Thanks to Tucker, Connor, Shahil,

And Doshi, sort of.

## Plan Unpop Links

### 1nc – TI costs PC

#### Plan guarantees a loss of capital – Obama will have to convince others to spend money

RUBINSTEIN 3 – 27 – 12 Reporter for Capital New York, has written for Bloomberg Businessweek, the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, the New York Observer, and the Brooklyn Paper [Dana Rubenstein “When is Obama going to have his Eisenhower moment?” March 27, 2012 http://www.capitalnewyork.com/article/politics/2012/03/5524547/when-obama-going-have-his-eisenhower-moment]

Ask a transportation expert who the last great transportation president was, and you're not bound to find much agreement. Dwight D. Eisenhower, who in the 1950s championed the creation of the Interstate System, is a common choice, though Jimmy Carter merits mention for deregulating the trucking industry and airline and air-freight transportation, and Ronald Reagan, for raising the gas tax and dedicating part of it to mass transit.

On the subject of the current president, there’s more of a consensus. One point of agreement is that he has talked a great game, but has been unable to do much to deliver. Another is that he might be able to do more if he gets a second term, but that even then it would depend on whether the upcoming election produces a Congress that is, one way or another, less hostile to his agenda

“Even Eisenhower didn’t mention transportation as much as this guy,” said Joshua Schank, a former transportation adviser to Hillary Clinton who is now president of the Eno Center for Transportation.

“It’s hard not to be frustrated that he hasn’t acted on it more,” he added

At the moment, it can safely be said that building support for increased transportation spending is not the president's top priority, as he heads into a general election with the economy just showing signs of recovery. Infrastructure funding—and what were once packaged as stimulus projects, generally—have taken a back seat to, say, the price of gas and, by extension, the conspicuously expanded drive for domestic energy resources.

The lesson that Obama and the administration seem to have taken from the times they have pushed hard for spending on big transportation-infrastructure projects is that they're a tougher sell than expected, or at least that voters don't necessarily see them as the economic generators they eventually become

So, for example, the president insisted that the federal stimulus act include $8 billion for high-speed rail, but then absorbed a great deal of grief over ensuing allocations, which were criticized as politically motivated.

And while spending on less costly projects has been easier for the administration, politically, it has also been less rewarding. For instance, the stimulus included $1.5 billion in funding for so-called TIGER grants, a small pot of money (it was later expanded to $2.6 billion) that’s been sprinkled around the country. They hardly got noticed nationally, other than by transportation advocates, who felt they were too small to make any meaningful change to the physical transportation system itself.

(There was a total of $48 billion in stimulus spending on projects around the country, but aside from the high-speed rail component and the TIGER grants, those funds are generally considered to have been inserted at the initiative of Congressional leaders and were not part of a coordinated national transportation strategy.)

The reforms that transportation boosters have in mind are, generally speaking, more profound: an ongoing commitment to paying for large capital projects and maintenance of existing infrastructure; sustainable sources of revenue to offset that cost; alterations to the system of incentives that drive commercial and residential growth, and to the metrics that measure the efficiency and cost of moving people around their regions and across the country.

“The federal tax code subsidizes some really bad development,” says Andrew Goldberg, managing director of government relations at the American Institute of Architects, which has advocated tax-code reforms. “A lot of the funding goes toward sprawl, toward building where land is cheapest."

“I know this isn’t sexy," said Schank, "but he could direct D.O.T. to start doing the research necessary to implement real performance measures and accountability for transportation.”

In other words, the administration could lay out a precise vision for how it would like to see the money it controls spent, and support that vision accordingly.

The American Society of Engineers says there’s a $3 trillion backlog in surface transportation spending. The United States spends a mere 2.4 percent of its G.D.P. on transportation and water infrastructure, compared to Europe’s 5 percent and China’s 9.

Many transportation experts also argue for a significantly higher tax on gas.

This is politically difficult, if not impossible, as illustrated by the way Republicans have latched onto currently high gas prices as an argument against Obama, and the president's high-profile response, cheerleading the expansion of domestic oil and gas exploration as a solution.

But the fact is gas here is cheap, relatively speaking: Americans are likely at any given time to be paying about half as much for fuel as Europeans. Yet gas-related revenue is where much of the nation’s infrastructure funding comes from.

“We’ve got one of the lowest federal gasoline taxes in the world,” said Robert Yaro, president of the Regional Plan Association. “The other countries that have gasoline taxes as low as ours include Saudi Arabia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait.”

And that’s not the only issue with the gas tax, which is about 18 cents per gallon and which provides much of the funding for the nation's highways and mass transit (New York’s M.T.A. derives some $1 billion from it per year).

It's not pegged to inflation, so it provides ever less revenue in real terms. Also, it's a victim of its own success: Today, thanks in part to the fact that the gas tax makes it more expensive to burn fuel, cars are much more fuel-efficient. Less consumption equals less revenue.

But while transit-dedicated revenue from gas is going down, the need to spend money on the nation's aging transportation infrastructure is going up.

“The interstate system, most of it is already approaching half a century old,” says Yaro. “It’s at the end of its useful life. Big stretches need to be rebuilt and there’s no money to rebuild them, much less create any new capacity in the system."

The president, at least rhetorically, recognizes that. He's proposed a half-trillion-dollar, six-year transportation plan. And he’s suggested a $50 billion infrastructure bank that would leverage private funding.

As of now, they're still just proposals.

“So far he hasn’t really put his political capital behind it because he has other priorities,” said Schank.

In this year’s State of the Union, the president made a strong argument for infrastructure spending.

“During the Great Depression, America built the Hoover Dam and the Golden Gate Bridge,” he said. “After World War II, we connected our States with a system of highways. Democratic and Republican administrations invested in great projects that benefited everybody, from the workers who built them to the businesses that still use them today.”

“In the next few weeks, I will sign an executive order clearing away the red tape that slows down too many construction projects.

"But you need to fund these projects. Take the money we're no longer spending at war, use half of it to pay down our debt, and use the rest to do some nation-building right here at home.”

The “you” in that sentence was Congress.

But the Republican-controlled House is looking to cut transportation spending, not increase it. It will be all the president can do to get them to agree to pass the Senate's version of this year's transportation-spending bill, which more or less extends the status quo.

“The White House hasn’t recommended funding sources, and the Congress has been reluctant to propose new revenues,” says Yaro, of the Regional Plan Association.

House Republicans in particular have staked out a radical position on infrastructure funding, going so far as to propose eliminating mass-transit financing entirely from the gas tax.

### TI costs PC

#### Infrastructure bills are unpopular – GOP won’t want to give any wins, and they will attach things.

WaPo 12 [Ashley Halsey III, Washington Post; “Transportation funding extension passes U.S. House”; 4/18/2012; <http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/trafficandcommuting/transportation-funding-extension-passes-us-house/2012/04/18/gIQArUSsRT_story.html>; Boyce]

With his plan for the nation’s transportation system shredded by attacks from both sides of the aisle, House Speaker John A. Boehner (R-Ohio) sought to free his party from the charge that they are “do-nothing Republicans” by orchestrating a clever move. The House approved what appeared to be the 10th extension of transportation funding since the last long-term bill expired more than two years ago. As a carrot for its most conservative members, the extension included non-transportation measures they support. But everyone knew that once the extension reached the Senate, it would be stripped bare and replaced with a two-year transportation bill the Senate approved earlier this year. That bill would land in the lap of a conference committee. “The House extension is a shell bill, a Kabuki dance,” one senior House staff member said. “They want to get this [in a conference committee] behind closed doors so they can work it, but what’s making the House conservatives crazy is that none of what they wanted in a transportation bill is in the Senate bill, and it obviously isn’t in the House extension, and in conference they’re required to stay within the bounds of the bills each side has passed.” One of the non-transportation measures appended to the House extension was approval of the controversial Keystone oil pipeline. The White House has threatened a veto if a bill emerges from the conference committee with that provision intact. Boehner’s motivation for pushing an extension that would revive a Senate bill that never reached the House floor? “He just wants to get a bill out of here so people stop saying they’re blocking a jobs bill,” said the staff member, who was not authorized to speak publicly about the action. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said exactly that on Wednesday, accusing House Republicans of engaging in “gotcha politics.” “They don’t want to hand the president a jobs bill before the election,” LaHood said, repeating that a transportation bill would put the construction industry back to work. “America’s one big pothole now. People ask, how come they’re not filling these potholes? It’s because Congress hasn’t taken any action. These people are going to have to go home and face the voters. They talk about creating jobs, but they’d done little or nothing about it.”

### TI costs PC – riders

#### GOP will add riders to appease their own party.

AP 12 [Associated Press; “Transportation tops political agenda”; 2/14/2012; <http://nbcpolitics.msnbc.msn.com/_news/2012/02/14/10407157-transportation-tops-political-agenda?lite>; Boyce]

President Barack Obama chimed in Monday with his own plan to spend nearly half a trillion dollars over six years on transportation infrastructure. But the president's plan is much grander than anything Congress is likely to go along with that the administration has swung its weight behind the Senate bill, a bipartisan plan that more modestly proposes to spend $109 billion over less than two years. Recommended: Congress weighs GOP payroll tax gambit House Republicans have proposed spending about $260 billion over nearly five years, but the bill is drawing fire from so many quarters that the ability of Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, to muscle the measure through to passage is in doubt. To build support with tight-fisted tea partiers for such a large spending bill, GOP leaders added sweeteners designed to appeal to conservatives, such as expanded offshore oil and gas drilling, approval of the controversial Keystone pipeline and a requirement that federal employees pay more toward their pensions. The bill's treatment of mass transit programs has riled urban lawmakers, including New York and Chicago metro-area Republicans who may wind up voting against the bill. It eliminates the guarantee of a portion of federal gasoline and diesel tax revenues for transit, leaving programs vulnerable to future budget cuts. "If you are a Republican from a city that has mass transit, how can you vote for this and go home?" said Rep. Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., who is sponsoring an amendment to restore a portion of fuel tax revenues for transit. Seven Republicans have co-sponsored the amendment. And six GOP lawmakers have sent a letter to Boehner and other GOP leaders saying the transportation bill will stand a better chance of passage if provisions opening leases in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska to oil drilling are dropped. The provisions, which include opening the East and West coasts and portions of the Florida Gulf Coast, as well as ANWR, to drilling, are supposed to help pay for transportation programs. But the Congressional Budget Office estimates they would raise less than $5 billion over 10 years for the federal government.

#### Infrastructure bills unpopular – riders and arguments with Obama

Nance 12 [Political Journalist, contributor to Democratic Daily; “Partisan Sniping Infects Even The Bipartisan Transportation Bill”; 2/14/2012; <http://www.thewashingtoncurrent.com/2012/02/partisan-sniping-infects-even.html>; Boyce]

Last fall, Democrats and Republicans on the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee together linked arms to unanimously approve a new federal transportation bill. The committee's liberal chairwoman, Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) and conservative ranking Republican, Sen. James Inhofe of Oklahoma, alike cheered the ability of the legislation, known as S. 1813, to put Americans back to work nationwide. Sadly, that Kumbaya moment just couldn't last. Now that it's moved from committee to the Senate floor, even this rare bill to achieve extraordinary bipartisan support has fallen victim to partisan sniping. Boxer complained Monday about an effort by Republican senators to introduce controversial, unrelated amendments to the highway bill, which would authorize the government to spend $109 billion over two years on roads, bridges and other transportation infrastructure. "We're trying to get out of this recession. This is a jobs bill that's just waiting to happen. We have myself and Senator Inhofe as partners in this effort. We want to get to this highway bill," she says. "Listen, we have to put aside these wedge issues, these ‘gotcha' issues. We have business after business after business that is struggling. This is a bipartisan bill. This will save 1.8 million jobs and create an additional million jobs." Meanwhile, Inhofe himself was busy making sure President Obama couldn't take any credit for the transportation bill, if it were to pass. “The bottom line is that the President’s involvement is detrimental to our bipartisan efforts. Whenever the President gets involved in transportation infrastructure, he turns it in to a partisan, political issue,” Inhofe says. “Remember back to his $787 billion failed stimulus bill, the one he claimed was an infrastructure bill? Despite all of his talk, only 3% went for infrastructure, 3% went for defense, and the rest went to liberal social engineering.”

### Air Traffic Control

#### Funding NextGen will cause a fight in congress

Bin Salam 12 Fellow, Eno Center for Transportation [Sakib bin Salam, NextGen: Aligning Costs, Benefits and Political Leadership, April 2012, ENO Center for Transportation]

Political Feasibility. No matter how effective and optimal a policy measure in theory, it is impractical unless it can generate Congressional support. This paper aims to propose a funding mechanism that is practical in the existing political environment. Any potential funding mechanism needs to be able to gain support from lawmakers, who have shown strong opposition to tax increases in recent times. However the unavoidable fact is that upgrading the air traffic control system to NextGen is going to require real funding. A policy that minimizes the cost burden while still equitable and transparent is more likely to gain political support.

#### ATC reform causes Congressional backlash

Poole 10 (Robert W. Jr., Director of Transportation Policy and Searle Freedom Trust Transportation Fellow – Reason Foundation, and Chris Edwards, Director of Tax Policy Studies – Cato Institute, “Airports and Air Traffic Control”, June, http://www.downsizinggovernment.org/transportation/airports-atc)

Political Constraints. A third impediment to ATC reform is political. The redesign of the ATC system foreseen in NextGen could potentially deliver major cost savings and greatly expand ATC capacity. However, realizing those gains would require retirement of large numbers of costly radars and other ground-based navigation aids and the consolidation of ATC facilities. One current proposal would replace 21 en route centers and 171 terminal radar approach control (TRACON) facilities with just 35 air traffic service hubs in a redesign of U.S. airspace.28 Physical control towers located at many smaller airports would gradually be phased out as "virtual tower" functions are built into the new super-hubs.

However, Congress tends to resist consolidating ATC facilities because of concerns about job losses and the like, which is similar to the political resistance to closing post offices and military bases. A major 1982 proposal for consolidating ATC facilities was quietly dropped after it became clear that getting it through Congress would be very difficult. Similarly, Congress came extremely close to forbidding the FAA's recent success in outsourcing its Flight Service Station system, which involved reducing the system from 58 facilities to 20. The prohibition was defeated only by a credible veto threat from the White House. In sum, as long as ATC remains government-owned and controlled, making the needed reforms to improve efficiency and implement NextGen will be very difficult.

### Bank

#### Infrastructure bank is unpopular with GOP – pork spending.

CFR 12 [Council of Foreign Relations; “Encouraging U.S. Infrastructure Investment”; April 2012; <http://www.cfr.org/infrastructure/encouraging-us-infrastructure-investment/p27771>; Boyce]

There is no shortage of good proposals to encourage infrastructure investment. For example, President Obama has endorsed the idea of creating a national infrastructure bank to leverage federal funds and encourage PPPs. Bipartisan negotiations in the Senate produced a bill for a scaled-down version of the bank, focused on low-cost federal loans to supplement state financing and private capital. The bill is not supported by House Republican leaders, however, and is unlikely to pass this year. There are also important transportation reforms in both pending highway bills where Republicans and Democrats are on common ground: expanding the popular Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) loan program, streamlining the Department of Transportation bureaucracy to speed approval of new projects, and eliminating congressional earmarks—a huge step toward smarter project selection based on merit rather than political interests. But if the highway bill does not pass, none of these reforms will happen.

### Gas Tax

#### Gas tax is partisan – spending issues and oil disagreements.

Puentes 12 [Robert Puentes is a senior fellow with the Brookings Institution’s Metropolitan Policy Program where he also directs the Program's Metropolitan Infrastructure Initiative; “Web Chat: Investing in Transportation Infrastructure”; 3/14/2012; <http://www.brookings.edu/up-front/posts/2012/03/14-transportation-chat>; Boyce]

12:49 Comment From Bob: In the current environment, can any other forms of revenue besides the gas tax be considered? Can it even be raised and tied to inflation? 12:52 Robert Puentes: The gas tax is the workhorse of the federal funding bucket. It is hard to replace and even harder to raise—given the current political climate and consternation about gas prices. Things like customs duties should be explored, vehicle miles travelled charges, tolling, public/partnerships, all should be on the table. But there’s no easy fix.

### Highway Bills

#### Highway bill debates get dragged out – guarantees a fight

Stanton ’12 Staff Writer for Roll Call [John Stanton “Lacking Support, Boehner Plans Long Debate on Highway Bill” Feb. 15, 2012]

Lacking Support, Boehner Plans Long Debate on Highway Bill: With the prospects of a grand bargain on transportation and energy legislation dashed and his bill broken into pieces, Speaker John Boehner told his colleagues today that the House debate on highway spending would extend beyond next week’s recess as leaders struggle to shore up support. GOP aides said Republican’s hand was forced in part because the payroll tax cut deal will use some of the offsets included in the package, as well as the fact that Boehner is hoping a protracted amendment process to the highway bill will build enough support for passage. During a closed-door meeting with his Conference, Boehner told Republicans that, “Given the volume of amendments and the need for a full, fair, open and transparent process, we may not finish energy/infrastructure this week. If we need more time to debate and consider amendments, that’s perfectly fine with me. It’s more important that we do it right than that we do it fast,” according to a person in the room. Boehner also tacitly acknowledged the deep opposition within his own Conference to the bill. “Look, I know some of you still have concerns about this plan. That’s why I want you to have a chance to offer amendments, to have a full debate on the floor,” Boehner said. He also argued that the transportation and energy fight is one Republicans should embrace. “This debate is a debate we want to have; ABC News reported last night that we will soon see $4-a-gallon gas prices. Maybe higher. Certainly, this summer will see the highest gas prices in years,” Boehner said.

### HSR costs PC

#### HSR politically unpopular and partisan, causes fights with airlines, freight, and activists

The Economist 6 – 5 – 12 [“California's Failing Project Could Spell The End Of High-Speed Rail For The Whole Country” Jun 5, 2012 <http://www.businessinsider.com/californias-failing-project-could-spell-the-end-of-high-speed-rail-for-the-whole-country-2012-6>]

Its ambition has been scaled back and its projected costs have increased. Even voters have turned on it. A new survey by USC-Dornsife and the Los Angeles Times found that if given a second chance to vote on the 2008 $9 billion bond issue that is funding the early stages of the project, 59% of survey respondents would vote it down. Part of what's happened here is that high-speed rail, like almost everything promoted by President Barack Obama, has become an intensely partisan issue in America. Republican governors across the country have criticized high-speed projects and rejected federal money to fund rail development. Mr Obama, meanwhile, has redistributed the rejected money to states like California that are run by Democrats and are more receptive to high-speed rail. All this makes sense. Mr Obama made high-speed-rail funding a big part of his 2008 stimulus package, and political scientists generally believe that a president weighing in on an issue polarizes people's opinions about it. In California, 76% of Republicans now oppose the high-speed-rail project, compared to just 47% of Democrats. The other problem, of course, is that powerful local and regional interests are threatened by the high-speed-rail plans. Airlines, freight transporters and not-in-my-backyard activists all have problems with the project. High-speed rail's opponents smell blood and are not going to fall in line, and the train plan is many years from completion. Unless California's leaders are truly committed to pushing high-speed rail forward and spending political capital to do so, this plan is probably doomed. And when it comes to high-speed rail, as goes California, so goes the nation.

#### HSR costs capital – long term benefits aren’t considered

ZHENHUA 11 PhD student at the George Mason University, School of Public Policy, and is currently working as a graduate research assistant under the supervision of Prof. Jonathan Gifford in the area of transportation policy [Zhenhua Chen, Transportation Law Journal, Article: Is the Policy Window Open for High-Speed Rail in the United States: A Perspectives from the Multiple Streams Model of Policymaking, Summer, 2011, 38 Transp. L. J. 115]

One common objective for these HSR policy proposals is to build an efficient HSR system in the United States. However, neither lawmakers nor the President have personal experience with HSR. n67 Therefore, when the idea of HSR is addressed, reactions from both Congress and the White House are very cautious. n68 Under such a scenario, for HSR to be accepted, policymakers must be persuaded that HSR can benefit the nation. It seems that the long-term benefits, such as congestion alleviation and energy consumption reduction, are too far off in the future to see any practical immediate effects. n69 Consequently, those tangible advantages that can be seen in a short term are preferred by policy communities in order to prove its feasibility.

#### HSR will cost massive capital and spending – critics are impassioned

CONGRESSIONAL DIGEST 11

High-Speed Rail Investing in a New National Transportation Infrastructure, www.congressionaldigestdebates.com

Although Congress has debated the feasibility of highspeed rail off and on since the 1960s, enthusiasm usually faded in the face of such obstacles as cost and competition with other transportation priorities. It returned in February 2009, however, with the provision of $8 billion for intercity passenger rail and high-speed rail projects in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, followed by an Obama Administration proposal announced last month to invest $53 billion in high-speed rail over the next six years. State governments, rail advocates, and environmentalists responded positively, and the “Buy America” requirement in the Administration’s proposal drew commitments from foreign as well as domestic rail manufacturers to expand their bases and hire American workers. In recent months, however, some aspects of the plan have begun to unravel, as newly elected Republican governors in Florida, Wisconsin, and Ohio have rejected Federal funding for high-speed rail initiatives in their States, saying that their share of the construction and operating costs made the projects impractical and unaffordable. High-speed rail promoters in Congress and around the country remain undeterred, viewing the technology as essential to developing a strong twenty-first century economy in the face of dwindling oil supplies, increasing highway and airport congestion, and the need to create new manufacturing jobs. They argue that if America fails to invest now in a modern domestic transportation infrastructure, the Nation will be unable to compete successfully in the global economy. America need only look to its past, they reason, when progress was possible because previous generations had the foresight to imagine and invest in bold infrastructure projects that citizens rely on and take for granted today.

Opponents are equally vehement in their assertion that the costs are too high and the benefits too low for highspeed rail to be a viable transportation option for the United States. They maintain that the President’s proposal would commit the Nation to a perpetual stream of Federal subsidies to offset the operating costs of a national high-speed rail network — and that the program, in fact, could become the equivalent of another Federal “entitlement” in its impact on budget deficits. Critics are skeptical that a sufficient number of people would actually use the system, given the continued convenience of cars and predicted advancements in that technology. They also note that high-speed rail lines elsewhere in the world have yet to earn enough revenue to cover construction and operating costs, and rely heavily on government subsidies. In light of the United States’ lack of experience in highspeed rail, the many funding and other challenges projects are likely to face, and the variety of the arguments for and against its development, Congress has a lot to consider. Although the zeal among many for high-speed rail is not likely to be squelched, a commitment by public and private interests of all persuasions may be needed for such a major undertaking to become a reality.

#### HSR funding costs capital – guaranteed fights

WOOD 2 – 8 – 11 CSM Staff Writer

[GOP critic calls Joe Biden's $53 billion high-speed rail plan 'insanity'. By: Wood, Daniel B., Christian Science Monitor, 08827729, 2/8/2011]

Vice President Joe Biden Tuesday proposed that the US government infuse $53 billion into a national high-speed rail network. The announcement was met immediately by deep skepticism from two House Republicans that could be crucial to the plan's success, raising questions about whether it can clear Capitol Hill.

House Transportation Committee Chair Rep. John Mica (R) of Florida said previous administration grants to high-speed rail projects were a failure, producing "snail speed trains to nowhere." He called Amtrak a "Soviet-style train system" and said it "hijacked" nearly all the administration's rail projects.

Meanwhile, Railroads Subcommittee Chair Rep. Bill Shuster (R) of Pennsylvania said Mr. Biden's plan was "insanity," adding: "Rail projects that are not economically sound will not 'win the future' " – coopting the slogan President Obama coined in his State of the Union address.

With Republicans controlling the House and dedicating themselves to deep budget cuts, any new spending proposed by the White House will face stiff scrutiny. But Congressman Shuster offers some hope of compromise. On Jan. 28 in Hartford, Conn., he proclaimed his support for expanding high-speed rail in the Northeast, backing a network that could stretch from Montreal to Washington, D.C.

"This is the most congested region in the country. High-speed rail here could be profitable," he said.

### Hydrogen

#### Hydrogen unpopular – flip-flop.

Merchant 11 [Brian Merchant, Reporter for Treehugger.com; “Obama to Cut Funding for Hydrogen Fuel Cell Research”; 2/14/2011; <http://www.treehugger.com/corporate-responsibility/obama-to-cut-funding-for-hydrogen-fuel-cell-research.html>; Boyce]

The Obama administration is getting down to the business of showing the public that it's serious about cutting the federal budget, and even Energy Secretary Stephen Chu is getting in on the action. He's trying to divert some of the funding currently going to hydrogen fuel cell research to other more immediately viable clean tech departments. While in the short term, this might be for the better -- we need to concentrate as much effort on improving the most viable renewable energy sources as possible -- it nonetheless marks a depressing trend, one that epitomizes the severe short-term thinking that defines our politics. After all, hydrogen cells remain intriguing, despite the fact that, as physicist Joe Romm of Climate Progress notes, it would take four near-miracles to make the technology viable as a transportation fuel anytime soon. Here's Romm: In a blog post Friday, "Winning the Future with a Responsible Budget," the Nobel prize-winning physicist [Steven Chu] explains, "In the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, the Department is reducing funding for the hydrogen technology program by more than 41 percent, or almost $70 million, in order to focus on technologies deployable at large scale in the near term." Chu said in May 2009 that the multiple technological and infrastructure challenges meant it was unlikely we would convert to a hydrogen car economy in the next two decades. Basically, the problems are, as outlined by Chu in Technology Review, 1) "the way we get hydrogen primarily is from reforming [natural] gas. That's not an ideal source of hydrogen. You're giving away some of the energy content of natural gas, which is a very valuable fuel ... 2) "if it's for transportation, we don't have a good storage mechanism yet. Compressed hydrogen is the best mechanism [but it requires] a large volume. We haven't figured out how to store it with high density ... 3) "The fuel cells aren't there yet, and 4) "The distribution infrastructure isn't there yet." So. Hydrogen-powered transit is a long shot. And that's the reason that Chu, Obama, and Romm are seeking to cut funding to research it -- electric cars and solar power technologies are improving quickly right now. We can deploy these soon. But I still think it's too bad that the president feels the need to gut research for a technology that could -- if in the long-term -- produce a fuel whose only byproduct is water (and a wee bit of nitrogen oxide). When taking a long view of the nation's potential energy mix, it's not hard to see why having a clean alternative to electricity would be a major benefit as EVs begin to dominate the roads in the wake of oil's decline. In the rush to provide enough clean energy capacity for EVs (or other, even more sustainable forms of transit like rail), hydro could be a major boon.

#### Hydrogen policies take political capital- even if there is support, it takes push to make it through congress

Barlett and Steele 03— [Donald L. and James B. staff writers for the Time "Why U.S. Is Running Out of Gas" 7-13-03 http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1101030721-464406,00.html

But hydrogen power went nowhere then, just as it went nowhere when it was trumpeted nearly a century ago. It will probably go nowhere today, for many reasons, most notably a chronic case of short attention span among American politicians when it comes to energy policy. With great fanfare, lawmakers and Presidents—both Democrats and Republicans—announce sweep- ing plans to end or ease American dependence on foreign oil and find other stable sources of energy. When the headlines and television sound bites fade away, however, they scrap the programs, which then are often reintroduced to an unsuspecting public as new in later years by another generation of lawmakers and Presidents. But changing anything as deep-seated as America's habits of energy use calls for consistency and follow through, so the failure of Washington to stick with hardly any of its plans has wound up making the U.S. more dependent than ever on foreign sources. Now Congress is about to enact yet another doomed energy policy that promises more of the same. Take hydrogen. Ideally, the gas would be extracted from water using fusion technology. But that won't be available for decades. In the interim, a substitute energy source would be used—natural gas. Yes, the same natural gas already in short supply.

#### Costs political capital – California proves

Fuhrmans 11 [Vanessa, “Hydrogen Fuel Cells Are Down, but Perhaps Not Out,” 5-22, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703778104576286620950028178.html>]

Hydrogen still faces plenty of practical challenges. The biggest may be creating a refueling infrastructure. While battery-powered cars can be plugged into the electricity grid, building even a basic network of hydrogen refueling stations would cost billions. And as California's experience shows, such initiatives are highly dependent on political will. But other initiatives are making progress, albeit slowly. In Germany, the federal government has pledged to spend some $2 billion over the next decade on a public-private plan to build at least 1,000 hydrogen stations, while a Hawaiian plan partially backed by [General Motors](http://online.wsj.com/public/quotes/main.html?type=djn&symbol=GM) Co. [GM +0.51%](http://online.wsj.com/public/quotes/main.html?type=djn&symbol=GM?mod=inlineTicker) calls for building as many as 25 stations on the island of Oahu by 2016.

### Port Deepening

#### Port deepening unpopular – funding and fights about choosing ports.

AP 11 [Associated Press; “U.S. ports race to keep up with bigger Panama Canal”; 2/7/2011; <http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2011-02-07-panama-canal_N.htm>; Boyce]

"Certainly every port is counting on it having a big impact," said Bernard Groseclose, former chief executive of South Carolina's seaports who now works as a private consultant. "Everyone is telling the same story: We're getting ready for the Panama Canal expansion." But getting funding may have just gotten tougher. Federal dollars used for dredging projects and the studies required to approve them typically get added to congressional budget bills as "earmarks" — line items requested by individual lawmakers to benefit their districts back home. Yet earmark spending was widely denounced as government waste in the 2010 elections that swept Republicans back in control of the U.S. House. As a result, GOP lawmakers in both the House and Senate have sworn off earmarks for the time being. It's not clear how else port projects would obtain federal money. "It has the potential to have a dramatic impact," said Nagle, who insists port projects aren't waste. "There clearly is a distinction between these types of projects and what is typically the target of the ban." Both Nagle and Groseclose agree not all ports seeking to supersize their harbors will get approved — and both don't think every U.S. port needs to be deep enough for the largest ships. But some are questioning how the federal government decides which projects move forward. In studies finished last November that recommend deepening Savannah's harbor, the Army Corps of Engineers concludes the project would have economic benefits for the nation as a whole — the benchmark for the agency's approval. But what the Army Corps hasn't done is take a comprehensive look at all East Coast ports to determine how many should be dredged to post-Panamax depths and which would reap the most benefits for the best price. "The Corps is evaluating the cost and benefits of these individual proposals in a vacuum," said Chris DeScherer, an attorney for the Southern Environmental Law Center. "Where does it make the most sense on the East Coast to have a deep water port? Where does the American taxpayer get the most bang for his buck with the least environmental impact?" The Army Corps said it hasn't done a broader study to compare ports, in part, because no one has asked. The Corps doesn't have the authority to initiate port studies on its own. "To date, there has been no request by the ports or Congress to undertake a comprehensive study," said Jim Walker, chief of the Navigation Program for the Army Corps of Engineers.

### Title XI

#### Title XI is unpopular – will be perceived as pork spending and it has no agency support.

LA Times 3 [Mark Fineman for the LA Times, cites DoT Inspector General Study; “Pork-Barreling Is Charged in War Funds Bill”; 4/4/2003; <http://articles.latimes.com/2003/apr/04/nation/na-pork4>; Boyce]

Just days before the Senate authorized the $50 million, the Transportation Department's inspector general sharply criticized the shipbuilding program. In a published report following a yearlong investigation of the loan-guarantee program, the inspector general called it poorly managed and wasteful -- to the tune of $490 million since 1998. The program, known as Title XI, allows the Maritime Administration to guarantee bank loans for private companies that build commercial ships at American shipyards, an industry that has been declining rapidly since the end of the Cold War. It costs taxpayers money only when companies default on the loans, as has happened more frequently in recent years. Cost to Taxpayers Among the program's most costly disasters was a $1.1-billion project to build two cruise ships in Mississippi that were to serve the Hawaiian vacation market. This project cost taxpayers $330 million last year. It was pushed through by Lott, the Mississippi Republican, and Sen. Daniel K. Inouye (D-Hawaii), who sits on the Appropriations Committee. American Classic Voyages won the loan guarantees to build what would have been the largest cruise ships assembled in the U.S. The company went bankrupt in October 2001, leaving hundreds of millions of dollars in debts. Taxpayers picked up almost all of them. Before its bankruptcy, American Classic received $185 million and produced one half-built ship and material for a second. These were sold for $2 million last summer to Norwegian Cruise Line, which plans to complete their construction on foreign shores. Dubbed Project America, the cruise ship project was the biggest -- and most controversial -- ever attempted under the program. When American Classic went bust, the Maritime Administration had to borrow money to pay back the loans from the U.S. Treasury. Three other big loans had been handed out to subsidiaries of Enron Corp. Those defaulted loans cost taxpayers more than $120 million when the Houston energy giant went bankrupt.

#### Title XI is unpopular – GOP doesn’t support and Congress will politicize the issue which kills solvency.

Margaronis 08 [Green Ships Can Fight Global Warming, president of California-based Santa Maria Shipowning & Trading Inc; Downloaded in PDF; Boyce]

The Bush Administration stopped new funding for shipbuilding , citing waste and some defaults in the program. While influential lawmakers from both parties expressed support of Title XI, Republican Senator John McCain came out in support of the president’s plan, and led successful efforts in the Senate to oppose new shipbuilding funds. McCain, who chaired the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, which had partial oversight of Title XI, questioned the relevance of the program in support of national security during a 2003 debate on a supplemental budget proposal bill in the U.S. Senate. “This funding is simply not justified as part of an emergency supplemental to fund the ongoing war,” McCain said in an April 3, 2003, speech on the Senate floor. “The Title XI program does not serve any defense or homeland security purpose and it should not receive funding under the guise of a wartime need.” McCain described Title XI as “riddled with problems.” And in fairness to the Arizona senator, there have been loan defaults related to the program. Some of these defaults, however, occurred due to the intervention of members of Congress who overrode MARAD staff on behalf of projects that should never have been funded. Which is to say, the problem wasn’t always with Title XI, but with Congress itself. Former Rep. Helen Bentley (R-Maryland) expressed such a sentiment during a House Transportation Committee hearing on short sea shipping in February, 2007. Bentley, a chair of the Federal Maritime Commission under former President Richard Nixon and a long-time advocate for the U.S. maritime industry, blamed “members of Congress” for some of the loan default problems with Title XI. When her comments, which were made as an aside to another witness, were reported during the hearing, there was no rebuttal. In a recent interview, Mark Schlefer, a retired Washington, D.C., maritime attorney and an authority on Title XI, also recalled that problems with the program surfaced with passenger ships that he says should never have been built. Congressional meddling, Schlefer agrees, undermined the program.

### Transportation Bills

#### Transportation bills cause fighting in Congress- empirics

Transport Politic 3 – 15 – 12 [“The Senate’s Transportation Program” March 15, 2012 <http://www.rollcall.com/news/lacking_support_boehner_plans_long_debate_on_highway_bill-212444-1.html>]

The U.S. Senate’s passage of a transportation reauthorization bill Wednesday was big news, if only because it has now been 898 days since the last transportation bill officially expired. Three years of debates in both houses of the Congress have brought us one proposal after another, but only one piece of legislation has actually made it out the doors of one of the chambers.

### A2 plan is small change

#### Even small changes cost capital

Olson ’12 Michigan Representative

[Rick Olson “Transportation Funding Findings to Date and Conclusions Reached” JUNE 24, 2012]

Doing less than the total need would expend considerable political capital and end up disappointing the taxpayers with higher costs, but no better roads. That is, if we are to take action, we might as well achieve the goals, rather than take the potential political heat for the higher costs AND still have poor roads.

### A2 Transportation Funding Bill triggers

#### Congress is empirically partisan on transportation funding – the transportation bill was a fluke

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette 12, (“Lost art: A partisan Congress does little on transportation” [<http://www.post-gazette.com/stories/opinion/editorials/lost-art-a-partisan-congress-does-little-on-transportation-643773/>] akash  
  
Congress finally did what it should have done months before -- passed a federal transportation bill. While this ended wide uncertainty in transportation circles, it was not a great triumph of bipartisanship, just a truce by partisans who wanted the voters to think Congress could do its job. The transportation component was part of a broad deal that froze federally funded student loan rates for another year and reauthorized the government flood insurance program. But while our federal lawmakers congratulated themselves, voters should not be taken in. In Pennsylvania, which has a chronic transportation infrastructure problem and mass transit systems running on empty -- witness the Port Authority of Allegheny County -- the lack of real forward thinking by Congress is especially galling. True, this was this first long-term transportation spending plan agreed to by Congress since 2005, but that only means a two-year extension. The bill replaced one that expired in October 2009 and was extended nine times. Congress kept the federal gasoline tax at 18.4 cents per gallon. This tax, which hasn't been increased since 1993, is (together with state gasoline taxes) the major source of funding for road and bridge projects. Simply to keep up with current road, bridge and transit funding, the bill tapped nearly $20 billion from non-transportation sources. As the Post-Gazette's Jon Schmitz reported Monday, the new federal legislation reduces Pennsylvania's transportation funding by $100 million in its first year, to $1.6 billion. Robert Latham, executive vice president of the Associated Pennsylvania Constructors and a member of Gov. Tom Corbett's commission on transportation funding, characterized the federal bill as "bumping along" for the next two years: "It's kind of another way for Congress to kick the can down the road." Mr. Latham said this outcome "underscores the need for the governor and legislative leadership to act on transportation funding ... we're looking at the continued deterioration of the transportation system unless we do something in Harrisburg." Unfortunately, Gov. Corbett hasn't acted on the commission's recommendations. For its part, Congress spent months of wrangling and nearly derailed the effort to restructure federal highway programs and make sure they're paid for. House Republicans tried to include a provision approving construction of the politically charged Keystone XL oil pipeline from Canada to Texas. That demand was dropped in the end, but Democrats agreed to onerous provisions that provide less money for bike trails, walking paths and other enhancements. In general, the bill illustrated that Washington is unable to act these days without a gun to its head. Such brinkmanship may appeal to the Democratic and Republican fringes, but most Americans long for the days when politics truly was "the art of the possible."

## Obama Good Internals

### PC key

#### Presidential Capital matters – Studies confirm that presidents can switch votes with influence and pushing

Beckmann and Kumar 11 [Department of Political Science at the University of California; “How presidents push, when presidents win: A model of positive presidential power in US lawmaking”; 2011; Journal of Theoretical Politics 23(1) 3–20]

Fortunately for those inside the West Wing, some researchers paint a more optimistic picture regarding presidents’ potential for passing important planks of their legislative agenda. Covington et al. (1995), Barrett and Eshbaugh-Soha (2007), Edwards III and Barrett (2000), Kellerman (1984), Light (1982), Peterson (1990), and Rudalevige (2002) all observe that presidents secure greater support for their ‘priority’ items, and when they exert ‘effort’ pushing them. In addition, Covington (1987) concludes that White House officials can occasionally win greater support among legislators by working behind the scenes, while Canes-Wrone (2001, 2005) shows that presidents can induce support from a recalcitrant Congress by strategically ‘going public’ when advocating popular proposals (see also Kernell (1993)). Sullivan (1987, 1988) finds that presidents can amass winning congressional coalitions by changing members’ positions as a bill moves through the legislative process.

**Political Capital Key – overcomes ideology**

**Beckmann and McGann 08** (Matthew N. Beckmann is an Associate Professor of Political Science at UC Irvine and **Matthew N. Beckmann is an Associate Professor of Political science at UC Irvine,** *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 2008, S.J)

Here we propose a theory that casts some early rays of light onto the policy consequences of polarization in Congress. Building from a simple theoretical model in which the president seeks to promote his preferred policies in the Senate (see Snyder, 1991; Groseclose, 1996), we assess differences in the chamber’s preference distribution – from normal to unanimous to bimodal – as well as the ‘political capital’ at the president’s disposal.2 Results show that absent the president, ideological polarization makes amassing the votes needed to beat the status quo difficult, so gridlock frequently prevails. The same is true when the president lacks political capital to spend. However, when endowed with abundant capital, facing a polarized legislature enables presidents to pass policies closer to their ideal than would have been possible in an assembly characterized by greater ideological homogeneity. Hence the familiar prediction of blanket ‘gridlock’ is overblown. Instead, comparative statics show that the consequences of ideological polarization in Congress are conditional: they depend on the nature of the preference distribution, the involvement of the president, and the political capital at his disposal.

#### Capital key – loss means no influence for future bills.

Beckmann and Kumar 11 [Department of Political Science at the University of California; “How presidents push, when presidents win: A model of positive presidential power in US lawmaking”; 2011; Journal of Theoretical Politics 23(1) 3–20]

Before developing presidents’ lobbying options for building winning coalitions on Capitol Hill, it is instructive to consider cases where the president has no political capital and no viable lobbying options. In such circumstances of imposed passivity (beyond offering a proposal), a president’s fate is clear: his proposals are subject to pivotal voters’ preferences. So if a president lacking political capital proposes to change some far-off status quo, that is, one on the opposite side of the median or otherwise pivotal voter, a (Condorcet) winner always exists, and it coincides with the pivot’s predisposition (Brady and Volden, 1998; Krehbiel, 1998) (see also Black (1948) and Downs (1957)). Considering that there tends to be substantial ideological distance between presidents and pivotal voters, positive presidential influence without lobbying, then, is not much influence at all.11

#### Political capital is key – even if there are other factors, Presidential influence helps roll-call votes.

Covington et al 95 [A "Presidency-Augmented" Model of Presidential Success on House Roll Call Votes Author(s): Cary R. Covington, J. Mark Wrighton and Rhonda Kinney Reviewed work(s):Source: American Journal of Political Science, Vol. 39, No. 4 (Nov., 1995), pp. 1001-1024; JSTOR; Boyce]

Where does this investigation leave us? Clearly, it does not invalidate or challenge the Congress-centered model's core claim that the congres- sional context importantly affects presidents' chances of legislative success. Previous research demonstrated that the partisan and ideological composi- tion of Congress both exhibit strong influences on the probability of presi- dential success, and our study confirms that finding. The contribution of our study lies in its reassessment of the impact of presidents on legislative outcomes. By introducing variables under the presidents' control that had previously gone unanalyzed, we have shown that when presidents use their proposing power and choice of whether to support or oppose bills, they can enhance (or diminish) their chances of success on roll call votes. The analysis of the determinants of congressional leader support also indicates that a rethinking of the place of those leaders in our categorization of "Congress-centered" and "president-oriented" variables may be war- ranted. If the effects of leadership support are to be classified solely as part of the Congress-centered model, then they must be independent of any important influences from the president. But Tables 4 and 5 clearly indicate that the support of leaders from the president's party is significantly affected by whether or not the bills in question are a part of the president's agenda. Thus, congressional leaders' influence on voting outcomes may consti- tute an indirect means by which presidents can affect voting outcomes. That linkage begins by noting that the president's party's leaders provide strong support for their president's agenda. Leadership support for majority party presidents is manifested through the agenda-setting process by en- abling the president's proposals to get to the floor and by blocking bills the president opposes from getting to the floor; and through the leadership's influence on the voting patterns of the rank-and-file members of the presi- dent's party. Therefore, the effects of leaders on voting outcomes are attrib- utable in some degree to the presidents' actions in setting forth their agendas. The thrust of our findings is to push us back "upstream" in the legisla- tive process in our search for the role of the president. We have seen that floor voting is importantly affected by presidential decisions about what to propose and what to support or oppose, and by congressional leadership decisions about whether and how much of the president's agenda to sup- port. Thus, if we want to fully understand the role and impact of the presi- dent on the legislative process, we must go further in our search for mea- sures of presidential involvement at pre-floor stages of the process, and the effects of their involvement in that process.

#### Capital is key and Uniqueness can’t overwhelm – it is necessary to insure passage.

BECKMAN & KUMAR 11 Professor - Department of Political Science, University of California, Irvine [Matthew N. Beckmann and Vimal Kumar, How presidents push, when presidents win: A model of positive presidential, 2011 23: 3, Journal of Theoretical Politics]

Agreeing that presidents’ strategic options in Congress do indeed depend heavily on factors beyond their control, our model’s ﬁrst insight is explicating the two systematic strategies presidents have available for exerting inﬂuence in Congress: they can target marginal voters to shift the preference distribution on roll-call votes and they can target congressional leaders to censor the policy alternatives making it that far. While the ﬁrst of these is widely recognized and studied, the second is not. By detailing the actual mechanisms of president-led coalition building on Capitol Hill, ours is a theory that puts positive presidential power on a ﬁrmer conceptual footing; legislative opportunities are predictable (if not controllable) and capitalizing on them depends on nothing more heroic than the normal grist of legislative politics: arm-twisting, brow-beating, and horse-trading. In this way, we subscribe to President Eisenhower’s observation: ‘I’ll tell you what leadership is: it’s persuasion, and conciliation, and education, and patience. It’s long, slow, tough work’ (Hughes, 1963: 124).

However, if spending political capital in the service of vote-centered and agenda centered strategies is a necessary condition for presidents to have positive inﬂuence in Congress, it certainly is not a sufﬁcient condition. Instead, we ﬁnd the exact policy return on a particular presidential lobbying campaign is conditioned by the location of the status quo, and the nature of leading opponents’ and pivotal voters’ preferences. Beyond enjoying ample political capital, then, those presidents who seek to change far-off status quos and confront pliable leading opponents and/or pivotal voters are expected to wield the greatest policymaking impact. By comparison, presidents with little to no political capital, seeking to change centrist status quos, or confronting opposing leaders and pivotal voters who staunchly oppose their proposals can ﬁnd themselves with ‘nothing to do but stand there and take it’, as Lyndon Johnson once put it.

### PC key – A2 U overwhelms

**Beckmann and Kumar 11**(Matthew N. Beckmann is an Associate Professor of Political Science at UC Irvine and**,  Vimal Kumar is a Proffessor of Economics at IIT** *Journal of Theoretical Politics*2008, S.J)

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### A2 Thumpers – extensions don’t cost PC

#### No thumpers- extensions of current programs require little capita

Caruso ’09 Columnist at Transportation Journal and Bloomberg

[Lisa Caruso “What Difference Would An 18-Month Delay In Reauthorization Make?” June 22, 2009]

In proposing an 18-month extension of reauthorization, Secretary LaHood apparently disagrees with Chairmen Oberstar and DeFazio that an acceptable agreement on reauthorization can be reached this year in the current political environment. Observers have concluded that the Secretary’s timing is driven by the need for a future increase in gas taxes, and the seemingly rational conclusion that a gas tax increase is not possible in the near future. If the Secretary’s agenda for reauthorization included only a simple extension of the current program coupled with a streamlining of USDOT, little political capital would be required and such legislation could easily be accomplished this year.

### Obama gets drawn in

#### Obama will get involved – will try to use for their jobs benefit.

AP 11 [Julie Page Associated Press; “Obama pushes for transportation spending”; 8/31/2011; <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/44340815/ns/politics-white_house/t/obama-pushes-transportation-spending/>; Boyce]

The White House said Obama wanted to push for the transportation bill extensions now in order to avoid a similar standoff again. The looming shutdown was overshadowed by the all-consuming debt debate in Washington, and the president didn't start publicly pushing for an extension until after the FAA had already partially shut down. Looking to take a different approach this time, the White House gathered construction workers and administration officials in the Rose Garden Wednesday morning so the president could attempt to get ahead of the issue. He was also flanked by the leaders of two occasionally warring factions — AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka and David Chavern, chief operating officer of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. "You cannot take for granted that the things that had bipartisan support will have it going forward," White House spokesman Jay Carney said Wednesday. Republican reaction to Obama's push for the highway bill was swift, with a spokesman for House Speaker John Boehner accusing the president of using irresponsible scare tactics.

#### Obama gets involved – empirics prove

AP 11 [Julie Page Associated Press; “Obama pushes for transportation spending”; 8/31/2011; <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/44340815/ns/politics-white_house/t/obama-pushes-transportation-spending/>; Boyce]

WASHINGTON — Warning of dire consequences for the nation's workers, President Barack Obama on Wednesday urged Congress to extend bills to fund highways and air travel that he said would protect a million jobs. "For construction workers and their families across the country, it represents the difference between making ends meet or not making ends meet," Obama said during a speech in the Rose Garden. The federal highway spending bill at issue expires Sept. 30. A Senate proposal would last only two years and cost $109 billion, while the House is considering a longer, six-year bill that could cut spending from current levels. The president said 4,000 workers would be immediately furloughed without pay if the bill is not extended, and a significant delay could lead to 1 million workers losing their job over the next year.

## Plan Popular Links

### HSR boosts capital

#### Link turn- rail projects boost capital

Taylor 6 – 15 – 12 University of California Los Angeles Professor of Urban Planning and Department Chair Dr. Brian Taylor

[Dr. Brian Taylor “Interview with University of California Los Angeles Professor of Urban Planning and Department Chair Dr. Brian Taylor” June 15, 2012 <http://reason.org/news/show/interview-with-university-of-califo>]

Major capital projects are sexy ribbon-cutting events that also attract media attention. However, from a media standpoint increasing service quality or reducing headways are non-events. Elected leaders are often more concerned with building political capital than with implementing the most cost effective transit service and new rail service raises political capital. Taxpayers see a tangible product from their tax dollars, even if it is often not the best use of those tax-dollars.

### Long Term extensions Popular

#### Plan doesn’t link – it’s long-term, not short-term which their links assume

Lightman 12 [David Lightman | McClatchy Newspapers, 3rd largest newspaper and news sourcing company in the U.S. as a syndication system; “Congress is so divided it can't even pass a highway bill anymore”; 4/5/2012; <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2012/04/05/v-print/144318/congress-is-so-divided-it-cant.html>; Boyce]

WASHINGTON — Providing money for highways and infrastructure historically has been one of Congress' easiest tasks. After all, it gives every lawmaker a chance to go home, stand in front of a bumpy highway and explain how he or she is making life better. Not anymore. When Congress returns to Washington in mid-April after a spring recess, it plans to resume one of the fiercest and most consequential battles of this year: funding highways and infrastructure. The Senate and House of Representatives are engaged in the kind of ugly impasse that's grown common in recent years. They're engaged in what Rep. Earl Blumenauer, D-Ore., called "infrastructure chicken." Historically, Congress authorized road and infrastructure programs for several years at a time. Transportation planners could look ahead, set priorities and line up contractors. The last such comprehensive measure passed with strong bipartisan support in 2005. It expired four years later. Since then, as bitter partisanship has become the legislative norm, Congress has been unable to craft a long-term plan. Short-term extensions have become routine. The latest expired March 31. The Senate approved a two-year, $109 billion plan in mid-March with a strong bipartisan vote, but in the House, conservatives balked. As a result, Congress approved a last-minute 90-day extension, setting up a fresh fight that's likely to rage until the next deadline, June 30. Back home, state transportation officials — already whipsawed by years of this gamesmanship — are watching nervously. Transportation for America, a coalition of state and local agencies and interest groups, finds that the short-term extensions — and the unpredictability of the legislative process — is having an effect on projects. "Most projects in progress will keep going," group spokesman David Goldberg said, "but agencies will scale back a bit, and hold off on major projects in the future, because they're not sure when reimbursement will come." Projects most affected could include major highway reconstruction, new bridges and other "really big projects that cost multiple millions," said Jack Basso, the director of program finance and management at the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.

## Obama Bad Internals

### PC irrelevant

#### Capital is irrelevant

Dickinson 09 professor of political science at Middlebury College  
(5/26/09, Matthew, Presidential Power: A NonPartisan Analysis of Presidential Politics, “Sotomayor, Obama and Presidential Power,”<http://blogs.middlebury.edu/presidentialpower/2009/05/26/sotamayor-obama-and-presidential-power/>)

What is of more interest to me, however, is what her selection reveals about the basis of presidential power. Political scientists, like baseball writers evaluating hitters, have devised numerous means of measuring a president’s influence in Congress. I will devote a separate post to discussing these, but in brief, they often center on the creation of legislative “box scores” designed to measure how many times a president’s preferred piece of legislation, or nominee to the executive branch or the courts, is approved by Congress. That is, how many pieces of legislation that the president supports actually pass Congress? How often do members of Congress vote with the president’s preferences? How often is a president’s policy position supported by roll call outcomes? These measures, however, are a misleading gauge of presidential power – they are a better indicator of congressional power. This is because how members of Congress vote on a nominee or legislative item is rarely influenced by anything a president does. Although journalists (and political scientists) often focus on the legislative “endgame” to gauge presidential influence – will the President swing enough votes to get his preferred legislation enacted? – this mistakes an outcome with actual evidence of presidential influence. Once we control for other factors – a member of Congress’ ideological and partisan leanings, the political leanings of her constituency, whether she’s up for reelection or not – we can usually predict how she will vote without needing to know much of anything about what the president wants. (I am ignoring the importance of a president’s veto power for the moment.) Despite the much publicized and celebrated instances of presidential arm-twisting during the legislative endgame, then, most legislative outcomes don’t depend on presidential lobbying. But this is not to say that presidents lack influence. Instead, the primary means by which presidents influence what Congress does is through their ability to determine the alternatives from which Congress must choose. That is, presidential power is largely an exercise in agenda-setting – not arm-twisting. And we see this in the Sotomayer nomination. Barring a major scandal, she will almost certainly be confirmed to the Supreme Court whether Obama spends the confirmation hearings calling every Senator or instead spends the next few weeks ignoring the Senate debate in order to play Halo III on his Xbox. That is, how senators decide to vote on Sotomayor will have almost nothing to do with Obama’s lobbying from here on in (or lack thereof). His real influence has already occurred, in the decision to present Sotomayor as his nominee.

### Winners-Win

**Winners Win – jump on board**

**Green 10** (﻿David Michael Green is a professor of political science at Hofstra University in New York, <http://www.opednews.com/articles/The-Do-Nothing-44th-Presid-by-David-Michael-Gree-100611-648.html>, S.J)

This is absolutely a matter of perception, and you can see it best in the way that Congress and especially the Washington press corps fawn over bold and intimidating presidents like Reagan and George W. Bush. The political teams surrounding these presidents understood the psychology of power all too well. They knew that by simultaneously creating a steamroller effect and feigning a clubby atmosphere for Congress and the press, they could leave such hapless hangers-on with only one remaining way to pretend to preserve their dignities. By jumping on board the freight train, they could be given the illusion of being next to power, of being part of the winning team. And so, with virtually the sole exception of the now retired Helen Thomas, this is precisely what they did.

#### Winners Win – momentum matters

**White House 12** (*Startup America Legislative Agenda*, from the Presidents inagural speech <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/startup_america_legislative_agenda.pdf>, S.J)

Congress should take action quickly on the President’s Agenda to help ensure that startups and small businesses have the tools they need to grow and succeed. In the wake of the President’s call to action in September 2011, there has been substantial bipartisan work in both the House and Senate on measures the President highlighted. This momentum reinforces the opportunity for Congress to come together and pass bipartisan legislation without delay. The Administration looks forward to working with sponsors of similar initiatives including S. 1965 (Warner-Moran), S. 1866 (Coons-Rubio), S. 1544 (Tester-Toomey), S. 1933 (Schumer-Toomey), S. 1970 (Merkley-Bennet), H.R. 2930 (McHenry), H.R. 1070 (Schweikert), as well as with leaders from the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committees, including Chairwoman Landrieu, Senator Snowe, Chairman Graves and Representative Velazquez. While urging Congress to act, the President will continue to advance small business and entrepreneurship priorities through the White House Startup America Initiative by taking executive action to improve the environment for new companies to grow, unlocking access to capital, cutting red tape, and accelerating innovation.