[Roll No. 318]

AYES—134

Abraham
Allen
Amash
Babin
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Burgess
Carter (GA)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Collins (GA)
Conaway
Cook
Crawford
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Fleming
Flores
Franks (AZ)
Garrett
Gohmert
Gosar
Gowdy
Graves (GA)
Guinta
Guthrie
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hunter
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Kelly (MS)
King (IA)
Kline
Knight
LaMalfa
Latta
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Massie
McCarthy
McClintock
McHenry
Meadows
Messer
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Neugebauer
Nugent
Olson
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Ratcliffe
Renacci
Roe (TN)
Rohrabacher
Rooney (FL)
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (TX)
Stewart
Stutzman
Tipton
Trott
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Yoder
Yoho
Young (IA)

NOES—287

Aderholt
Aguilar
Amodei
Ashford
Barletta
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Bost
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capps
Capuano
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Clyburn
Cohen
Cole
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gibbs
Gibson
Goodlatte
Graham
Granger
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Hastings
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Herrera Beutler
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Hultgren
Hurd (TX)
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jolly
Joyce
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Labrador
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Sean
Marino
Matsui
McCaul
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McKinley
McNerney
McSally
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Mica
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Newhouse
Noem
Nolan
Norcross
Nunes
Palazzo
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pitts
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Reed
Reichert
Ribble
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rokita
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stefanik
Stivers
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Whitfield
Wilson (FL)
Wittman
Womack
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NOT VOTING—12

Adams
Buck
Cárdenas
Cleaver
DeFazio
Duncan (TN)
Fincher
Lamborn
Maloney, Carolyn
McMorris Rodgers
O'Rourke
Woodall

□ 1944

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. LAMBORN. Madam Chair, I was unavoidably detained on account of a flight delay. Had I been present I would have voted "aye" on rollcall vote 309, "aye" on rollcall vote 310, "aye" on rollcall vote 311, "aye" on rollcall vote 312, "aye" on rollcall vote 313, "aye" on rollcall vote 314, "aye" on rollcall vote 315, "nay" on rollcall vote 316, "aye" on rollcall vote 317, and "aye" on rollcall vote 318.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Madam Chair, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HULTGREN) having assumed the chair, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2577) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

□ 1945

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2685, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2393, COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELING AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2015

Mr. NEWHOUSE, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 114–145) on the resolution (H. Res. 303) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2685) making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2393) to amend the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 to repeal country of origin labeling requirements with respect to beef, pork, and chicken, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H. RES. 198

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that Congressman AMASH be removed as a cosponsor of H. Res. 198.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 2577, and that I may include tabular material on the same.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 287 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 2577.

Will the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) kindly resume the chair.

□ 1949

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 further consideration of the bill (H.R. 2577) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes, with Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (Acting Chair) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIR. When the Committee of the Whole rose earlier today, an amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. POSEY) had been disposed of, and the bill had been read through page 156, line 15.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Madam Chair, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Madam Chair, I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN) for the purpose of a colloquy.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. I thank the chairman for yielding, and I thank him for his great work on this appropriations bill.

Madam Chairman, for over 20 years I have been a staunch advocate for reducing aircraft noise over northern New Jersey. I have attended dozens of public hearings and meetings with officials from the FAA and responded to thousands of calls from constituents whose lives have been affected by increased aircraft noise.

While the safety of airplane passengers is paramount and the vitality of our air transport system is important, people on the ground have a right to a quality of life with a minimum exposure to air noise overhead.

Despite spending over $70 million in taxpayer dollars on the New York, New Jersey, and Philadelphia airspace redesign project, time and time again the Federal Aviation Administration has turned a deaf ear to the tremendous impact air noise has had over northern New Jersey. I recently wrote two letters to the FAA to bring my constituent concerns directly to Administrator Michael Huerta's attention. To date, these letters and my constituents' pleas for help have gone unanswered.

As the FAA proceeds with the New York, New Jersey, and Philadelphia airspace redesign, they must factor air noise into their calculations. I look forward to working with the chairman to ensure that this is done.

I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. I want to again thank the gentleman for raising this important issue. I appreciate his dedication to ensuring that his constituents' air noise concerns are adequately addressed by the FAA.

Again, I thank the gentleman, and I yield back the balance of my time.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MS. MAXINE WATERS OF CALIFORNIA

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. 4____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to establish any asset management position (including any account executive, senior account executive, and troubled asset specialist position, as such positions are described in the Field Resource Manual (Wave 1) entitled ''Transformation: Multifamily for Tomorrow'' of the Department of Housing and Urban Development) of the Office of Multifamily Housing of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, or newly hire an employee for any asset management position, that is located at a Core office (as such term is used in such Field Resource Manual) before filling each such asset management position that is located at a Non-Core office (as such term is used in such Field Resource Manual) and has been vacated since October 1, 2015.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 287, the gentlewoman from California and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Madam Chair, I rise to offer an amendment regarding HUD's multifamily transformation plan. I will ultimately withdraw this amendment because I know that there will be Republican opposition, but I think it is important for me to speak out against the ill-advised plan.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development is currently in the process of a major consolidation of its multifamily offices, which it has dubbed the multifamily transformation plan. I have been vocal in my skepticism of HUD's assurances that this plan will bring about significant savings without impacting program delivery.

In fact, last year this House approved an amendment to the fiscal year 2015 appropriations bill that required HUD to follow a transformation plan that maintains asset management staff in its field offices. I fought for this amendment because I believe strongly that HUD's plan to consolidate the important function of asset management from 17 hubs overseeing 50 field offices into just 5 hub locations and 7 satellite offices would significantly impair program delivery without resulting in significant cost savings.

Asset management is a hands-on job which calls for an intimate knowledge of the local housing market and frequently requires staff to make on-site visits to troubled properties. That is why it is so important to have asset management staff in local field offices to respond to local needs.

Unfortunately, I have been hearing from advocates that HUD has been failing to replace vacancies in asset management positions in field offices and is only hiring new asset management staff in hub locations. This is unacceptable. There are already two field offices that have completely shuttered because they have no working staff. In Los Angeles, we have already lost 15 asset management staff who have not been replaced.

My amendment would ensure that HUD prioritizes the hiring of asset management staff in local field offices for vacancies that occur in the next fiscal year instead of continuing to consolidate this important function to a select few hub and satellite locations. It would help ensure that our multifamily field offices remain open and operating at current staffing levels. Without this amendment, local multifamily offices will continue to have more vacancies that go unfilled.

I regretfully ask unanimous consent to withdraw my amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. YOHO

Mr. YOHO. I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used in contravention of subpart E of part 5 of the regulations of the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (24 C.F.R. Part 5, Subpart E; relating to restrictions on assistance to noncitizens).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 287, the gentleman from Florida and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. YOHO. Madam Chair, my amendment simply ensures that no funds can be used to circumvent current law which prevents illegal immigrants from obtaining housing assistance. Spending should be prioritized based on the needs of American taxpaying citizens, not those who are residing in our country illegally.

Constituents back in my district and throughout the country work hard every day, and their needs should not play second fiddle to those of immigrants who broke our laws and came into this country illegally.

With the continued efforts by some in this country to disregard the rule of law, much to the detriment of taxpaying Americans, I truly believe this amendment is necessary to clarify and reinforce the intent of Congress as it pertains to housing assistance providing via HUD.

This is a simple, commonsense amendment that shows the hard-working American citizens that we are serious when it comes to spending their tax dollars and that we will not use their hard-earned money to prioritize and reward those who break our laws. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment and support the rule of law.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Chair, I do oppose this amendment. On the face of it, it simply restates existing regulations, but I fear there is another motive at play, that is, an anti-immigrant agenda.

Let me explain what I mean. This amendment feeds into the widely held misperception that many undocumented individuals are, in fact, obtaining Federal benefits despite restrictions—verification procedures—specifically designed to prohibit such activity.

We must not allow this appropriations bill to become a platform to denigrate immigrants in this country or to score political points at their expense. We need real solutions. We need to actually fix our broken immigration system. We shouldn't be wasting valuable floor time on amendments such as these. We would be better served by moving comprehensive immigration reform, fully debating it in this Chamber.

□ 2000

We are ready to do that. We can pass comprehensive immigration reform, if the Speaker would bring it to the floor, this very week. Until then, I would ask restraint on amendments that in no way alter existing law and regulation and only serve to stir controversy, reinforce prejudices, and distract us from the business at hand.

I urge defeat of this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. YOHO. Madam Chair, this amendment is strictly about the rule of law and following the rule of law. I agree we shouldn't have to debate immigration here. This is not about this. This is about following the rule of law.

At this point, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT).

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Chair, this amendment has nothing to do with being anti-immigrant. In fact, the gentleman's comments play into that accusation. This is entirely incorrect and inappropriate. In fact, it reminds me of a comment a President made from right up there at that podium that no illegal aliens would get ObamaCare. Somebody thought that was not true and said so. It turns out it was not true. They have gotten it.

I went home and talked to a number of people that were in and around Walmart this weekend—immigrants, people that are here legally, and they can't find work and they need help. They did everything to come here legally and properly—Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, African Americans, Anglo Americans—and they just need help.

I would submit, if we are going to be true to the oath we took to our Constitution and the laws which uphold our Constitution, we need to be about helping those that are under our care, those who have come legally.

I support the gentleman's amendment, and I appreciate him doing it. It is a pro-immigrant amendment for immigrants that will come legally, and there are plenty of those here.

Mr. YOHO. Madam Chair, to the ranking member, I would love to have that discussion down the road about responsible immigration reform, and I think we need to have that. The American people expect it. They deserve it, and I look forward to having that.

In the meantime, this is just a commonsense amendment that strictly puts the emphasis on following the rule of law, and I think all Americans, regardless of what side of the aisle, would stand supporting the Constitution, the very document that we all took an oath to.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOHO).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 16 OFFERED BY MS. JACKSON LEE

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used in contravention of section 5309 of title 49, United States Code.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 287, the gentlewoman from Texas and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Let me thank the ranking member, Mr. PRICE, and his staff, as well as the chairman, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, for their work on something that is very close and near and dear to many Members' hearts. It certainly is close to mine.

The Jackson Lee amendment was passed last year. I am grateful to have the opportunity this year to restate the fact that this amendment indicates that none of the funds made available by this act under the heading ''Federal Transit Administration: Transit Formula Grants'' may be used in contravention of section 5309.

This is, as I said, an amendment identical to the Jackson Lee amendment. Might I just briefly speak to this amendment. It affirms the importance to the Nation of projects that create economic development, particularly in the transportation area.

It particularly says that the Secretary of Transportation may make grants under this section to State and local governments; it has the authority to assist in financing capital projects, small start-up projects, including the acquisition of real property.

The key is that these grants under State and local authority can undertake capital projects, which means that, when local governments propose their projects, the Secretary has the authority to go forward. Nothing can contravene that authority.

It is well documented that nothing enhances the competitiveness of a Nation in this increasingly globalized economy than investments in transportation and infrastructure capital projects.

I will include an article about transportation dated March 31, 2015, into the RECORD.

[From the Houston Chronicle, Mar. 31, 2015]

STUDY FINDS HOUSTON TRAFFIC CONGESTION WORSENING

(By Dug Begley)

As workday commutes go, Raj Dada's isn't terrible. He lives east of Jersey Village, an easy drive from the freeway. His off-ramp from Interstate 10 puts him practically in front of his job near Bunker Hill.

In each of the past three years, though, the daily drive has gotten worse, Dada said.

''I leave earlier than I used to,'' he said Monday morning as he stopped for gas near his office. ''Even on weekends, it's taking longer to get around all the construction and traffic.''

It's a common dilemma for Houston motorists. Congestion in Houston increased sharply from 2013 to 2014, according to a report released Tuesday by TomTom, developer of the mapping and traffic data fed to phones and other GPS devices.

Analysts said trips in the region on average last year took 25 percent longer than they would have in free-flowing conditions, compared with 21 percent longer in 2013.

This means that a hypothetical 30-minute, congestion-free trip, on average, takes about 52 minutes at peak commuting times. For an entire year, it means drivers waste 85 hours—more than 3.5 days—plodding along the highways and streets of Houston.

It's the first increase in TomTom's traffic index for Houston in four years after three consecutive years of slight declines.

Growing cities with robust economies tend to experience the biggest increases in traffic. Oil price dips notwithstanding, Houston certainly fits the bill, said Tony Voigt, the program manager for the Texas A&M Transportation Institute's Houston office.

Voigt said local analysis supports the conclusion in the TomTom report: More local streets and highways are more congested for more hours of the day. Even weekend trips to some spots—notably retail corridors—can be increasingly time-consuming.

''This is a result of more people living here as compared to two or three years ago and our economy being very active and healthy,'' Voigt said.

Nick Cohn, senior traffic expert for TomTom, said the opposite is true in places where job prospects are not as strong, based on the company's worldwide traffic research.

''In Moscow, where there has really been an economic slowdown and gas prices are up, there has been a slowdown,'' Cohn said.

Moscow and other international cities continue to experience traffic far worse than cities in the U.S. In the United States, Houston ranked 12th-worst among major cities for traffic, compared to 85th worldwide.

News that 11 other American cities have worse congestion isn't comforting to Houston drivers.

''It's terrible,'' said Debbie Curry, 60, a lifelong Houstonian. ''Traffic in this city has gotten worse. When I moved (to western Houston) I thought it would get better. It did for a little while; now it's as bad as it's ever been.''

Reasons why Houston drivers spend so much of their time in traffic vary, but most theories circle back to explosive growth.

''Some of the congestion on U.S. 290 and on (Loop 610 North) is, of course, construction-related,'' Voigt said. ''But what we are really seeing is travel demand is greater overall, and this is causing the peak congestion periods to spread out.''

Peak commutes, once contained to two hours each in the morning and evening, are spreading to three and sometimes four hours. Though it means more days when traffic is heavy for longer periods, the gradual growth of peak commuting periods isn't all bad, Cohn said.

''It means at least when possible they are being flexible with those work-to-home and home-to-work trips,'' Cohn said, noting that an alternative could be a more compressed—but more severe—peak commuting period.

Houston-area officials have a long list of road-widening projects planned over the next decade, along with some transit growth. Suburban areas, notably Conroe and The Woodlands, are exploring their own transit options. It's a pattern across the U.S., Cohn said.

Each city faces different obstacles, Cohn said. Houston's lack of density could make transit less effective, but public transportation remains a critical part of any congestion relief as roads dominate.

Many municipalities, state transportation officials and counties in the area have made ''significant requests for roadway dollars,'' said Houston Councilman Stephen Costello, chairman of the Transportation Policy Council of the Houston-Galveston Area Council.

Those projects are not just about relieving traffic now, but about building before it gets worse, Costello said.

Any improvements are constrained by funding, which federal and state lawmakers have been slow to deliver. Federal officials remain at an impasse about a long-term transportation bill, and many have shown reluctance to increase federal highway spending. Texas voters last year approved $1.7 billion for state highways, leaving about $3.3 billion in additional money needed, according to the Texas A&M Transportation Institute.

That funding shortfall has many, especially officials in suburban Houston, worried as their traffic worsens and projects crawl toward completion, said West University Place Mayor Bob Fry.

''I think outside (Loop 610) is going to be worse for traffic than inside the Loop,'' Fry said. ''Inside is built out, and it's not going to get worse like it is outside.''

In the urban core, Fry said, transit is the important investment. He said Metro's upcoming redesign of bus service will ''help quite a bit.''

PERSONAL CHOICE

With projects slow to take shape, Cohn said drivers might see the best results by using an increasing and improving array of traffic information available to them. Houston's TranStar system—a partnership of Houston, Harris County, the Texas Department of Transportation and the Metropolitan Transit Authority—is one of the largest and most comprehensive real-time traffic systems in the country.

''There used to be a big difference between what the highway authority has and what real-time traffic systems have,'' Cohn said. ''It is more of a unified service now.''

When a motorist finds alternate routes to avoid congestion, it helps not just that driver but also others because one less vehicle is clogging up the problem spot.

Reliance on the information, and better personal planning, might be the best relief for traffic now.

''I don't think drivers can sit back and wait for some big infrastructure project,'' he said.

[From the Houston Chronicle, Feb. 5, 2013]

CONGESTION A CONSTANT FOR HOUSTON COMMUTERS

(By Dug Begley)

Houston region has been rated as having the sixth worst commute in the nation based on hours of delay.

The good news is that traffic congestion isn't getting much worse in the Houston area. The bad news is it was pretty bad to begin with.

Houston commuters continue to endure some of the worst traffic delays in the country, according to the 2012 Urban Mobility Report released Tuesday by the Texas A&M Transportation Commission. Area drivers wasted more than two days a year, on average, in traffic congestion, costing them each $1,090 in lost time and fuel.

And it's unlikely to get any better, researchers and public officials say.

''I think as rapidly as this area is growing, (the challenge) is just trying to stay where we are,'' Harris County Judge Ed Emmett said of the traffic congestion.

Planned toll projects on U.S. 290 and eventually Interstate 45 will help ease traffic, just as the Katy Freeway managed lanes did in 2008, Emmett said.

Drivers take the congestion in stride and devise their own strategies to deal with the hassle. Roger Wilson, 54, takes a park and ride bus from Katy, but his co-worker Brad Steele, 39, drives in from Spring. Over lunch Monday, both claimed their method was best.

''Yeah, you get to read or sleep,'' Steele told Wilson, ''but I would rather have my car.''

But as long as Houston attracts jobs, and those jobs attract workers, commuting hassles will persist, said Tim Lomax, a co-author of the mobility report.

''We're hitting the limits of improving traffic by widening the roads,'' said Stephen Klineberg, co-director of the Kinder Center for Urban Research at Rice University.

With 4 million people in Harris County, and another 1 million coming in the next 20 years, the region will embrace new development patterns that reduce the need for driving—but on its own terms and without abandoning the car, Klineberg said.

''Suburban areas are developing town centers and walkable urbanist developments,'' Klineberg said, pointing to developments in The Woodlands, Sugar Land and Pearland.

DRIVERS ADAPTING

The new patterns follow years of steady outward growth, leading to greater distances between homes and workplaces.

Based on the mobility report, in 1982 drivers spent about 22 hours each year stuck in congestion, a figure that has increased almost every year since. Traffic congestion peaked in 2008 at 55 hours, the same year two carpool/toll lanes along I–10 opened between downtown and Katy. The lanes took five years to complete and cost $2.8 billion.

But some of the best ways to reduce congestion are less costly. As Houston drivers have acclimated to rush-hour traffic jams, they've become more adept at saving themselves time.

''People are adjusting when they leave,'' Lomax said, noting resources that provide real-time traffic information. As smartphones and computers become more common, and workdays come with greater flexibility for some people to work from home, commuters can adjust to less-stressful drive times.

Thus, even though they have the sixth-worst commute in the country based on hours of delay, the region's drivers rank 21st on a new calculation that determines how much extra time drivers have to build into their trips. The new measure, called the freeway planning time index, shows drivers don't have to build in as much extra time as others, because planning and good freeway clearance rates by tow trucks keep roads moving, Lomax said.

Public transit can provide some relief, but with jobs in Houston divided among a dozen or so job areas, it's hard for public transit to carry everyone where they need to go efficiently, Lomax said.

Still, drivers and elected officials said traffic congestion is spreading farther from the urban core and growing.

TRUCKING HURT

''I think within the next two years it is going to get worse,'' said Liberty County Commissioner Norman Brown, who said traffic is already worsening for some Dayton-area drivers.

Some congestion on the region's fringes is the result of trucking and manufacturing, Brown said. The mobility report found congestion accounted for $646 million in cost to businesses reliant on trucking in 2011, up from $490 million in 2007.

Emmett said the shipping growth demonstrates the need for investment in rail and other methods to move goods.

Lomax said congestion caused by flourishing truck business can be a good problem to have.

''Economic recession seems to be the one foolproof way of controlling congestion,'' Lomax said. ''But nobody's saying that is a solution.''

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Just to emphasize, finally, whether it is seaways, dams, highways, or tollways, whether it involves other modes of transportation, transportation projects are major engines driving the economy. That is why we are here on the floor. It is important for the local communities to be drivers of that. The metropolitan regions will not be able to maintain economic vitality without this investment.

Finally, the Jackson Lee amendment clearly speaks to the global aspects of the Secretary of Transportation having the ability to work with our local and State governments.

I ask my colleagues to join me in restating that the Secretary of Transportation has authority to work with local and State entities on the proposed projects that they have and for these projects to continue to grow and develop to ease traffic congestion.

Madam Chair, Let me thank Subcommittee Chairman DIAZ-BALART and Ranking Member PRICE for their leadership on this important legislation and for the opportunity to explain my amendment.

The Jackson Lee Amendment adds at the end of the bill the following new section providing that:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available by this Act under the heading '' Federal Transit Administration—Transit Formula Grants'' may be used in contravention of section 5309 of title 49, United States Code.

This amendment is identical to the Jackson Lee Amendment to H.R. 4775, the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Act for FY2015 adopted by the House last year by voice vote.

In particular, the Jackson Lee affirms the importance to the nation of projects that create economic development, particularly in the transportation area.

Pursuant to section 5309 of title 49, the Secretary of Transportation may make grants under this section to State and local government the authority to assist in financing capital projects, small startup projects, including the acquisition of real property.

This section further supports capacity improvements, including double tracking, and it specifically relates to work that deals with projects on approved transportation plans.

That is key; section 5309 of title 49 grants to State and local governments the authority to undertake capital projects, which means that when local governments propose their projects, the Secretary has the authority to go forward on them.

It's instructive to consider what some of the nation's leading transportation and economic development organizations have to say about the importance and economic impact of investments in local light rail capital projects.

It is well documented that nothing enhances the competitiveness of a nation in this increasingly globalized economy, than investments in transportation infrastructure capital projects.

Whether it is the seaways, dams, highways, or tollways, and whether it involves other modes of transportation, transportation projects are major engines driving the economy.

And it is important for the local community to be the drivers of that.

Metropolitan regions will not be able to maintain its economic vitality without the ability to create and preserve infrastructure that supports the movement of people and goods throughout our country.

The Jackson Lee Amendment clearly speaks to the global aspect of the Secretary of Transportation having the ability to work with our local and State governments.

Houston is the fourth most populous city in the country; but unlike other large cities, we have struggled to have an effective mass transit system.

Over many decades Houston's mass transit policy was to build more highways with more lanes to carry more drivers to and from work.

The city of Houston has changed course and is now pursuing Mass transit options that include light rail.

This decision to invest in light rail was and is strongly supported by Houstonians by their votes in a 2003 referendum and by their increased usage of light rail service made possible in part by transportation appropriations bills.

Specifically, Harris County voters passed a massive referendum proposal that was to set the stage for transit for the next 20 years.

It included a first stage of four light rail lines, to be complete by 2012, and a master plan for a 65-mile system, to be complete by 2025.

An April 2014 report by the Houston METRO on weekly ridership states that 44,267 used Houston's light rail service, which represented a 6,096 or 16% increase in ridership from April of the previous year.

This increase in light rail usage outpaced ridership of other forms of mass transit in the city of Houston: metro bus had a 2.3% increase over April 2013; metro bus-local had a 1.3% increase over April 2013; and Metro bus-Park and ride had a 8.0% increase over April 2013.

In a story published February 5, 2013, the Houston Chronicle reported on the congestion Houston drivers face under daily commute to and from work.

According to the Chronicle article, in 2011 Houston commuters continue to enjoy some of the worst traffic delays in the country, and Houston area drivers wasted more than two days a year, on average, in traffic congestion, costing them each $1,090 in lost time and fuel.

Today, those figures have increased to 3.5 days a year wasted in traffic congestion, costing them each $1,850 in lost time and fuel.

To put it in simpler and starker terms: A driver in Houston could see 154 movies this year or purchase 21 tickets to a home Texans game with the money wasted because of poorly maintained or traffic-clogged roads.

Expanded light rail is critical to Houston's plan to meet its transportation and environmental challenges, ease its traffic congestion, and improve its air quality.

Places most likely to see immediate benefit from light rail in Houston are the 50,000 students that attend the University of Houston and Texas Southern University.

Funds made available under this deal should be available to support local government decisions of the Houston Metropolitan Transit Authority and the city of Houston to expand rail service.

When we put our minds to it, we can get things done.

In Houston, we built a port 50 miles from the ocean, created the world's greatest medical center in the middle of open prairie, and convinced the federal government to base its astronauts in a hurricane zone 870 miles from the launch pad.

Each of those achievements shares a common element: elected officials have advocated, built public support, and brought the agencies together.

Members of Congress should respect the decisions of state and local governments when it comes to deciding how they will spend funding made available for public transportation under this appropriations bill.

I ask my colleagues to again support the Jackson Lee Amendment and affirm the authority of the Secretary of Transportation to work with local governments to develop local transit projects that will relieve traffic congestion, efficiently move people and goods, create jobs and maintain America's status as the leading economy in the world.

I ask my colleagues to support the Jackson Lee amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. BROOKS OF ALABAMA

Mr. BROOKS of Alabama. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to provide financial assistance in contravention of section 214(d) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1980 (42 U.S.C. 1436a(d)).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 287, the gentleman from Alabama and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Alabama.

Mr. BROOKS of Alabama. Madam Chair, America recently blew through the $18 trillion debt mark. America's Comptroller General warns that America's debt path is unsustainable.

In short, Washington's financial irresponsibility threatens America with a debilitating insolvency and bankruptcy that risks destroying the America our ancestors sacrificed so much to build.

With this impending financial crisis as a backdrop, I ask the House of Representatives to have the courage, to have the backbone, to be financially responsible. The House can do that in part by adopting my amendment that eliminates Federal Government housing subsidies for illegal aliens.

How big is this problem? Census Bureau data analyzed by the Center for Immigration Studies in 2012 reflects that at least 130,000 households headed by self-identifying illegal aliens live in public or subsidized housing. That is potentially hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars being illegally taken by illegal aliens with the tacit or open consent or even the encouragement of the United States Government.

Think about that for a moment. While American families struggle to make ends meet, while America faces a debilitating and destructive insolvency and bankruptcy, while American families and lawful immigrants are being forced to wait in line for public housing, this administration ignores the law to spend potentially hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars subsidizing illegal aliens, thereby encouraging their illegal conduct.

Madam Chair, my amendment is simple. It prohibits funding to subsidized housing in violation of section 214(d) of the Housing and Community Development Act that, for clarity, bars HUD from providing taxpayer assistance for the benefit of an applicant ''before immigration documentation is presented and verified'' by DHS' automated Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements system or a subsequent successful appeal.

Unfortunately, this administration ignores the law and permits illegal aliens to move into public housing before the legality of their status is finally determined.

Also, unfortunately, the administrative and legal process being what it is, it takes as much as 2 years to evict illegal alien tenants after their illegal alien status is discovered.

Madam Chair, it is unacceptable that, in a time of out-of-control United States debt and deficit, HUD violates the law to give limited public housing benefits to illegal aliens, rather than needy American citizens and lawful immigrants.

Madam Chair, I urge the adoption of my amendment that, first, denies public housing subsidies to illegal aliens; and, second, underscores the sense of

Congress that the law must be obeyed and that it is wrong to use public housing subsidies to reward illegal aliens for their illegal conduct.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Chair, I rise in opposition to this amendment. Once again, we have an amendment that, on its face, simply restates existing law. In fact, the gentleman offering the amendment has acknowledged that existing law categorically prohibits HUD benefits from going to undocumented persons.

What is going on here? What is lurking beneath the surface? I fear something is. An anti-immigrant agenda based on fear and prejudice would appear to be the answer.

We are feeding into widely held misconceptions that so many undocumented immigrants are seeking and receiving Federal benefits, that Federal programs, Federal dollars, are being abused and misused.

Well, we do need to have a remedy for our broken immigration system. As I said earlier, a comprehensive immigration reform bill, bipartisan, passed the Senate last Congress. It could be placed on this floor tomorrow and pass overwhelmingly. That doesn't appear to be happening. Instead, what we have is this drumbeat of measures that are denigrating the immigrant community.

We need to have some restraint in this body on such amendments. They don't alter existing law. They do, I am afraid, though, stir controversy. They reinforce prejudice and stereotypes. They distract us from the business at hand.

I think it is an unworthy amendment. I urge my colleagues to reject it, and I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART), the chairman of the subcommittee.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I think it is important to just kind of always try to lower the decibels as much as we can.

This amendment, as both gentlemen have said, does not change current law. It doesn't change current HUD policies. It merely restates current law. I don't, frankly, see a reason to have the amendment. Likewise, I don't see a big reason to oppose the amendment that just, again, restates current law. I ask all sides to try to lower the rhetoric on this issue. This amendment does not change anything.

As the ranking member knows, I have been involved in trying to get immigration reform for a long, long time and have worked with a number of Republicans and Democrats. I will tell you that both sides have had opportunities to get it done, and neither side got it done when they had the opportunity to get it done. I am hoping that we will be able to get it done.

□ 2015

But this is not the time and place to have that debate. So, again, while I don't see the need for this amendment, I don't see what the issue is of objecting to an amendment that, in essence, does absolutely nothing.

I thank the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE) for allowing me some of his time.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. I thank the chairman, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BROOKS of Alabama. Madam Chair, I find it interesting and somewhat perplexing how my good friend across the aisle talks about an anti-immigrant agenda appealing to fear and prejudice.

It seems that whenever we start talking about border security and lawful immigration, the race card is played. And I would submit that that is because, in part, there is an absence of rational sound public policy for the position taken.

Let's emphasize something. America has, far and away, the most generous lawful immigration policy in the world. No nation is as compassionate with respect to lawful immigrants as the United States of America is, and I challenge anyone to say different.

I wish that this kind of amendment was not necessary, but when you have got an executive branch that has shown itself to be willingly lawless, to the point that two Federal judges, one in Pennsylvania and one in Texas, have had to render a decision trying to force this administration to obey the law, then I would submit, Madam Chair, that it is important to have these kinds of amendments to also deny the funding that otherwise would be used for that lawless conduct.

I ask for support of the amendment. I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BROOKS).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Alabama will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 4 OFFERED BY MR. ENGEL

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used by the Department of Transportation, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, or any other Federal agency to lease or purchase new light duty vehicles for any executive fleet, or for an agency's fleet inventory, except in accordance with Presidential Memorandum—Federal Fleet Performance, dated May 24, 2011.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 287, the gentleman from New York and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Chair, on May 24, 2011, President Obama issued a memorandum on Federal fleet performance that required all new light-duty vehicles in the Federal fleet to be alternative fuel vehicles, such as hybrid, electric, natural gas, or biofuel, by December 31, 2015.

My amendment echoes the President's memorandum by prohibiting funds in this act from being used to lease or purchase new light-duty vehicles unless that purchase is made in accord with the President's memorandum.

I have submitted identical amendments to 17 different appropriations bills over the past few years, and every time they have been accepted by both the majority and the minority. I hope my amendment will receive similar support today.

Global oil prices are down. We no longer pay $147 per barrel. But despite increased production here in the United States, the global price of oil is still largely determined by OPEC.

Spikes in oil prices have profound repercussions for our economy. The primary reason is that our cars and trucks run only on petroleum. We can change that with alternative technologies that exist today.

The Federal Government operates the largest fleet of light-duty vehicles in America, over 635,000 vehicles. More than 6,000 of these vehicles are within the jurisdiction of this bill, being used by the Department of Transportation and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

When I was in Brazil a few years ago, I saw how they diversified their fuel by greatly expanding their use of ethanol. People there can drive to a gas station and choose whether to fill their vehicle with gasoline or with ethanol and also possible blends as well. They make their choice based on cost or whatever criteria they deem important.

So I want the same choice for America's consumers. That is why I am proposing a bill in Congress, as I have done many times in the past, which will provide for cars built in America to be able to run on a fuel instead of, or in addition to, gasoline. If they can do it in Brazil, we can do it here, and it would cost less than $100 per car to do.

So, in conclusion, expanding the role these alternative technologies play in our transportation economy will help break the leverage that foreign-government-controlled oil companies hold over Americans. It will increase our Nation's domestic security and protect consumers.

I urge that my colleagues support the Engel amendment.

In conclusion, I would just say that energy policy is something that is really important, and we can take a very

small step tonight to move closer to energy independence and protecting the American consumer. I would urge all my colleagues on both sides, as they have in the past, to support this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. HULTGREN

Mr. HULTGREN. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used by the Federal Aviation Administration for the bio-data assessment in the hiring of Air Traffic Control Specialists.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 287, the gentleman from Illinois and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

Mr. HULTGREN. Madam Chair, I rise today to offer my amendment, which defunds a troubling hiring test put forth by the FAA which has led to cheating and questionable hiring practices for air traffic controllers.

The intent of my amendment is not to slow hiring, but to stop the FAA's use of a discredited gatekeeper hiring test.

I represent more than 270 air traffic controllers in Illinois' 14th Congressional District. More than a year ago, the FAA made an inexplicable and obscure change to its longstanding hiring practices, with few details given about how the changes would be implemented and with little advance warning.

Setting aside its decades-long process by which qualified Collegiate Training Initiative students and military veterans were given preference in hiring, the FAA implemented a new biographical questionnaire, or Bio Q, which contains such questions as, ''How many sports did you play in high school?''

With no way to know what a right answer is, how to improve on the test, or what their final score was, many otherwise highly qualified applicants failed, after spending countless resources and time training to become air traffic controllers.

The new procedures caused the agency to divert the hiring process around highly qualified, CTI-certified trainees and experienced veterans, jeopardizing air travel safety in favor of off-the-street hires, some of whom have little experience or ambition.

Since then, the FAA has been under fire following a six-month investigation which uncovered that FAA or aviation-related employees may have assisted in giving potential air traffic controller recruits special access to answers on the Bio Q to help them gain jobs with the FAA.

This cheating is greatly disturbing and jeopardizes any shred of credibility of the Bio Q that it had any accurate or fair test to determine who should be an air traffic controller.

Yet, we are now finding out that the cheating may run deeper than first reported, possibly with knowledge at the highest levels of the FAA.

If additional FAA or aviation-related employees helped applicants cheat on the Bio Q, it is imperative that we expose those responsible and determine how widespread and systemic the misconduct is.

I have urged Congress to compel the FAA to appear before the American people to get to the bottom of this troubling discovery. These investigations uncover just how discredited the Bio Q is in any hiring process.

But until we get answers to these questions, like who knew about the cheating, when did they know about it, and how did they cover it up, we cannot let the FAA employ people unfairly using the highly flawed Bio Q as a gatekeeper.

In addition, we still don't know what will happen to those who have either failed the Bio Q, aged out of the hiring process, or both.

Disqualifying highly trained, certified graduates and military veterans because they did or did not play sports in high school is ridiculous. This amendment would restrict funding for the Bio Q, stopping its use by the FAA.

When you climb into an airliner, you trust the pilot, the crew, and the air traffic controllers will keep you safe. I have introduced H.R. 1964, the Air Traffic Controllers Hiring Act of 2015, to reverse the effects of the FAA's policy, restore safety and confidence to air travel, and to make sure we have the best and brightest in our control towers.

I have hopes that this legislation can move quickly through the House and have urged the Transportation Committee to hold a hearing on the bill. Now that Aviation Subcommittee Chairman LOBIONDO has cosponsored the legislation, I am looking forward to the committee's consideration.

Until then, this amendment will help restore some sanity back to the FAA.

I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI), my good friend and colleague.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Madam Chair, I thank the gentleman for yielding and for his work on this amendment and on the bill.

As the gentleman said, early last year, the FAA switched course on its hiring process by moving from the AT-SAT, which was a tried-and-true, knowledge-based test, to a bio-data assessment. The change had a tremendous impact on the 36 Air Traffic Collegiate Training Initiative schools.

I have one of the best of these schools in my district, Lewis University. Lewis 2 years ago won the Loening Trophy as the best aviation program in the Nation.

Maybe students chose to attend Lewis and these other schools because of the advantages that CTI schools provided under the old hiring system. They decided at a young age to enroll in a program fostered by the FAA and were given the opportunity to excel on the AT-SAT, which was unfairly pulled out from under them.

Madam Chair, this amendment is a step in the right direction towards fixing the misguided policy change that had a negative impact on students and the universities that invested significant resources in training our future generations of air traffic controllers.

But I need to emphasize that this amendment should not come at the cost of slowing down the hiring of air traffic controllers. We have already suffered from a hiring and training slowdown and cannot afford further delays to staffing an essential safety function of the FAA.

Our hard-working air traffic controllers are already understaffed, and Congress must ensure that we are increasing their ranks quickly and with well-trained air traffic controllers.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes.''

Mr. HULTGREN. I thank my colleague from Illinois, and I would also urge my colleagues to support this passage and to make sure that we continue to have the safest air traffic control towers in the world.

Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Madam Chair, I very reluctantly, actually, claim time in opposition.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Madam Chair, I actually understand and, frankly, listened very intently to the gentleman's concerns, and I actually want to work with him to make sure that nothing is used that is absolutely arbitrarily, or frankly, totally unfair. And so I think the gentleman's concerns are very, very valid.

At this time, however, and that is why I say ''very reluctantly'' have to oppose, because, again, at this moment, I am concerned, hearing the other gentleman from Illinois mention the fact that we want to make sure that we don't slow down the hiring of the air traffic controllers. We need to hire another 1,500 new controllers in 2016.

So I not only appreciate the gentleman's concerns, but I, in fact, potentially could share a lot of his concerns.

But again, reluctantly at this time, because I am concerned about potentially slowing down the hiring of new controllers, I reluctantly have to oppose his amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HULTGREN).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. HULTGREN. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Illinois will be postponed.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. MEEHAN

Mr. MEEHAN. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. 416. None of the funds made available by this Act for Amtrak capital grants may be used for projects off the Northeast Corridor until the level of capital spending by Amtrak for capital projects on the Northeast Corridor during fiscal year 2016 equals the amount of Amtrak's profits from Northeast Corridor operations during fiscal year 2015.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 287, the gentleman from Pennsylvania and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

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Mr. MEEHAN. Madam Chair, before I begin my comments, I would like to thank Chairman DIAZ-BALART and Ranking Member PRICE for all of their diligent work on this bill.

My amendment seeks to prioritize investment in Amtrak's Northeast Corridor, which is its most heavily traveled route, by ensuring that operating profits that are earned there stay there.

Last year, Amtrak's Northeast Corridor line earned nearly $500 million in operating profit. More than 100,000 Americans get on a train that travels along the Northeast Corridor every day, but instead of reinvesting those dollars into improvements in the line's infrastructure, much of that money was sent across the country, used to subsidize money-losing, long-distance Amtrak routes. This has left Amtrak's most heavily traveled route less funded, and it has delayed needed improvements to Amtrak's only line that actually turns a profit.

This amendment will fix that. It will ensure that the dollars Amtrak earns along the Northeast Corridor are invested into improvements in the line's infrastructure. It will make travel along Amtrak's most heavily used route safer, and it will also do so without adding to the taxpayers' burden.

This amendment will codify the principle that was passed in the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act, and I might add that that was approved with more than 300 votes in this House earlier this year. This tracks that same principle. And that legislation passed with the leadership of my friend and fellow Pennsylvanian, Chairman BILL SHUSTER, which requires that Amtrak direct capital investments into the Northeast Corridor, where it is needed most.

Madam Chair, more than 11 million Americans rode an Amtrak train between Boston and Washington last year. Many more used rail lines like SEPTA or Metro-North, operating on tracks owned by Amtrak, to get to work every day. The tragic derailment in my own area of Philadelphia last month has shown that there is a desperate need to improve the line and strengthen capital investments in the region.

This amendment will ensure Amtrak makes smart investment decisions and directs capital spending where it is needed most. It will help Amtrak tackle the backlog of capital projects that plague the Northeast Corridor. It will reduce delays. It will mean safer, more efficient travel for millions of Americans who rely on Amtrak's Northeast Corridor every year. I urge my colleagues to support it.

I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART).

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Chair, there is a lot of work that goes into this bill and there is a lot of work that goes into the amendments, but I will tell you that the gentleman from Pennsylvania has worked nonstop to find real solutions to deal with making sure that Amtrak is safe and, in particular, that the Northeast Corridor is as viable and as safe as possible. So I just must commend the gentleman for his hard work, for the way that he has just worked this issue day in, day out to get to the point where we are today.

Mr. MEEHAN. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Chair, I wish to claim the time in opposition.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Chair, I too want to commend my colleague for offering this amendment. I understand his intent. There are significant capital needs on the busy Northeast Corridor. It is Amtrak's busiest and most successful corridor. It is a fundamental flaw of this bill that we are unable to provide for the kind of investments that the service in that corridor warrants and, indeed, that the service of Amtrak nationwide warrants.

But the effect of this amendment, I fear, in the environment of inadequate investment, this would provide a much-needed boost in investment in the Northeast Corridor. It may be still not enough, but it would do so at the expense of the rest of the Amtrak network, and that should give us pause when we consider this amendment.

The amendment would require Amtrak to spend at least $1.2 billion—the annual amount of Northeast Corridor revenues—on Northeast Corridor capital projects before they could spend any of their Federal capital funding elsewhere. This would have the effect of halting all capital projects that are not on the Northeast Corridor, including all information technology, upgraded safety technology, until very late in the fiscal year at the earliest, and possibly longer, should projects on the Northeast Corridor not be ready to advance. This would also hinder Amtrak's ability to manage State and long-distance service.

I know that all of these consequences are probably not my colleague's intent, but it does demonstrate the types of consequences that we need to consider when making such a policy change. I ask colleagues to vote against this amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MEEHAN. Madam Chair, before I close my comments, I think it is important to recognize that the same principle has already been adopted by 318 Members of this body, including a near unanimous vote by my colleague from the other side of the aisle, his colleagues on that side of the aisle.

I will also say that I am not sure that the gentleman understands the actual effect of the bill. It simply is to reinvest the profits that are made on the Northeast Corridor. These are being made by the investments that are being made by the taxpaying people who are purchasing those tickets. We can still look for ways to fund other parts of the system around the country where they can earn their investments on merit.

We are asking, in light of the fact that this is a line which is so heavily used, the priorities be placed where they are most needed.

Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MEEHAN).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania will be postponed.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. NEWHOUSE

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to issue, implement, or enforce the proposed regulation by the Federal Aviation Administration entitled ''Operation and Certification of Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems'' (FAA-2015-0150) without consideration of the use of small unmanned aircraft systems for agricultural operations, as defined in 14 CFR 21.25(b)(1).

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Madam Chairwoman, I reserve a point of order on the gentleman's amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. A point of order is reserved.

Pursuant to House Resolution 287, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. NEWHOUSE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Madam Chair, I rise today to introduce an amendment on an important topic that will undoubtedly have a growing impact not just on our Nation's agricultural sector, but on our economy as a whole.

The use of unmanned aerial vehicles, or UAVs, has enormous possibilities for our economy, whether it is providing cost-effective means to deliver packages, photographing housing for Realtors, broadcasting sports games, assisting law enforcement with tracking criminals, or providing mobile WiFi hubs for Internet access. However, one vastly underconsidered outcome for UAV technology is that it could potentially transform our Nation's agricultural sector.

Ideas have been considered using UAVs to survey cropland, to determine property lines, or to help plan for planting, spraying, watering, or harvesting of crops; however, the potential applications are even greater. Depending on how this technology evolves, UAVs may be equipped with special cameras to determine if crops are dry and need extra water and where and how much should be applied. They may also be used to apply pesticides or fertilizers with precision to ensure that too little or too much isn't being used. And depending on their sophistication, someday, UAVs may even be used to harvest the food we grow.

The potential applications don't just stop there, though. In my district last year, we experienced the worst forest fire in Washington State history, consuming hundreds of thousands of acres. In the future, first responders, the Forest Service, and other stakeholders may be able to use UAVs to monitor the spread of fire to get people out of harm's way or to better predict where to best apply water and fire retardants. They could even help with identifying dry or overgrown areas in advance to help stakeholders know where treatment is needed, which could prevent fires in the first place.

Madam Chair, I appreciate the steps the FAA has taken in releasing draft rules regarding UAVs and that the FAA has been more agreeable in allowing testing of UAVs for commercial purposes.

While I understand that safety and privacy are enormous concerns being considered by the FAA, it is also important that we do not fall behind other nations in utilizing this technology, which are currently developing and innovating in this industry more rapidly than we are here in the United States.

Madam Chair, my amendment today is simple. It merely limits FAA's rulemaking on UAVs if the rules do not take into consideration agricultural applications of UAVs in the rulemaking process.

I appreciate the work the FAA is doing on this matter, and I hope the final rules that are expected later this year generously allow for the safe testing and commercial use of UAVs, ensuring the amazing agricultural prospects for these technologies are well considered in the process.

Madam Chair, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. NEWHOUSE

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to issue, implement, or enforce regulations by the Federal Aviation Administration entitled ''operations and certification of small unmanned aircraft systems'' (FAA–2015–0150) in contravention to 14 CFR 21.25(b)(1).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 287, the gentleman from Washington and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Madam Chair, in my previous comments, I addressed this amendment, which is in order, and I would just submit those comments to be used for this particular amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. NEWHOUSE).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. GARRETT

Mr. GARRETT. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to implement, administer, or enforce the final rule entitled ''Implementation of the Fair Housing Act's Discriminatory Effects Standard'', published by the Department of Housing and Urban Development in the Federal Register on February 15, 2013 (78 Fed. Reg. 11460; Docket No. FR-5508-F-02).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 287, the gentleman from New Jersey and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

□ 2045

Mr. GARRETT. Madam Chair, I rise today, as I have done in the past, to offer an amendment that attempts to restore some sanity, fairness, and certainty to our housing market. My amendment would undo harmful economic actions taken by the administration that weaken credit availability and job creation. You see, the Department's final rule implementing the Fair Housing Act's discriminatory effects standard establishes regulations promoting the use of a legal theory known as disparate impact.

What is disparate impact? Disparate impact liability allows the government to allege discrimination on the basis of race or other factors based solely on statistical analyses that find disproportionate results among different groups of people and—get this—regardless of any evidence of any actual discriminatory actions or intent. Let me point that out again—regardless of any evidence of actual discrimination.

If, for example, a mortgage lender uses a completely nondiscriminatory standard to assess credit risk, such as maybe a debt-to-income ratio, they can still be found to have discriminated if the data shows different loan approval rates for different groups of consumers.

So real and actual discrimination must be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. I think that is something everyone here can agree on. But under the example that I just laid out, that lender could even have specific antidiscriminatory practices in play, in other words, he would have rules in his business in place, but still be found liable under this theory.

Predictably, by creating a presumption of discrimination, this rule will result in a perverse regulatory scheme where lenders, insurers, and landlords would effectively be required to intentionally discriminate among different classes of borrowers. Why? Just to protect themselves from becoming entangled in the regulatory pretzel-like logic of this administration.

So if we specifically consider the examples of homeowner insurance commonly considered factors, including an applicant's claim history, construction material, the presence or absence of a security system, the distance to the firehouse, well, they could be barred if they were found to result in creating a statistical disparity for a class defined by race or ethnicity or gender.

You see, sound risk-based lending insurance underwriting and pricing that unintentionally results in a statistical disparate outcome, that is not discrimination; rather, accurate risk identification and classification is absolutely essential to the lending of insurance businesses.

In addition to being unfair and unwise, the HUD rule is also unnecessary. Why? Because protected class characteristics are already prohibited from consideration in the risk assessment process.

You see, State law already prohibits insurers from recording race, for example. The HUD rule requiring race considerations there turns on its head and violates these laws. You see, all 50 States in this country have antidiscriminatory provisions in their housing insurance regulations, and there is no claim that these have been insufficient. The Federal Government, therefore, should be encouraging sound business practices, not punishing them to utilize them.

We have seen what risky lending practices can do to our economy already. Although I believe the Supreme Court will strike down disparate impact theory, we should do all we can in our power to rein in an administration policy that will increase the cost and undermine the availability of credit throughout the economy.

Now, to this Chamber's credit, let me point out, this House recently passed my amendment to the Commerce-Justice-Science Appropriations bill that would prevent the DOJ from using this very same theory.

I hope that we will continue to take a stand against this flawed logic and theory and promote sound business practices.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Chair, I wish to claim the time in opposition.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. I rise in opposition to this amendment. It would nullify a critical enforcement tool that has been used, for example, to rule against discrimination and racially discriminatory zoning requirements, practices that exclude families with children from housing, discrimination by lenders, zoning requirements that discriminate against group homes housing individuals with disabilities. It is a critical enforcement tool, and it would be a very, very bad mistake to pass this amendment.

I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS), the ranking member of the Financial Services Committee.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Madam Chair, I rise in strong opposition to this amendment. I am very surprised that this amendment is being brought by my friend, Mr. GARRETT.

Mr. GARRETT's amendment seeks to empower HUD's efforts in enforcing the Fair Housing Act in such a way that relies on the disparate impact doctrine. It weakens our ability to protect Americans from discriminatory policies that deny them access to quality housing, quality neighborhood schools, and other resources.

The disparate impact doctrine is a very effective legal tool that has been used for decades to address seemingly neutral policies that have the effect of discriminating against protected classes.

The disparate impact doctrine provides legal redress for victims of hidden discrimination. It ensures that women cannot be evicted from their apartments solely because they were victims of domestic violence, and it ensures that veterans with disabilities are not barred from living in certain places solely because of the lack of accommodations for their disability. This amendment ignores the realities of harmful discrimination in our Nation today, and it would eliminate well-established, decades-old protections for American families.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''no.''

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN), another outstanding Financial Services member.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Chair, this amendment would absolutely, totally, and completely allow discrimination against our veterans. If you are a veteran and you need a service animal and if there is an area that is set aside with no pets allowed, that service animal can become a pet. We cannot allow veterans to be discriminated against.

With reference to this amendment being a theory, all 11 circuit courts have upheld it. It is not a theory. It is a standard. It is a standard that the courts adhere to, and it is a standard we ought not abrogate. We must continue.

I am absolutely, totally, and completely opposed to this amendment, and I beg that my colleagues would go on record as being opposed to it as well.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART).

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Madam Chair, I am wary of considering an amendment on a rule and regulation that is currently pending before the Supreme Court. The sponsor of the amendment is a good man, but I would hope that we would wait for the Court to issue its ruling and then the committee of jurisdiction can properly debate and consider what, if any, legislative action should be taken. For those reasons, I urge a ''no'' vote on this amendment.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON).

Mr. ELLISON. I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time, and I strenuously urge all Members to vote ''no'' on this particular amendment.

The fact is that residential segregation in this country has limited opportunities for people for so many years. And I don't mean segregation just in terms of race—people who are excluded because of race, because of gender, because of all types of reasons.

If we say that disparate impact has no place, then we will be precluded from looking into how disparity just causes people to have different chances to live the American Dream. We will be consigned to having to find a smoking gun or intent before we can take action to try to make this country fairer and more open.

This is a very bad amendment, and I urge all Members to vote ''no.''

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GARRETT. Madam Chair, how much time remains?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from New Jersey has 1 minute remaining.

Mr. GARRETT. The gentleman said, ''The fact is.'' Well, everything we have heard for the last 5 minutes as the facts has absolutely nothing to do with this bill. This bill has nothing to do with vets and service animals. This bill has nothing to do with domestic violence and women not being able to be in the house. This has nothing to do with any of the weakening of State standards whatsoever.

This bill basically simply says that, if a lender to you says that you live in a wooden house versus a stone house, there might be different rates for your insurance. It says that, if your house is miles from a fire department and your house is right next to the firehouse, there might be different rates for the insurance and the mortgages and the loans you get on that house. Those are not discriminatory practices. Those are reasonable practices that businesses enter into. It has nothing to do with all of the examples just given.

This bill says we should continue to go after and prosecute when there is evidence of discrimination and intentional discrimination. This bill will not end that. This bill will not end your ability to look into the examples the last gentleman just raised. It would simply say that businesses should be allowed to use standard rationales in their risk analysis, whether it is debt-to-income ratio or construction materials and the like.

For those reasons, along with the other reasons I have already said and the host of organizations that support this legislation, and that this House just passed last week on the CJS bill, we should do so again tonight.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. GARRETT. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New Jersey will be postponed.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. ELLISON

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to enter into a contract with any person whose disclosures of a proceeding with a disposition listed in section 2313(c)(1) of title 41, United States Code, in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System include the term ''Fair Labor Standards Act'' and such disposition is listed as ''willful'' or ''repeated''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 287, the gentleman from Minnesota and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Chair, this amendment simply says that the United States Government should not give appropriations and pay contracts for people or companies who have been found to have willful or repeated violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act. In other words, if you have repeatedly and willfully stolen the wages of workers and you have a Federal contract, then you are not the kind of contractor who the American people, through the U.S. Congress, want to do business with.

No hard-working American should ever have to worry that her employer will refuse to pay her when she works overtime or take money out of her paycheck, especially if she works for a Federal contractor. The practice is known as wage theft. Right now, Federal contractors who violate the Fair Labor Standards Act are still allowed to apply for Federal contracts.

This amendment, which my colleagues from the Progressive Caucus join me in, will ensure that funds may not be used to enter into a contract with a government contractor that willfully or repeatedly violates the Fair Labor Standards Act. The amendment ensures that those in violation of the law do not get taxpayer support and should not get the rewards that other good contractors receive.

It is important to point out to Members contemplating this amendment that, if you are a contractor who pays your workers on time, who does what you are supposed to do, who has avoided willful violations and repeated violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act, you should not, as a good contractor, have to compete with somebody who gets a competitive advantage by stealing the pay of their workers. We should have good contractors competing for contracts, not contractors who make willful, repeated violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

This amendment relies upon violations reported to the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System.

□ 2100

That system looks back 5 years to review criminal, civil, or administrative agency actions which have a final disposition.

This amendment differs from previous amendments that I have offered similar to it because it targets actors who willfully or repeatedly engage in wage theft. The amendment would ensure that a single inadvertent violation would not disqualify a contractor, but it would show clearly that someone who had made repeated and willful violations would not be able to benefit from the contract.

I urge Members to vote in favor of this particular amendment because a penny worked for and a penny earned must be a penny paid; particularly when that penny is derived from a company with a Federal contract, we have a right to believe that we are going to be treated in an honest way.

I yield to the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Chair, I want to commend my friend from Minnesota for offering this amendment. Every worker is entitled to receive pay, fair pay, for the hours they work. We know, unfortunately, there are employers, as the gentleman has stated, who refuse to pay for overtime, who make their employees work off the clock, who refuse to pay the minimum wage. These things go on.

The least we can do is take steps to ensure that those employers don't receive new Federal contracts. That is what the gentleman's amendment does. I commend him for offering it and urge colleagues to support him.

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Chair, how much time do I have remaining?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Minnesota has 1½ minutes remaining.

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Chair, I want to thank the gentleman for the support for this amendment.

Let me just point out a few things for Members contemplating this amendment.

An important think tank looked at this question and found that in total, the average low-wage worker loses a stunning $2,600 a year in unpaid wages, representing about 15 percent of their earned income.

One thing that I believe Democrats and Republicans can agree on is that, if you break your back on the job all day long trying to earn a living and you don't get paid what you are supposed to get paid and your check is light, we all have to agree that that is wrong.

I expect to have an all green board up there because to do otherwise would say that you want to stand on the side of the wage thieves, the ones who are willfully and repeatedly making violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

I think that, as the United States Congress, we should stand together and say a penny worked is a penny that is going to be paid, and we are going to insist upon it.

Finally, I just want to say that breaking the law is a bipartisan problem. Nobody can stand with the contractors who do this. It is one thing to underpay your workers in a way that is consistent with the law by paying them the Federal minimum wage rate—I want to raise it; we may not agree on that—but for sure, we have got to agree that, for people who work for Federal contractors, we have got to insist that the contractors who pay these workers even less than they have earned should not benefit from a Federal contract.

To help the workers, we have to do this, and to help the honest Federal contractors, we have to do this.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Madam Chair, the gentleman's amendment is obviously very well intentioned.

However, the amendment, as drafted, is so broad that, for example, a contractor could be excluded for something as minor as failing to display a poster in a break room. Again, it is well intentioned.

We have to remember something. We fund a lot of contracts in this bill, everything from phone service to the computer systems that ensure an orderly and efficient air space. Potentially, this amendment could eliminate a number of those transportation-industry-dependent contracts.

Nobody wants to allow for lawbreaking; but, because it is so broadly drafted, the unintended consequences, I think, that folks could be caught in this are a lot more than I think many folks understand.

Again, though it is a well-intentioned amendment, I would urge a ''no'' vote on this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Minnesota will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 28 OFFERED BY MR. EMMER OF MINNESOTA

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may used to carry out any enrichment as defined in Appendix A to part 611 of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, for any New Start grant request.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 287, the gentleman from Minnesota and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Madam Chair, I rise to address an issue that is playing a role in crippling America's transportation system by driving our deficits and exacerbating the need for bailouts of the highway trust fund. As we debate how to fund transportation, one of the most vital functions of government, this body is being forced to make hard choices.

I want to thank Chairman DIAZ-BALART, the ranking member, and the members of the subcommittee for their

work on bringing this appropriations bill to the floor. Their work is definitely appreciated by me and my constituents. That said, it is inconceivable to me that, as we kick the can on a long-term transportation authorization bill, we continue to allow frivolous spending on transit projects.

As important as New Starts transit projects are to my State and my district, one would think that every last available dollar would go towards ensuring transit New Starts have the funding needed to make a line operational and as cost effective as possible.

Madam Chair, that is not what is happening. Within Federal grant applications, extras are being included that can dramatically raise the cost of transit New Starts.

Excessive enrichments such as artwork, landscaping, and bicycle and pedestrian improvements such as sidewalks, paths, plazas, site and station furniture, site lighting, signage, public artwork, bike facilities, and permanent fencing are included in the overall grant application.

Even more shocking is that the Federal Transit Administration doesn't include these extra costs into the cost-effective measurements for the overall cost of the project which serves to deceive taxpayers and Congress as to the project's real price tag.

Madam Chair, in my district alone, I have cities that have placed a moratorium on new business development due to severe transportation issues. It is insane to me and my constituents that we blindly spend money on the niceties rather than prioritize funds for the necessities.

There are numerous reasons that our Federal highway trust fund continues to run deficits and we will continue to have that debate; but one place that we can agree, certainly, is that Federal taxpayers should absolutely not be paying for things like artwork, furniture, lighting, and bike racks while transportation projects remain unfinished across America.

I understand the need and desire for transit projects—I have them in my district—which is why I have offered this amendment. We should make funds available to ensure more Federal dollars go to what the hard-working taxpayers who fund these accounts expect, transit projects, rather than expensive add-ons that are driving deficits in our transit accounts.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Chair, in considering this amendment, it is important to be very clear about what the amendment means when it refers to enrichments.

This refers to improvements to a transit project like a sidewalk, paths, plazas, lighting, and signage, things that can help individuals in utilizing transportation infrastructure and ensure that they do so in safety.

Unfortunately, Madam Chair, there are approximately 4,000 pedestrian deaths, comprising 14 percent of overall traffic fatalities each year. These enrichments are just the kinds of projects that could help reduce the risk for pedestrians, for bicyclers, and other users of our systems.

Now, the gentleman offering this amendment is just bordering on ridicule when he talks about site lighting. Really, site lighting? What is more important to promoting safety, promoting visibility, and discouraging those who would prey on individuals than site lighting?

Site lighting is extremely important in improving general safety in public places. It is incredibly important for protecting individuals against crime, including harassment and assault. That is what we are talking about here.

Now, the amount of funding that goes towards such enrichments is small relative to other expenditures, but it is a commonsense way that we can enhance our transportation projects, we can broaden their use, and, above all, we can ensure that they are safe for all users.

It is an unwise amendment, Madam Chair, and I urge its rejection.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Madam Chair, how much time do I have remaining?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman has 2 minutes remaining.

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Thank you, Madam Chair.

I have the utmost respect for my colleague from North Carolina, but he actually makes the argument for the amendment as opposed to opposed to it.

Yes, it reduces risk for bicyclists and pedestrians when you talk about signage, when you talk about certain lighting, when you talk about certain enhancements that are add-ons to the project that the Federal Government and the Federal taxpayer dollars are intended to fund.

The Federal taxpayer dollars should be going to the transit project that it is intended for, instead of all the extras. The local authorities should be responsible for those.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to support the amendment. It is a clear-cut amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. EMMER).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Minnesota will be postponed.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MS. BASS

Ms. BASS. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the spending reduction account), insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used by the Federal Transit Administration to implement, administer, or enforce section 18.36(c)(2) of title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, for construction hiring purposes.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 287, the gentlewoman from California and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

Ms. BASS. Madam Chair, as the economy continues to recover, 8.5 million Americans are still unemployed. Meanwhile, the effectiveness of local transportation agencies to spur job creation in their local communities is unnecessarily obstructed by restrictive Department of Transportation policies.

Limiting the ability of local officials to contribute to targeted job growth is detrimental to local economies across the United States, especially in communities where many remain jobless.

Local hiring and procurement policies have helped to provide quality job opportunities to residents in communities hardest hit by the economic downturn.

My local hire amendment is designed to help spur local job creation through federally funded transportation projects nationally.

My amendment would prevent the Department of Transportation from issuing regulations that prevent local hiring. Specifically, it would limit the regulations and burdens placed on local governmental agencies, preserve the competition and cost-effectiveness mandates in our current rules that govern Federal transit grants, and give local transportation agencies the necessary flexibility to apply geographically targeted preferences when making hiring decisions for federally funded transit and highway projects.

It is important to note that this local hire amendment does not require transportation agencies to implement local hiring policies. It simply gives local leaders the opportunity to do so if they determine it is in the best interest of their communities.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to support this important amendment. It will reduce burdensome regulations and spur local job creation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 2115

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BASS).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. ZELDIN

Mr. ZELDIN. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill, (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used by the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration to institute an administrative or civil action (as defined in section 47107 of title 49, United States Code) against the sponsor of the East Hampton Airport in East Hampton, NY.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 287, the gentleman from New York and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

Mr. ZELDIN. Madam Chair, I am proud to represent a district that is home to some of the most scenic destinations in the country, and all forms of transportation are part of our tourism economy. Yet, with the high season upon us, many of my constituents are finding themselves bewildered by actions of the FAA. Federal agencies ought to stand by their word and keep their commitments to Members of Congress and to the citizens we represent.

In 2012, the FAA made assurances to my predecessor that, in light of a 2005 court settlement between the FAA and a community group, the town of East Hampton, New York, would not be subject to certain regulations after December 31, 2014, when certain grant assurances expired and, thus, could adopt restrictions on the use of their airport without FAA approval.

The FAA has written that the town can proceed on certain course and not fear FAA reprisal for their actions. Earlier this spring, the democratically elected town board passed a set of airport regulations—all predicated on the FAA's written assurance to not take negative action against the town. Recently, however, the FAA has started wavering.

I am offering this amendment, which is 100 percent consistent with the prior written assurance made by the FAA. This amendment will hold the FAA to its word on this critical local issue, a local issue that should have a local solution—bring all sides to the table to improve the quality of life on the East End this high season.

Madam Chair, I urge all of my colleagues to support this effort. The people of the East End communities across Long Island and around America deserve straight answers and follow-through from government agencies.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Chair, I rise in opposition.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Chair, I do this, though, simply to express some concerns about this amendment and others like it that we have heard over the course of this debate.

I do have some concerns about limiting flight path options for the FAA in a piecemeal fashion from the floor of the House. The FAA needs to have appropriate flexibility to use flight paths in the wisest ways, particularly if there are safety risks for incoming or outgoing aircraft. I do think, however, that the FAA needs to take note and be more responsive to the concerns that have been raised in these limitation amendments, and there have been several this evening and in the prior days of this debate.

I also want to observe that the FAA's authorization expires at the end of the fiscal year. Now, as I mentioned in the debate last week, our colleagues on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee are exploring options to reform the FAA, including separating the FAA from the Department of Transportation, allowing it more independence over the use of its resources.

I would say this is an important time to encourage caution, to encourage our colleagues to think very carefully about a more independent FAA, one that does not have to rely on annual appropriations. Would it be as attentive to concerns such as those raised by communities and by our colleagues here tonight? We ought to move very cautiously in this area.

I strongly urge the FAA Administrator, in observing this parade of limitation amendments, to take note to ensure that the FAA is more attentive to the concerns that are raised by communities when developing their new flight procedures.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ZELDIN. Madam Chair, I thank the gentleman from North Carolina for his comments. Certainly, concerns within the First Congressional District of New York are the reason this amendment is being offered. I strongly urge my colleagues to support this important amendment so as to ensure that these local issues have local control.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. ZELDIN).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. LEWIS

Mr. LEWIS. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 156, after line 15, insert the following new section:

SEC. 416. Notwithstanding Mortgagee Letter 2015–12 of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (dated April 30, 2015) or any other provision of law, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall—

(1) implement the Mortgagee Optional Election (MOE) Assignment for home equity conversion mortgages (as set forth in Mortgagee Letter 2015-03, dated January 29, 2015), allowing additional flexibility for non-borrowing spouses to meet its requirements; and

(2) provide for a 5-year delay in foreclosure in the case of any other home equity conversion mortgage that—

(A) has an FHA Case Number assigned before August, 4, 2014; and

(B) has a last surviving borrower who has died and who has a non-borrowing surviving spouse who does not qualify for the Mortgagee Optional Election and who, but for the death of such borrowing spouse, would be able to remain in the dwelling subject to the mortgage.

Mr. LEWIS (during the reading). Madam Chair, I ask unanimous consent to dispense with the reading.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Madam Chair, I reserve a point of order on the gentleman's amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Florida reserves a point of order.

Pursuant to House Resolution 287, the gentleman from Georgia and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. LEWIS. Madam Chair, I rise today to offer an amendment to H.R. 2577.

When I was first elected in 1987, Congress created the first nationwide Home Equity Conversion Mortgage program. Also known as reverse mortgages, these loans differ from traditional mortgages and have very good intentions. They are designed to help seniors stay in their homes by using the values of their properties as a means for living more stable and independent lives. Since the borrowers must be 62 years of age or older, lenders often advise some borrowers to remove younger spouses from the titles. This allows them to be eligible for the program or to qualify for greater loans. Unfortunately, Madam Chair, many seniors are experiencing challenges in the program's actual operation.

For example, a citizen in my district, Mrs. Helen Griffin, reached out to my office last year. She and her husband took out a reverse mortgage on their home. In order to qualify, she agreed to be taken off the title. The lender promised that she could be added back on the title at a later date if they refinanced. Unfortunately, she and her husband had no idea how expensive refinancing would be. Like so many others, Mrs. Griffin was now in a dangerous financial situation. Upon the reverse mortgage borrower's death, a surviving spouse is required to pay the full balance due on the loan—or 95 percent of the value of the property—simply to remain in their home.

My amendment would protect people like Mrs. Griffin and allow them more time to protect themselves from foreclosure. I think we must do everything in our power to inform and protect unknowing senior couples from the danger of not only losing their loved ones but also their nest eggs.

Madam Chair, I want to thank the gentleman from Florida and his staff for working so hard on this legislation and for making a commitment to this issue. I look forward to continuing to work with the gentleman to make sure that we do all that we can to realize

the full goal of this important program.

Madam Chair, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. DENHAM

Mr. DENHAM. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used for high-speed rail in the State of California or for the California High-Speed Rail Authority, nor may any be used by the Federal Railroad Administration to administer a grant agreement with the California High-Speed Rail Authority that contains a tapered matching requirement.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 287, the gentleman from California and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. DENHAM. Madam Chair, once again, I am here one more year, offering another amendment to end this incredible waste of taxpayer dollars.

I have been clear about my position on high-speed rail. High-speed rail has a future in the United States. It just can't be done as it is being done in California—$70 billion over budget and completely changed from the proposition that the voters originally voted on. If the Governor and the Obama administration are committed to bringing this high-speed rail to fruition, then it should go back before the voters and actually uphold the will of the voters.

This is a case study. If you want to get it wrong, if you want to end high-speed rail across the Nation, then go ahead and continue to waste dollars in California on a project that continues to have many different flaws. This authority in California is not only demolishing homes, but it is demolishing businesses. The only way they can continue to get right-of-way is through eminent domain—slashing farms, tearing down businesses, and now kicking people out of their homes.

Today, it was announced that, instead of ending the initial construction segment in the outskirts of Bakersfield, the rail work will now stop just north of Shafter—a full 8 miles of what the original segment was—with still no operating segment that will allow people to travel from one end of the State to the other or even from one end of the valley to the other. Currently, if you ride Amtrak from north to south, you have to get off in Bakersfield, get on a bus, go over the mountains, and take that bus until it hits rail in the LA area. Now we are going to have a bus in Shafter. This just doesn't make any sense. They continue to change over and over again.

In the wake of Amtrak accident 188 and with the incredible focus on safety that is necessary to pass PTC across the country, why wouldn't we take high-speed rail dollars and actually fix the safety improvements that need to be done in California? Where is the commitment to safety? Let's fix the positive train control and make sure that our trains in California are safe, and let's end this project that continues to waste taxpayer dollars.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Chair, this amendment is a new twist on an amendment that the gentleman from California has been offering over the last few years. The net result, however, is the same. It would stop the development of California high-speed rail in its tracks, so to speak.

The amendment would prevent the Federal Railroad Administration from administering the funding that California received under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This would have the effect of preventing the FRA staff from providing routine project delivery oversight or invoicing on all of the environmental work funded under the grant agreement.

Do we want the Federal Government to conduct oversight on the projects that receive Federal funding?

Furthermore, with the Recovery Act funds set to expire at the end of fiscal year 2017, the amendment would make it virtually impossible for the California High-Speed Rail Authority to spend all of its funding by the deadline. It would put the completion of the project in grave jeopardy. In January, Governor Brown and other California leaders came together to mark the commencement of construction for California's high-speed rail project. The project is expected to create 20,000 jobs per year.

I include for the RECORD two letters—one from industry and one from labor groups. Both support the California high-speed rail project.

MAY 12, 2015.

Hon. MARIO DIAZ-BALART,
Chairman, Subcommittee on Transportation, HUD, and Related Agencies, Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, Washington DC.

Hon. DAVID E. PRICE,
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Transportation, HUD, and Related Agencies, Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, Washington DC.

We are writing to voice our strong support for public works investment, including recent efforts to develop, construct and deliver high-speed intercity passenger rail service for the first time in American history. Specifically, we oppose the inclusion of harmful riders in the fiscal year (FY) 2016 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act that would target or impede efforts to construct any specific high-speed rail projects, including the California High-Speed Rail program.

American public works infrastructure is at an inflection point, and this will be a pivotal year as the U.S. Congress deliberates Federal highway, transit, rail and aviation policy bills, and debates how to fund Federal transportation programs that will meet our Nation's future mobility needs. Meanwhile, the State of California, in partnership with the Federal government, has made significant investments in intercity high-speed passenger rail. In January, the California High-Speed Rail Authority (the Authority) hosted a ''Groundbreaking Ceremony'' for the California High-Speed Rail program to mark the commencement of sustained construction, which will accelerate this year and create 20,000 jobs annually for the next five years. Additionally, the bids on the Authority's first two construction contracts, valued at almost $2.2 billion, came in significantly under budget.

To date, the State of California has committed the majority of the funding that has been committed to build the program's initial operating section. And last year, the Authority secured the ongoing appropriation of 25 percent of all future California State Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund auction proceeds for the high-speed rail program—a dedicated revenue stream capable of producing hundreds of millions of dollars annually for direct funding or financing. The private sector is now also exhibiting a great deal of interest in investing in the program.

We believe that America is a country with bold vision that does big things, and we believe that robust investment in infrastructure benefits our industry and the American public. Congressional efforts to impede new public works projects in any one state send the wrong message to local, state and private sector investors in every state who are willing to invest in sorely needed new infrastructure projects in any mode of transportation.

Moreover, the California High-Speed Rail program represents the first ever effort to build an intercity high-speed passenger rail system in this country. California is at the forefront of developing an entirely new American industry where investments in and the development of new technologies, manufacturing capabilities, and innovative business practices will create high-skilled, good paying jobs and benefit American public works for decades. The Authority is also operating under a Community Benefits Agreement with skilled building trades and contractors to promote training and apprenticeship programs and provide opportunities for disadvantaged workers. Halting or impeding this seminal program at its outset will set our industry back and jeopardize thousands of new middle-class jobs.

We believe that the California High-Speed Rail program may serve as model of a Federal, state, industry and labor partnership that creates jobs, links economies and communities, preserves our environment and builds a sustainable future. Therefore, we respectfully oppose the inclusion of harmful riders in the fiscal year (FY) 2016 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act that would target or impede efforts to construct any specific high-speed rail project, including the California High-Speed Rail program.

American Train Dispatchers Association; Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; Brotherhood of Railway Signalmen; International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers; International Brotherhood of Boilermakers; International Union of Operating Engineers; North America's Building Trades Unions; SMART Transportation Division; State Building and Construction Trades Council of California; Transportation Communications International

Union; Transportation Trades Department, AFL–CIO; Transport Workers Union International; UNITE HERE!

JUNE 1, 2015.

Hon. SUSAN COLLINS, Chair,
Hon. JACK REED, Ranking Member,
Subcommittee on Transportation, HUD, and Related Agencies, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. Senate, Washington DC.

DEAR SENATORS COLLINS AND REED: As you prepare to consider the Senate's version of the fiscal year (FY) 2016 ''THUD'' appropriations bill, we are writing to ask you to avoid using the measure to set up roadblocks to transportation investment. Specifically, we wanted to make you aware of policy language contained in the House version of the FY 2016 THUD bill that seeks to block federal approvals for the California high speed rail program.

In January, Governor Jerry Brown and other California leaders commemorated the beginning of construction on the nation's largest infrastructure project: a high-speed railroad connecting Southern and Northern California through the Central Valley. This program, in which the state will be the primary funder, will bring together public and private funds to create a transformative investment for California and the nation. During construction, the program will create 20,000 jobs per year. After it is open, it will help ensure a sustainable and growing economic future for California.

By including language in its appropriations bill intended to withhold federal support and approvals for the project, the House is sending a message to all the states that major infrastructure projects—even after receiving federal grants and multiple federal approvals—are at risk of being halted in their tracks based on political considerations in Washington, DC.

In a May 11 letter to House appropriators, OMB Director Shaun Donovan also expressed the Administration's opposition to the language in the House bill dealing with the California High-Speed Rail program.

We believe that the California high speed rail program will serve as model of a Federal, state, industry and labor partnership that creates jobs, links economies and communities, preserves our environment and builds a sustainable future. Therefore, we respectfully request that your subcommittee produce a bill free of any harmful riders in the FY 2016 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act that would impede efforts to construct any specific high-speed rail project, including the California High-Speed Rail program.

Thank you for your attention to our views.

Sincerely,

AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES.
AMERICAN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION.
AMERICAN ROAD AND TRANSPORTATION BUILDERS ASSOCIATION.
ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT PASSENGER RAIL OPERATORS.
RAILWAY SUPPLY INSTITUTE.
U.S. HIGH SPEED RAIL ASSOCIATION.

□ 2130

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. The administration has been very clear that it strongly opposes provisions in this bill that would restrict the development of high-speed rail. Moreover, the California congressional delegation has overwhelmingly opposed these restrictive riders in the past, and I am happy to stand with them again tonight, urging my colleagues to oppose this amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DENHAM. I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA).

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Chair, I thank my colleague, Mr. DENHAM, for his hard work on curtailing this waste of taxpayer money.

Here are just a few of the headlines currently on the Internet about California's high-speed rail project: ''Why California's High-Speed Rail is Off Track''; ''High-Speed Rail Brings Fears of Gutted Communities and Noise''; ''High-Speed Rail Foes Cite Noise, Property Value Concerns''; ''Protesters Rail Against High-Speed Rail Route Proposal''; ''High-Speed Rail Opponents Expected to Converge at LA Meeting''; finally, ''What an Unholy Mess This California Bullet Train Meeting is Going to Be.''

This is all reflected in southern California planning for a route that isn't even planned yet; yet billions of dollars of the California taxpayers—but even more importantly, in this body, Federal taxpayer dollars—are being planned and spent and will be spent if we don't stop this here tonight for a route, for a plan, for a project that isn't even a plan.

You couldn't send astronauts into outer space without a plan to bring them back, yet they are hell-bent on this project to spend the money as fast as they can without having any idea where the route is going to go; and we are seeing people all over California protest it, for a project that has tripled in price from what the voters saw as Prop 1A just 7 years ago. Yet here we are 7 years later with a groundbreaking that consists of knocking down some of the houses and buildings without any track being laid, without a real project they can actually count on being a true route under Prop 1A from San Francisco to Los Angeles. We need to put a stop to this now.

Mr. DENHAM. Madam Chair, as you have heard, this project is $70 billion over budget. It has a shortfall of $87 billion. If my colleagues in California, if the minority party of this body would like to continue on with this project, then where is the $87 billion? I don't see a proposal from them, nor do I see a proposal from the Governor for $87 billion.

We have priorities in the State. As you may know, we are going through a big drought in California. We would love to create the jobs. Let's utilize the billions of dollars that would be spent on high-speed rail over the next several decades on water projects that would actually help our infrastructure, our agriculture, as well as people throughout California.

There is a good way to spend taxpayer dollars. This is not it. We cannot afford to leave the next generation with an $87 billion hole that will continue to not only put California in further debt, but will continue to show that our priorities are misguided.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. DENHAM).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. PETERS

Mr. PETERS. I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used in contravention of Executive Order 11246 (relating to Equal Employment Opportunity).

Mr. PETERS (during the reading). Madam Chair, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be considered as read.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Objection.

The Acting CHAIR. Objection is heard.

The Clerk will read.

The Clerk continued to read.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 287, the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. PETERS. Madam Chair, no American should be fired, denied a job or a place to live for being who they are or because of whom they love. Every American deserves to be treated equally and with dignity.

My amendment would make a simple change to the text of the bill but make an important difference in the lives of LGBT Americans across the country. President Obama signed an executive order in July 2014 to prohibit Federal contractors from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity against their employees or those seeking employment. This amendment would affirm that order by ensuring that no funds in the bill are used to conflict with the President's rule. It would demonstrate to the American people that Congress supports fairness and equality for all.

Today, only 18 States and the District of Columbia have nondiscrimination protections for LGBT communities in sexual orientation and gender identity in both employment and housing. That means that in a number of States an LGBT individual can get married in the morning and fired from his or her job or denied an application in the afternoon for no other reason than the change in marital status. That is unacceptable. As a country that believes in equality for all people, we must do better.

June is Pride Month, and in cities and towns across the country, millions

of Americans will celebrate the vibrant diversity of the LGBT communities who are enriching our society. As we look forward toward full nondiscrimination, we can help provide at least a small window of equality for all members of the LGBT community by passing this amendment. I urge my colleagues to stand on the side of equality and against discrimination and support this amendment.

I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE).

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Chair, I simply want to commend him for offering this amendment and offer my enthusiastic support.

In various ways, we ensure that the Federal Government doesn't pay substandard wages, doesn't do other things that are detrimental in the workplace or that set a low bar, set a low standard. This amendment adds to that, I think, in a very constructive way. It adds to worker protections by preventing any company that does business with the Government from firing employees based on who they are and whom they love.

I commend the gentleman. It is a fine amendment. I hope colleagues will support it.

Mr. PETERS. I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. MULLIN. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California will be postponed.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. MULLIN

Mr. MULLIN. I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill, before the short title, insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to enforce subpart B of part 750 of title 23, Code of Federal Regulations, regarding signs for service clubs and religious notices as defined in section 153(p) of such part.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 287, the gentleman from Oklahoma and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma.

Mr. MULLIN. Madam Chair, churches and civic groups are in danger of being forced to tear down their informational highway signs. Some of these signs have stood for decades. The current law states that religious and civic groups can no longer have signs larger than 8 square feet. That is 2 feet by 4 feet. However, ''Free Coffee'' signs in the same law are unlimited in size.

My amendment would allow churches and civic organizations to keep their signs that are larger than 8 square feet. This is a reasonable amendment. It would be beneficial to the safety of the traveling public and allow our Federal Government to focus its resources on more critical infrastructure uses. We need to be focusing on repairing our roads and bridges, not tearing down church signs.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Chair, this amendment would suspend enforcement of rules governing the size of billboards for religious organizations and service clubs. These rules have been in place for a long time—since 1975.

As I understand it, the gentleman is seeking to increase the allowable size of billboards for religious organizations and service clubs from 8 square feet to 32 square feet. This isn't the appropriate place to deal with this issue. We have barely heard of it before it was offered. We certainly haven't had extensive deliberations, haven't heard from State authorities, local authorities, people who have a stake in this. It needs to be reviewed and debated within the context of the surface transportation authorization.

The authorizing committees are in the midst of working on the new authorization bill right now. That is where I would suggest the gentleman might want to take his concerns. This is not the place here tonight. I urge colleagues to reject this amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MULLIN. I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. BRIDENSTINE), my colleague.

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. Madam Chair, I rise today to give my very strong support to this amendment offered by my colleague from Oklahoma.

The Federal Government creates a regulation. That regulation says that, if you are a church or if you are a civic group or if you are some kind of community organization, you are limited in the size of your sign to 8 square feet, 2 feet by 4 feet; however, if you are a billboard company, you can have 25 feet by 60 feet. This is discrimination against churches and civic groups that I think is inappropriate.

I would also say that the State of Oklahoma has weighed in. The State of Oklahoma would like to regulate the signs in the State of Oklahoma. I think that is absolutely not only appropriate, but I think it is constitutional that the State have the right to regulate the signs in its own State.

Here is the sad part that I would like to let people know and understand. If the State of Oklahoma chooses not to enforce this Federal regulation that is discriminatory, then the State of Oklahoma risks losing 10 percent of its Federal funding for roads. This is the Federal Government using Oklahoma taxpayer dollars against the State of Oklahoma. It is Federal bullying.

This amendment offered by my colleague from Oklahoma is a good amendment. I fully support it, and I highly recommend my colleagues support it.

Mr. MULLIN. Our churches and our civic organizations have better ways to spend their limited resources than tearing down signs. Our States would have more time on their hands to be looking at our roads and bridges if they didn't have to go out and enforce a law that our State doesn't even want. If we could simply be focusing on the important issues, like our roads and our bridges, not wasting Federal dollars and State dollars on enforcing an out-of-date law, this wouldn't even simply be an issue.

I would urge my colleagues to support this commonsense amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. MULLIN).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. GROTHMAN

Mr. GROTHMAN. I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act under the heading ''Department of Housing and Urban Development—Housing Programs—Project-Based Rental Assistance'' may be used for any family who is not an elderly family or a disabled family (as such terms are defined in section 3(b) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437a(b)) and who was not receiving project-based rental assistance under section 8 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1437f) as of October 1, 2015, and the amount otherwise provided under such heading is reduced by $300,000,000.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 287, the gentleman from Wisconsin and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

□ 2145

Mr. GROTHMAN. The first thing we should look at when we look at this budget is cost, and this is one program that is going up in cost. We are still in a position in this budget in which we anticipate borrowing about 14 percent. We have the $18 trillion debt.

This amendment will reduce the cost in this budget by $300 million, which by itself is nothing to sneeze at, but the real reason for this amendment is the perverse incentives in Section 8 and other tenant-based rental assistance programs.

All of these programs are conditioned upon, first, having little or no income. It is wrong to encourage people not to work. As I get around my district, I find so many employers who cannot find employees today, in part, because they feel it pays better not to work.

Secondly, and more importantly, this program, like so many other programs designed to help poor people, has a huge marriage penalty associated with it. In order to get this low-income housing, it almost encourages one—it does encourage one—to have children without a mother and father at home. To continue this program or even expand this program to more people is to just destroy the moral fiber of America.

This amendment is tailored to not include or not reduce low-income housing for the elderly or disabled. I am aware of the fact that we have people in this country on Social Security maybe making $500 a month, and they may find it very difficult to find anywhere else to live, so I am not chipping away at that part of the program.

I will give you an example. In my district, I talked to someone who ran one of these low-income projects—not Section 8, but more of a project-based one—and they were very proud of what nice, low-income housing it was. It was very nice, very generous. They pointed out the only thing you needed to do to get these apartments for $25 a month was to not have a job. Now, can you imagine anything so foolish as to encourage people to not have a job?

In any event, I hope this amendment passes. I hope there is nobody else in this room who would have any objection to this commonsense amendment designed to restore the moral fiber that made America great.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Chair, if there is an air of familiarity about this amendment and what the gentleman has just said about his amendment, listeners may want to tune in and remind themselves of virtually this same amendment being offered last week.

I should begin by saying that tenant-based Section 8 housing—a program, by the way, that conservatives should love because it is market based and the tenants pay a substantial portion of their income in rent—tenant-based Section 8 housing in this bill is just barely held even, with more or less level funding. Of course, other things in the bill are treated much worse.

The gentleman apparently thinks there is too much money in this bill, too much investment, with thousands on waiting lists across this country. This amendment would certainly increase those waiting lists.

Now, last week, it was $614 million cut; this week, it is a $300 million cut—so not quite as many people would be evicted. This week, the gentleman is saying that the elderly and the disabled would not be evicted. Who does that leave? It leaves everybody else; it leaves working families.

I ask anyone in this body to go to their local community house authority and ask about those waiting lists. Ask how many people are waiting for a roof over their head who are willing to work, willing to participate in financing, but need a leg up, the kind of support that tenant-based and project-based Section 8 represents.

It escapes me why the gentleman would offer this amendment in a bill that is already at rock bottom.

I urge my colleagues to reject this amendment, just as we did last week, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GROTHMAN. I do not give up hope that, by the time this budget rolls around next year, you see the wisdom of the amendment.

I think a lot of people get confused when they find waiting lists for this sort of program. If you are handing out apartments for $25 a month, of course, there are going to be waiting lists; so that is not surprising. Even then, there are certain areas in my State, in my district, where they are trying to find people who are not in the local area to fill these units because there is an excess of units.

Nevertheless, I think you want to think about the perverse incentives you have in a program in which, the more you work, the more your rent goes up. In order to get in, in the first place, you almost can't work at all; and, secondly, what the long-term effect on our society is if you would tell somebody that, if they raise a child out of wedlock, you get a free, air-conditioned, maybe two-bedroom, two-bath apartment, but if you get married to somebody with a job, you lose that apartment—is that the type of incentive we want for the next generation?

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN).

The amendment was rejected.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. GROTHMAN

Mr. GROTHMAN. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act under the heading ''Department of Housing and Urban Development—Public and Indian Housing Programs—Tenant-Based Rental Assistance'' may be used for any family who is not an elderly family or a disabled family (as such terms are defined in section 3(b) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437a(b)) and who was not receiving tenant-based rental assistance under section 8 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1437f) as of October 1, 2015, and the amount otherwise provided under such heading is reduced, the amount specified under such heading for renewals of expiring section 8 tenant-based annual contributions contracts is reduced, and the amount specified under such heading for administrative and other expenses of public housing agencies in administering the section 8 tenant-based rental assistance program) is reduced, by $300,000,000, $210,000,000, and $90,000,000, respectively.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 287, the gentleman from Wisconsin and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

Mr. GROTHMAN. I think all we talked about in that last amendment applies to this amendment, with one additional thing that people should find offensive, because here we are dealing with project-based rental assistance.

Not only are we encouraging some people not to work very hard, not only are we encouraging people not to raise children in an old-fashioned nuclear family, we are also kind of having a strong element of corporate welfare here, too, which is something I don't care for.

Over time, we have this kind of industry growing up in which you operate low-income housing. In some ways, I assume people are entering into it because it is more profitable than a pure, free market sort of thing; and I would think that people who are opposed to corporate welfare ought to be opposed to it for that reason as well.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Chair, I claim the time in opposition.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Chair, here we go again with, once again, a reprisal of the amendment offered last week and rejected.

The amendment offered tonight separates that amendment in two: tenant-based Section 8, project-based Section 8.

The argument does apply, I think, to any of this assisted housing. It behooves us to reflect on some numbers, I think. On any given night, 575,000 of our constituents are homeless, absolutely homeless. That is 50,000 veterans, by the way.

They get on these waiting lists for these Section 8 projects, and the waiting lists often have thousands of names. They finally get into Section 8. They are paying a large proportion of their income in rent. They are struggling to get a leg up and struggle to find jobs.

By the way, how likely is one to find a job if one is homeless? If you are talking about self-reliance, isn't it better to have a roof over your head and have some of the basics of life so you can go out and seek work?

Evictions, we are talking about evictions here. How does kicking out children and how does kicking out families promote marriage, for goodness' sake? How does it promote wedlock? How does it promote self-reliance? It is likely to promote destitution and desperation.

We are a better country than this. I plead with colleagues, look at this amendment closely. Think about what we stand for. Think about the fact that this bill is already inadequate. Let's not make it worse.

Reject this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GROTHMAN. First of all, I would like to clarify something in the amendment. The amendment does not apply to people who were receiving rental assistance—and neither did the other amendment—prior to October 1 of this year. It is not a matter of kicking people out; it is a matter of not putting any further people on.

Furthermore, I think we have to discuss how generous this benefit is. There are so many people in our society who are living with parents, living with other family members, living with roommates, and working to afford that rent. To give somebody a freestanding apartment—some of these are very nice apartments, two-bedroom, two-bath, air-conditioned apartments—without having to work at all to receive that apartment is just a horrible incentive.

I would ask the gentleman to go back in his district and talk to people who live in the neighborhoods where they have these subsidized projects. One of the things I find is that sometimes people who live in maybe high-end areas and are not familiar with these get confused.

I think, if you talk to people who know people who live in this subsidized housing, you will have no problem finding many anecdotes of people who are clearly not hurting materially; and, in order to keep their subsidies going, they cannot work, work harder, or get raises. Above all, they can't get married.

I think you have to ask yourself whether we ought to continue these programs that are around year after year after year or whether it is high time to look at these programs; change the underlying qualifications; change the time limits; change the amount that has to be paid; and, quite frankly, also sometimes look at the very generous accommodations that the government is providing, quite frankly, more generous accommodations than a lot of people who are working quite hard have.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN).

The amendment was rejected.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. ISSA

Mr. ISSA. Madam Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

At the end of the bill, before the short title, insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to acquire a camera for the purpose of collecting or storing vehicle license plate numbers.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 287, the gentleman from California and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. ISSA. Madam Chair, this amendment reflects a simple principle. The government does not and should not have unchecked power to track American citizens.

There are many very legitimate reasons to observe license plates using camera technology. Every day in America, law enforcement drives through neighborhoods looking for stolen cars. Cameras and computers identify the number of that plate and run it against a database to see if it is stolen.

□ 2200

But again, there is no reason to store that data. The bulk collection of the location of every American's automobile is well beyond a reasonable standard. It is a difficult one, but it is simple in this case.

The Federal Government should not provide money for cameras that indiscriminately bulk collect information on where you are at all times. I hope that this amendment will spark a healthy dialogue similar to the one we had on the PATRIOT Act, one in which we agreed that with a court order you can collect this kind of data, with a court order you can seek it, with a known database of stolen cars or wanted criminals, you can compare a camera image.

But the simple collection, in bulk, of your location of your car, 24 hours a day, using thousands, tens of thousands or perhaps millions of cameras, is far too ''1984'' for Members of this body or the American people.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Chair, I rise in opposition.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Chair, this amendment is well-intentioned, I realize, but I think it is an overreach and certainly not appropriate for this appropriations bill.

Records of license plate information can serve as a helpful clue to investigators. They can produce leads in criminal cases. This information is also used routinely by law enforcement and by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children to help find missing children.

I understand there are legitimate privacy concerns. I share those concerns. But there is already a Federal law that governs the use of such data. The data is not used to track citizens in real time, despite what some assert.

Putting restrictions on law enforcement's ability to obtain and use this license plate information without really fully exploring the facts or giving due consideration to the consequences, this needs to be done by the appropriate committees. But doing it here tonight seems risky and unreasonable, actually, to expect us to legislate on this matter in the context of this appropriations bill.

Madam Chair, I will insert into the RECORD a letter from the Fraternal Order of Police and other law enforcement entities asking Congress not to limit the use of this information.

NATIONAL FRATERNAL
ORDER OF POLICE,
February 23, 2015.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.
Hon. HARRY M. REID,
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.
Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House, House of Representatives Washington, DC.
Hon. NANCY P. PELOSI,
Minority Leader, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR MCCONNELL, MR. SPEAKER, SENATOR REID AND REPRESENTATIVE PELOSI: I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to express our concern about continued efforts to portray automated license plate recognition (ALPR) as an ongoing, national real-time tracking system operated by law enforcement. This is emphatically not the case.

We believe that there is a fundamental misunderstanding as to how ALPR technology is deployed and used by law enforcement and other public safety agencies. Many people, including members of Congress, are under the impression that this technology is being used by our national security apparatus to geotrack our citizens and monitor their movements. Indeed, a Dear Colleague letter circulated last year in support of an amendment defunding this technology was entitled, ''Stop NSA-like geotracking of innocent Americans.''

This is not the case. To begin with, ALPR data is simply a photograph of a vehicle's license plate in a public place at a particular point in time. Geotracking is the use of Global Positioning System (GPS) data to track over time the movement of a specific electronic device capable of emitting GPS location information. Conversely, ALPR data is collected anonymously without personally identifying information. A government agency with access to ALPR data may connect that data to personal information from a State's vehicle registration system, but if they do so without a legitimate law enforcement or public safety purpose, then they are in violation of the Drivers' Privacy Protection Act. Any other use of the data would be an unjustifiable violation of privacy and Federal law.

Thousands of local, State and Federal law enforcement agencies use ALPR data every day to generate leads in criminal investigations, apprehend murderers, respond to Amber and Silver alerts, find missing children, recover stolen vehicles, and protect our borders. Even something as simple as the use of cameras at traffic lights and toll booths has a beneficial impact on the safety of our roadways.

The FOP would also submit that the only difference between the use of ALPR technology and an officer taking down license plate information along with the time, date and location is the efficiency by which the data is collected. Every State in the Republic mandates that every vehicle have a mounted and clearly visible license plate for the specific purpose of contributing to public safety, whether the data is collected by a fellow citizen, law enforcement officer or camera.

With these facts in mind, it is our hope that Congress will recognize the substantial benefits this technology makes to public safety and oppose any legislation or amendment that would restrict the use of ALPR by law enforcement.

On behalf of the more than 335,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, I thank you

for your consideration of our views. If I can provide any further information about law enforcement's use of ALPR technology, please do not hesitate to contact me or Executive Director Jim Pasco in my Washington office.

Sincerely,

CHUCK CANTERBURY,
National President.

MARCH 9, 2015.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,
Speaker.
Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Minority Leader,
House of Representatives.
Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Majority Leader.
Hon. HARRY REID,
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER BOEHNER, LEADER PELOSI, LEADER MCCONNELL, AND LEADER REID: We are deeply concerned about efforts to portray automated license plate recognition (ALPR) technology as a national real-time tracking capability for law enforcement. The fact is that this technology and the data it generates is not used to track people in real time. ALPR is used every day to generate investigative leads that help law enforcement solve murders, rapes, and serial property crimes, recover abducted children, detect drug and human trafficking rings, find stolen vehicles, apprehend violent criminal alien fugitives, and support terrorism investigations.

There is a misconception of continuous government tracking of individuals using ALPR information. This has led to attempts to curtail law enforcement's use of the technology without a proper and fair effort to truly understand the anonymous nature of the data, how it is used, and how it is protected.

We are seeing harmful proposals—appropriations amendments and legislation—to restrict or completely ban law enforcement's use of ALPR technology and data without any effort to truly understand the issue. Yet, any review would make clear that the value of this technology is beyond question, and that protections against mis-use of the data by law enforcement are already in place. That is one of the reasons why critics are hard-pressed to identify any actual instances of mis-use.

If legislative efforts to curtail ALPR use are successful, federal, state, and local law enforcement's ability to investigate crimes will be significantly impacted given the extensive use of the technology today.

We call on Congress to foster a reasonable and transparent discussion about ALPR. We believe strong measures can be taken to ensure citizens' privacy while enabling law enforcement investigators to take advantage of the technology. Strict data access controls, mandatory auditing of all use of ALPR systems, and regular reporting on the use of the technology and data prevent misuse of the capability while enabling law enforcement to make productive use of it. Adoption and enforcement of strong policies on the use of ALPR and other technologies by individual law enforcement agencies would also help.

We strongly urge members of the House and Senate to understand and recognize the substantial daily benefits of this technology to protect the public and investigate dangerous criminals. We urge opposition to any bill or amendment that would restrict the use of ALPR without full consideration of the issue.

Sincerely,

J. Thomas Manger, Chief of Police, Montgomery County Police Department, President, Major Cities Chiefs Police Association; Chief Richard Beary, President, International Association of Chiefs of Police; Mike Sena, Director, Northern California Regional Intelligence Center, President, National Fusion Center Association; Ronald C. Sloan, Director, Colorado Bureau of Investigation, President, Association of State Criminal Investigative Agencies; Sheriff Donny Youngblood, President, Major County Sheriffs' Association; Bob Bushman, President, National Narcotic Officers' Associations' Coalition; Jonathan Thompson, Executive Director, National Sheriffs' Association; William Johnson, Executive Director, National Association of Police Organizations; Mike Moore, President, National District Attorneys Association; Andrews Matthews, Chairman, National Troopers Coalition.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. I urge opposition to the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ISSA. Madam Chair, in closing, I respect the gentleman's opinion, but we are not legislating on this appropriations bill. What we are doing is determining that the relevant committees of jurisdiction have not authorized broad collection of data of the American people.

The committees of jurisdiction have not authorized this sort of proactive tracking of people because, at some point, someday there may be a reason to use that database. So, in fact, it is perfectly appropriate not to spend the money, not to authorize the money until or unless the authorizing committees have made a thorough decision of what should be authorized and what safeguards need to be in order.

So my amendment will simply limit, until such time as a legislating amendment or authorization from a committee can, in fact, ensure that we both authorize law enforcement to collect and protect the privacy of American citizens because, ultimately, these are the taxpayer dollars of the American citizens and the privacy embodied in the Constitution and guaranteed to every citizen.

Therefore, I insist that Members consider voting for an amendment that recognizes, just as the minority clearly said, we have not yet had a debate on the basis under which we should pay for the bulk collection against the American people without their permission or safeguards of their rights.

I urge support for the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. ISSA. Madam Chair, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California will be postponed.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Chair, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Chair, we are coming to the end of several days of floor debate on the 2016 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill.

I want to, again, express my appreciation to Chairman DIAZ-BALART, subcommittee members from both sides of the aisle, and our remarkable, dedicated staff for all the hard work that has gone into this bill and for the orderly and civil character of our floor deliberations.

I very much wish that all of this work and all of our efforts at cooperation were being more adequately rewarded, but they are not. And that is not the chairman's fault. It is the fault of the majority's profoundly misguided and flawed budget policy, a policy that has left this bill a mere shadow of what it should be and has decimated the investments a great country should be making.

Make no mistake, Madam Chair, our roads, our highways are crumbling. One out of every nine bridges in this country is structurally deficient and in need of repair or replacement.

Americans spend the equivalent of one work week a year sitting in congestion caused by overcrowded highways. The capital backlog for our transit systems is nearly $78 billion.

And make no mistake, our public housing resources don't meet the basic needs of millions of vulnerable and low-income Americans. On any given night, 575,000 of our constituents, including more than 50,000 veterans, are homeless. The maintenance backlog for public housing approaches $25 billion.

Madam Chair, this is a defining crisis for our generation. This bill, which is intended to help improve housing and transportation options and create jobs for hard-working American families, will, instead, dig the hole deeper by cutting everything from safety programs to transportation construction grants to maintenance budgets for public housing.

It would be bad enough if the cuts were limited to our transportation and housing systems, but Republicans have taken the same shortsighted approach with each of this year's domestic appropriations bills.

Unfortunately, the majority has targeted domestic appropriations to bear the entire brunt of deficit reduction. That means deep cuts, not just to our transportation and housing infrastructure but also to research support, programs that make college more affordable, the very things that make this country the envy of the world.

Meanwhile, the majority lacks the courage to address the real drivers of the deficit, which I think most Members of this Chamber realize are tax expenditures and entitlement spending.

In the 1990s, we achieved budget surpluses as the result of concerted bipartisan efforts to balance the budget through a comprehensive approach. We actually paid off $400 billion of the national debt.

Until we have a similar budget agreement this year, one that sets responsible funding and revenue levels across

the board, we cannot write a bill that addresses our country's crumbling roads and bridges, that brings our rail system up to first-world standards, or that provides shelter for America's elderly, disabled, and other vulnerable populations.

In fact, we cannot make any of the investments that we simply have to make to continue as the greatest country in the world. So I implore my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this short-sighted, irresponsible bill, but beyond that, to consider the long-term consequences of the fiscal course we are on. We simply have to make a correction for our country's sake.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Madam Chair, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Florida is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Madam Chair, I want to thank the ranking member, first, for his kind words towards me right now but, more importantly, for his willingness to work with me, to spend the time, the effort. Both he and his staff, the committee staff, have, frankly, worked awfully hard on making sure we do the best job that we can, and I am grateful for that.

I just very briefly want to just mention that this bill, this is a bill that prioritizes funding and funds our country's priorities. It is a balanced bill.

And very important, Madam Chair, this is a bill, that, yes, it does not raise taxes.

Now, I know that a lot of folks have talked about the President's requests and the President's requests. And the President's requests for this area are much higher in many areas than what this bill is funding.

But let's remember a couple of things. The President has massive taxes, tax increases in his proposals, number one. And also, that this bill adheres to not only the budget that was passed by Congress, House and Senate, but this bill adheres to the law, the law that was passed by Congress and signed by the President of the United States, the so-called ''sequester'' law.

So if we go above and beyond that level, which some people, I guess, don't remember, it is fake. It gets sequestered.

So, Madam Chair, again, I thank the ranking member for his hard work.

This is a balanced bill. It is a good bill. It is a responsible bill. It pays and funds the priorities of this great country. And I am going to ask for our colleagues to give us a favorable vote on this fine bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, proceedings will now resume on those amendments on which further proceedings were postponed in the following order:

Amendment by Mr. YOHO of Florida.

Amendment by Mr. BROOKS of Alabama.

Amendment by Mr. HULTGREN of Illinois.

Amendment by Mr. MEEHAN of Pennsylvania.

Amendment by Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey.

Amendment by Mr. ELLISON of Minnesota.

Amendment No. 28 by Mr. EMMER of Minnesota.

Amendment by Mr. PETERS of California.

Amendment by Mr. ISSA of California.

The Chair will reduce to 2 minutes the time for any electronic vote after the first vote in this series.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. YOHO

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOHO) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the ayes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 244, noes 181, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 319]

AYES—244

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davis, Rodney
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Knight
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
MacArthur
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Ratcliffe
Reed
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NOES—181

Aguilar
Ashford
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Graham
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Reichert
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz