \$9 million for a new occupant protection grant program.

Recognizing the importance of investing in the Nation's infrastructure,