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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. RIBBLE).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 10, 2014.

I hereby appoint the Honorable REID J. RIBBLE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2014, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

REBUILDING OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. HIMES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, I am moved to rise today because this House, starting yesterday and continuing into today, is considering a complicated bill called the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. Mr. Speaker, that is a complicated set of words. This is the bill, of course, in which we fund the Nation's transportation infrastructure.

I rise today, Mr. Speaker, because this bill is not just bad policy, but it is a danger to the safety and economic health of my constituents and to all Americans.

What is it that we are talking about here? We are talking about the money that the Congress appropriates to build and improve our highways, our bridges, and our railways. I wonder who in this House doesn't have bridges or highways or railways in their district? This is the bone, it is the arteries on which we build our economic growth and on which the jobs that we spend so much time talking about are created. Without good highways, without the ability to move people, goods, and services around this country, we are nothing. We will not be serious about creating jobs.

Now, let's take a little tour on how we are doing on our highways, our bridges, and our railways. Just last Friday, I got caught on a Metro-North train in my district because a 100-year-old bridge in Norwalk got stuck in the open position. Thousands of my constituents sitting on trains and in train stations at Grand Central, at Norwalk, and at Stamford were unable to get home.

There have been derailments on this rail line, including some that have been fatal. I live about a mile upstream of a bridge on Interstate 95, the single biggest artery in the Northeast of the United States, that just shy of 20 years ago fell down, killing a bunch of people and creating huge economic havoc.

This is true nationally. The stats are out there. The amount of investment that we need to make in this country to be competitive with the Chinese, with the Europeans, who are spending far more on the bones and sinew of their economies, is huge numbers.

So, what are we doing about it? What are we doing about it right now in this House? Well, the bill I mentioned proposes to spend \$70 billion on transpor-

tation. That sounds like a big number—a lot of zeros. But let's put that into context. A couple of weeks ago, this House decided to spend about \$600 billion on our military, which is fine. It is an incredible military that we have. Add in security and intelligence, and you get a number of about \$700 billion that this House chose to spend on our national security. That is 10 times what we are now choosing to spend on transportation. We are spending 10 times protecting this Nation than we are on actually building this Nation and providing the economic infrastructure that will create the economic growth and jobs that we all say we need—\$70 billion. By the way, that is 1 percent less than we spent last year, and \$20 billion less than the President's request.

Amtrak—now I understand that many of my colleagues don't rely on Amtrak. I rely on it every single week, and, by the way, an awful lot of my colleagues do. I see them on my way down here. Amtrak is proposed to be reduced in funding by 15 percent—half of what the President thinks is necessary in his budget. Who thinks that this is a good idea, Mr. Speaker? Who thinks that it is a good idea in a country where we are supposedly serious about creating jobs to underinvest in the artery, the bone, and the sinew that allows us to grow jobs in this country? That is not a good idea. And, yet, we are fending off amendments to cut investment even more in our transportation infrastructure.

Are there people in this country who don't sit in traffic wasting time that they could be spending with their family, taking away their focus on their businesses that they would like to grow? There aren't many of them, and yet this House chooses to reduce the investment in the country that we supposedly hold dear.

I am tired of it, Mr. Speaker. I am tired of my constituents having their

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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