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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

O God, the King of Glory, Your never failing providence sets in order all things both in Heaven and Earth. You give comfort to all who seek You. You have promised to supply all our needs with riches from Your celestial bounty.

You are at work in the events of our lives, bringing melody from cacophony and unity from division.

Bless our Senators as they trust Your mighty power. Bless, also, the members of their families who support them in their arduous work. Remind each of us that righteousness is the only true national defense.

O God, we wait for You to answer and trust You with our future. Help us to live by faith, so that we are acceptable to You. May the lives we live tell the world of Your marvelous deeds.

Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 60 minutes, with the first 30 minutes under the control of the majority leader or his designee,

and the second 30 minutes under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

THE TRANSPORTATION BILL

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, this week we have been talking about a fundamental standard to guide our debates in the Senate.

As we do our work, we need to ask a simple question: "Are we doing right by America?" We need to ask that question on policies affecting farmers, seniors, and veterans. And we always need to ask whether we are doing right by American families when it comes to economic policies.

While the economy has finally started adding jobs these past few months, this comes after 2½ years in which the economy lost jobs every month. What is clear to many of us is that we still have a long way to go, and we need to do more to help improve our economy. That is one of the main reasons it is so unfortunate that we have not completed the long-overdue transportation reauthorization bill—legislation that expired at the end of last September.

The ability to plan how roads and bridges will be built has suffered greatly due to Congress's failure to get this bill completed on time. Well over 100,000 jobs have been lost due to this delay. And each month that we do not complete our work brings more job losses.

Job creation will suffer, too—in South Dakota and across the country. In my State, because our construction season is short, there is not enough time to plan ahead and put people to work, even if we passed a bill today. But we will not pass a bill today.

Earlier this year, on February 12, the Senate passed S. 1072, the Safe, Ac-

countable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act. It was passed by an overwhelming, bipartisan vote of 76 to 21. The Senate bill would authorize \$318 billion over 6 years and is revenue-neutral. It is fully paid for and does not increase gas taxes.

Nearly 400 organizations, representing the full spectrum of transportation interests, all support the Senate funding level.

The Chamber of Commerce, the Associated General Contractors, the governors, the State legislators—the list goes on and on. All attest to the need for this kind of infrastructure investment.

The Senate bill would create over 1.7 million jobs—new, good jobs for the millions of Americans who are looking for work. In my State, the Senate bill would create over 6,500 jobs. It would also provide for important transportation needs on our rural roads and Native American reservations, and would allow us to move forward with high-priority projects in towns like Sioux Falls, Rapid City, Yankton, and Pierre. These are important projects that simply will not get completed without the assistance of the Federal Government.

One might ask: "What was the Bush administration's response to the Senate's bipartisan job-creating bill?" Their response has been, a veto threat—hardly the answer that Republicans and Democrats alike were hoping for; hardly the response that the economy needs; and hardly the response that the infrastructure deficit we have in this country cries out for.

Fast forward to April 2. After a bipartisan House plan to offer a bill at a \$375 billion level was scuttled by the Bush administration and the Republican House leadership, the House passed H.R. 3550, the Transportation Equity Act. This bill authorizes only \$284 billion over 6 years, and is not fully paid for. Again, one might ask: "What was the Bush administration's response to the House bill?" If it did

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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