

of Representatives himself for many years. He said about that House bill that it was "the worst transportation bill I have ever seen" and that it would "take us back to the horse and buggy era."

So with bipartisan opposition to this extreme, the worst bill that Secretary LaHood had ever seen, Speaker BOEHNER was forced to pull it, and that was that for that effort.

Then they spent months going after budget proposals that would reduce spending on our highways and on our bridges. Ultimately, they have thrown in the towel. They have no transportation bill in the House. They cannot get one up for a vote. So they have fallen back on trying to pass short-term extensions.

Well, first of all, that is not a great outcome for jobs and for the economy. According to the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, short-term extensions have had significant detrimental effects. These include delaying \$80 million worth of projects, which equates to the loss of 1,000 job-years of work; delaying planning for needed safety and structural improvements of a \$300 million to \$400 million interchange that is in deplorable condition; delaying the advertising and awarding of the entire 2012 formula-funded construction program, which may cause the State to miss an entire construction season, putting the entire road construction industry out of work for that season; making long-range planning and the development of a sound State Transportation Improvement Program nearly impossible; and, last, jeopardizing the State's plans to design and construct the replacement of the Providence Viaduct I spoke about.

So the idea that an extension just carries on the status quo, it is more or less OK, it will not create harm, and it will not cost jobs is just plain dead wrong. There is job loss and there is economic loss associated with these extensions.

So how have they done on the extensions? Well, they have not even managed to pull themselves together to deal with the extensions. The House leadership has proposed 60-day extensions and 90-day extensions to the Federal transportation programs. Twice they have placed these proposals over on their calendar, but both times they have had to pull the proposals down because they do not have the votes.

So what do they have over there? They have no bill they can vote for. The bill they did put up was called one of the worst and most extreme transportation bills in history by a former Republican Congressman. They cannot get their act together to pass an extension. Even assuming it is not a bad idea to pass an extension for our economy, they still cannot do it, even as bad of an idea as that is. So they have nothing, and we are coming up on a deadline. On March 31, the authority to draw funds from the Highway Trust Fund runs out. So we are up against a

pretty serious time constraint. As we whittle away to those last days, and as they get ready to leave the House and head home without having done their work on transportation, it is becoming more and more urgent that they take some action. If they cannot do a bill of their own, if they cannot pass a 90-day extension, if they cannot pass a 60-day extension, there is one obvious solution that is standing there as big as the proverbial rhinoceros in the living room; that is, pass the Senate highway transportation bill.

It is right there. It is ready to go. It could be on the President's desk in just days. It is bipartisan, with 75 votes in the Senate. It preserves these important programs and saves or creates nearly 3 million jobs in this country. The people of America understand that our highways, our roads, and bridges are important. They want us to go forward on this bill. This is not controversial. This should be easy.

So the House needs to take a look at where they are and make a hard decision.

They should not go home without addressing this problem and let us hit the deadline wall—particularly not with a good, solid, bipartisan Senate highway bill waiting to be taken up, waiting to be voted on, and waiting to be signed. All of the indications are that if the Senate highway bill were taken up by the House, it would pass overwhelmingly. Who would vote against a bill that creates 2.9 million jobs? Who would vote against a bill that maintains our highways, our roads, and our bridges? Who doesn't get it that in this country, our highway, bridge, and road infrastructure is in terrible shape? We understand this. The Nation's civil engineers have given our infrastructure near-failing grades in these areas. Other countries spend 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 percent of their gross domestic product on infrastructure, keeping it right, knowing it helps grow their economy. We are down below that.

It is very unfortunate that the House at this point cannot sort itself out to come up with its own transportation bill, cannot sort itself out to pass an extension—they cannot even do that. A deadline is coming at them that is non-negotiable. Ideology, partisanship, rhetoric—all of those things don't matter against the hard deadline they are driving this country toward. I hope and urge that they take up the Senate Transportation bill, put it to a vote, let's get going, let's put 2.9 million people to work rebuilding our roads and highways, and let's get America moving and working again.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BEGICH). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

TRIBUTE TO MR. BILL SWOPE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, today I rise to commemorate my very dear friend, Mr. Bill Swope of Elizabethtown, KY, for his many successes in business and in life. Mr. Swope has made many contributions to philanthropy and his local community, and has affirmed a commitment to public service on behalf of the Commonwealth while setting an example for his family and others of what it means to be a distinguished citizen.

I have been very closely acquainted with Bill Swope, his brother Sam, and the rest of their family for quite some time. Bill was born in 1922 in Cleveland, Ohio. He graduated from Miami University in Oxford, OH, with a degree in business administration. Bill served in the U.S. Army during World War II as a sergeant specializing in artillery. He recently received the French Legion of Honor in 2009, and is now considered a knight of the French Republic.

His wife Betty was a lieutenant, junior grade, in the Navy WAVES before she married Bill on July 26, 1945. According to Bill, the couple's long-lasting relationship is because Bill has always remembered who holds the higher rank—and it isn't him.

The first business venture of Mr. Swope was established in 1952 in Winchester, KY; it was called Swope Motor Company Plymouth-Dodge. There were many doubts about the future of the young company in its beginnings, but the Swope family business survived and thrives. This year marks the 60th year of the family business. Bill is now retired has left the running of the business to his three sons Carl, Bob, and Dick.

The first generation of Swopes laid the foundation of the business. The second generation is now in charge and makes sure the business runs smoothly. One thing both generations can agree on is that the company needs to remain a local, family-run enterprise. Bill is excited about the next 60 years in the automotive industry, and he is the first to tell you how proud he is of the three generations of Swopes' leadership.

Mr. Swope has been involved in a tremendous amount of volunteer activities, charities, and leadership roles throughout the years. He has been an active member of the Lion's Club since 1952, a deacon, elder and trustee of First Presbyterian Church in Elizabethtown, KY, and the past president