

Mr. REID. Absolutely true.

Mrs. MURRAY. Would the majority leader yield for a question? I would say to the majority leader, since I am chairman of transportation appropriations, I have been warning of this to come for some time. It is my understanding that the amendment you are asking unanimous consent for takes \$8 billion out of the general fund and puts it back in the trust fund, which is exactly what happened back in 1998, in reverse.

Taxpayers pay their gas tax into the trust fund, expect it to go for transportation projects. In 1998, we took \$8 billion of that money that they expected to go into transportation funding and put it in the general fund.

What you are asking to do tonight is simply to take that \$8 billion back and put it exactly where taxpayers expected it to go originally, which was to transportation funds; is that not correct?

Mr. REID. The Senator from Washington is exactly correct.

Mrs. MURRAY. I did not talk to the Secretary of Transportation. I did see their press release that they now want this money to come out. It is my understanding that if we do not take this action, as the House has done, that beginning this Thursday, and shortly thereafter, States will not get their transportation dollars and will therefore have to begin to lay off workers at construction projects and essentially halt many of the construction projects in the country, correct?

Mr. REID. When I talked to her, I believe last Friday, she indicated to me that she was going to have to make those difficult decisions. Then I also read her press release later, after she had been able, I guess, to put more numbers in the paper, and that is what I read, which is an elaboration of what she told me.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I share the concern of the majority leader.

I am deeply concerned that several members of the Republican Party have said no to this. At a time when our economy is in real trouble, when construction projects are not only providing critical dollars but completing important transportation work across the country, that we would allow those projects to be halted and workers to be laid off, adding to the economic woes of the country at this time, is simply not a smart move. I hope we see that decision reconsidered on the other side in the next 24 hours.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I thank the majority leader for his leadership. I am not surprised that the Transportation Secretary for the Bush administration would call the majority leader and ask this be done. She came to us today. She stood over that bridge the day after it happened. When I was listening to my friend from New Hampshire talk about the fact that we need

to continue funding our soldiers, of course, we need to do that. But for me, this is an issue of priorities. Why this administration would decide to spend \$10 billion a month in Iraq month after month after month, so that this war has gone on longer than World War II, while we have bridges collapsing, while we have levees falling apart, defies reality.

When I heard the Senator from New Hampshire talk about soldiers on the frontline, which this Congress has been more supportive of than any other Congress for continuing that funding, for those people on the bridge that day in Minnesota, they were on the frontline. Those people who plummeted into that cold water that day were on the frontline. People died at that bridge. The NTSB has not concluded its investigation of the cause for the bridge collapse, but what we do know is, if it had been fixed earlier, if there had been appropriate funds all over this country for bridge and levee repairs, we may not have experienced some of the disasters we have seen. I view this not only as fixing a bridge that, by the way, is six blocks from my house—I drive over it every day with my daughter in the back seat, an eight-lane bridge that fell into the Mississippi River—it is also about going into the next century's transportation system.

If we are going to move to the next century in this economy, if we are going to start talking about transportation and wind and solar and doing things with biofuels and building our own energy future, we cannot be stuck in the last century's transportation system. As we face difficult economic times and look at the number in terms of what we can generate in jobs with transportation funding, it is a winner. I want to have an infrastructure plan and a stimulus package that lasts long after the rebate checks are cashed, that is looking to the future with infrastructure funding.

When Dwight D. Eisenhower created the interstate highway system, when President Roosevelt did the rural electrification system, they saw it as not only moving the economy forward, they saw it as a way to generate jobs. That is what this is about.

It is shortsighted, indeed, and shows a lack of understanding of the country's priorities to say that we should let transportation funding go down the pot while we are constructing bridges in Iraq and as bridges in Minnesota are falling apart.

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.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

RECOGNIZING LOS TIGRES DEL NORTE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the musical group Los Tigres del Norte for its contribution to the greater Las Vegas community and especially for its commitment to the Silver State's vibrant Hispanic community. As we commemorate the importance of the Hispanic community in Nevada and around the country during Hispanic Heritage month, I find it fitting to recognize the members of Los Tigres del Norte for their talent and dedication.

Just last year, this premier musical group was chosen by a committee comprising Las Vegas community and business leaders to join individuals such as my good friend, Wayne Newton, Vicente Fernandez, and other notable celebrities who have made a positive impact on Clark County. Like the Walk of Stars honorees before them, Los Tigres del Norte have added to the worldwide prominence of Las Vegas. These talented artists have also been an encouraging and supportive voice for the Silver State's hardworking Hispanic community.

Their Grammy and Latin Grammy winning music not only entertains, but it sends a clear message that we all have a commitment to making a lasting impact on our community, regardless of the color of our skin or our country of origin. It also tells stories of those individuals who often are not able to share their concerns and challenges. Los Tigres del Norte truly are a voice of the unheard. They confront the issues of our day and use their music as a medium to provide inspiration and hope.

Today I join my colleagues in the Silver State in recognizing Los Tigres del Norte for all they have brought to Nevada and their dedication to serving as a positive voice for our vibrant Hispanic community. Their addition to the Las Vegas Walk of Stars was a much deserved recognition of their almost 40-year-long musical career and their success in bringing to light the challenges facing America's Hispanic communities. As we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, I offer my congratulations to Los Tigres del Norte—an accomplished group of musicians of whom all Nevadans can be proud.

TRIBUTE TO TRILBY WHOBREY BALL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to a dear friend of mine who has left behind her beloved