

The team at Rutgers has been inspecting, evaluating and monitoring a representative sample of seven bridges nationwide. These pilot studies are instrumental in gathering reliable information, such as how to maintain safe and satisfactory traffic flow.

The researchers will analyze and apply the data to facilitate improved life-cycle cost and predictive models, better understanding of bridge deterioration, and more effective maintenance and repair plans. Ultimately, this study will promote the safety, mobility, longevity and reliability of our Nation's highways.

As the highway system grows older, it is important to be sure that our Nation's bridges are safe and reliable.

I am proud that Rutgers Center for Advanced Infrastructure and Transportation is leading the way in helping the country tackle its complicated transportation issue.

I ask my colleagues to join me in commending Rutgers University.

IS ANYBODY LISTENING?

(Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, what were world leaders saying last weekend about their troubled economies?

German Chancellor Merkel: Budget cuts are urgently needed.

Prime Minister David Cameron: Those countries that have big budget deficits like ours have to take action.

The Washington Post headline said: "President Obama urges G20 nations to spend; they pledge to halve deficits."

Just like England, the U.S. has a budget deficit that's equal to 11 percent of gross domestic product. While other nations are tightening their belts, Washington is borrowing Chinese money belts.

By year's end, the national debt will reach 62 percent of the GDP, the highest leveled since World War II. The more Washington spends, the more it borrows, the more interest rates, the more taxpayers must spend on interest payments to Chinese and foreign debt holders.

You know, the first rule when you're in a hole, especially a \$13 trillion hole, is stop digging. American families understand that just because there are checks in the checkbook, that doesn't mean there's money in the account. And that's the message from Main Street to Wall Street. Is anybody listening?

AMERICANS CAN'T AFFORD ANY MORE FAILED ECONOMIC POLICIES

(Mr. CARNAHAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, instead of working together like Presi-

dent Reagan and Speaker O'Neill did in the early eighties to extend the solvency of Social Security, this week the Republican leader announced his plan to raise the Social Security retirement age and decrease benefits for older Americans to pay for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Pay for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan on the backs of seniors? You've got to be kidding me.

This is the same Republican Party when, in the majority under President Bush, refused to pay for the two wars, and gave tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans, doubling our national debt, and laying the groundwork for the worst financial crisis in a generation.

And some Republicans are still trying to privatize Social Security. Do I need to remind people that personal retirement funds have been wiped out under failed Republican economics?

The other side refuses to work together to create additional jobs and to help those who have lost their jobs.

Despite Republican foot dragging and nay-saying, this year we're on track to create more jobs than were created during the entire 8 years under President Bush.

Missourians simply cannot afford more failed economic policies.

STOP PLAYING SPY GAMES WITH WESTERN LANDS

(Mr. REHBERG asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. REHBERG. Secret documents, clandestine meetings, code words, and secret identities. Despite all of these elements of a dime store spy novel, this isn't fiction. It's the United States Department of the Interior.

Almost 4 months ago a secret memo was discovered. Across the top, where you might see "top secret," it said "not for release" instead. It contained secret plans to designate millions of acres across the West as national monuments. My colleagues and I demanded the missing pages, and after nearly 4 months, mum is the word.

Meanwhile, new emails hint at a conspiracy that would be at home in an Ian Fleming novel: meetings with United States Senators to discuss projects, treasured landscapes, contingency plans, complete with maps, fit for a Pentagon war room.

Americans like spy novels, but there's no place for covert policy-making in America. The Department of the Interior should stop playing spy games with Western lands.

SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

(Mr. TONKO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I think that the President was right yesterday

when he called our friends on the other side of the aisle out of touch.

In my hometown of Amsterdam, New York, there are neighbors who are hurting. In some instances, this recession has eliminated nearly half of their retirement savings. Others have lost their homes.

Despite this downturn and Wall Street's recklessness, Republicans still want to privatize Social Security. They want to create a casino economy and play Russian roulette with our hard-earned retirement savings.

Most of the seniors in Amsterdam have worked hard and have played by the rules their entire lives. Social Security, which they have paid into their entire working life, is their crucial safety net and financial security. Let's not gamble it away to appease Republicans, Wall Street, and big banks.

Just a few days ago, the leader of the other side suggested slashing Social Security benefits and using those funds and savings to pay for the war in Iraq and the war in Afghanistan. Enough is enough.

Democrats in Congress are standing up for seniors and fighting to protect Social Security, to create jobs here at home and to support small business as the engine of job growth.

Mr. Speaker, I will continue to fight for seniors because they are deserving of the respect that they have earned.

FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, while the President chose yesterday to engage in a strident, harsh, vitriolic attack on us, I'm going to respond by complimenting him.

At the G20 meeting I was very gratified to see that the President came forward and said that we could create good private sector jobs right here in the United States of America if we were to proceed with ratification of the U.S.-South Korea free trade agreement. It will, in fact, Mr. Speaker, be the largest trade agreement in the history of the world.

Now, some critics would say that calling for its renegotiation or delaying a vote until a lame duck session would be the wrong thing to do. But I will say that I believe anything that we can do to move in that direction is a positive.

One cautionary note: There are two pending trade agreements with both Panama and Colombia that were negotiated before the U.S.-South Korea Free Trade Agreement was completed. Millions and millions of consumers who would like to have the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to purchase U.S. goods and services right here in our hemisphere are denied that opportunity.