# Transportation Bill Cards

## AT: Transportation Bill Solves Infrastructure

#### The Recent Transportation Bill doesn’t solve our infrastructure problems – it makes them worse

Rodin, President of Rockefeller Center, ’12 (Judith, 6/30/12, The Atlantic, http://www.theatlanticcities.com/commute/2012/06/how-transportation-bill-failed-america/2431/, “How the Transportation Bill Failed America,” AM)

Whether you drive to work every morning, hop on a subway or bus, or just pull the bike out for a ride around town, you need to pay attention to the transportation bill that Congress finally passed this week. The bill is a significant step backward and falls woefully short of creating a balanced system that serves all Americans and invests adequately in options and our growing metros. Why does the bill matter? Because transportation is the second highest cost in American households (and the highest if you are a low-wage worker). Traffic costs Americans an estimated 4.2 billion hours and $87 billion in productivity each year. One of every nine of our highway bridges are currently deemed "structurally deficient." The multi-billion dollar surface transportation bill that Congress just passed is what pays for your road improvements, your state-of-the-art bus rapid transit, and it should create or save hundreds of thousands of jobs. We continue to fund and build the wrong things, focusing on the needs of the loudest lobby rather than the needs of the next generation of Americans. These transportation decisions touch every American directly, determining access to work and services, the cost of the goods we buy and the amount of emissions we release. I commend the citizens and policymakers who fought valiantly but unsuccessfully to achieve a much better outcome than what we are left with today. Lawmakers had the opportunity to achieve transformative change. They didn’t seize it. The bipartisan bill that previously passed the Senate would have provided funds to repair structurally deficient bridges. It also imposed a needed degree of accountability on transit authorities and empowered local governments to make streets safer for all users. In the final compromise, Congress chose to dilute some of these proposals and roll back others altogether, thereby gutting a once promising bill.

#### Compared to other nations, our Congress doesn’t sufficiently fund our transportation infrastructure

Rodin, President of Rockefeller Center, ’12 (Judith, 6/30/12, The Atlantic, http://www.theatlanticcities.com/commute/2012/06/how-transportation-bill-failed-america/2431/, “How the Transportation Bill Failed America,” AM)

America is also being left behind by the rest of the world. Developed countries are committing billions of dollars in 21st century transportation and infrastructure spending. At the recent UN conference on sustainability and development in Rio, the eight largest multilateral development banks committed to lending $175 billion over the next decade to mass transit projects in the developing world, both increasing access to opportunity and reducing pollution. Despite the round of self-congratulation we are likely to hear from Congress, a compromise is not a win if it doesn’t give us the transportation system we actually need to fit our needs and lifestyles. Transportation rarely comes up as a hot button issue; it is rarely fodder for big presidential debates or the dynamic conversations on morning TV or radio. But access to affordable transportation is probably one of the most fundamental issues in your life. So whether you are driving on I-15 in Salt Lake City, riding the 6 train in Manhattan, or sitting in traffic trying to get over the Brent Spence Bridge in Cincinnati, Ohio – remind Congress that their work isn’t nearly done yet and that transportation matters.

## Transportation Bill No Link-Uniqueness

#### Congress just passed a transportation bill – makes their links non-unique

Associated Press, ’12 (6/29/12, Associated Press, http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2012/06/29/house-passes-highway-jobs-bill-halts-student-loan-rate-hike/, “Congress passes highway jobs bill, halts student loan rate hike,” AM)

Finding rare political accommodation on the cusp of a holiday recess, Congress passed legislation Friday designed to salvage 2.8 million jobs and shield students from a sharp increase in loan interest rates. The legislation, which also revamps highway and transit programs and shores up the federal flood insurance program, now goes to the White House for President Obama's signatures. Lawmakers trying to leave town for a weeklong Fourth of July recess had been facing twin deadlines: Federal highway and transit aid programs and the government's authority to levy federal fuel taxes were expiring Saturday. And interest rates on new student loans were set to double on Sunday. The burst of legislating came just four months before the November elections, giving lawmakers achievements to show off to voters who have increasingly held Congress in low esteem while the economy continues to flounder. "We have a bill that will boost this economy. We have a bill that is supported by conservatives and liberals, progressives and moderates. I think it's a great day," said Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., who led Senate negotiations on the transportation portion of the package. Boxer estimated the bill would save about 1.8 million jobs by keeping aid for highway and transit construction flowing to states and create another 1 million jobs by using federal loan guarantees to leverage private sector investment in infrastructure projects. Rep. John Mica, R-Fla., chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, said: "Probably millions would have been put out of work if we hadn't acted." Not all lawmakers were happy. "At least it's not as bad as our Republican colleagues wanted," complained Rep. Earl Blumenauer, D-Ore., who has championed bike and pedestrian programs that the measure would squeeze. "But make no mistake, it is not a bill to be proud of." In the bargaining that led up to an agreement on the package earlier this week, House Republicans gave up their demands that the bill require approval of the contentious Keystone XL oil pipeline and block federal regulation of toxic waste generated by coal-fired power plants. Democrats gave ground on environmental protections and biking, pedestrian and safety programs. The bill consolidates various transportation programs and reduces the number of programs by two-thirds. States would have more flexibility on how they spend transportation aid. It also revamps rules on environmental studies of the potential impact of highway projects, with an aim toward cutting in half the time it takes to complete construction projects. And the measure contains an array of safety initiatives, including requirements that would make it more likely passengers would survive a tour bus crash.

#### Even though it has flaws, the transportation bill still non-uniques the DA

NY Times Editorial, ’12 (7/1/12, NY Times, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/02/opinion/at-last-a-transportation-bill.html, “At Last, a Transportation Bill,” AM)

Thanks to the stubbornness of the Senate’s political odd couple — the liberal Barbara Boxer of California and the conservative James Inhofe of Oklahoma — Congress approved on Friday afternoon a serviceable transportation bill. And in the nick of time, too. The current program was due to expire Saturday night, potentially disrupting highway and mass transit projects at the height of the construction season and jeopardizing 2.9 million jobs. Though the final bill is far from perfect, it more nearly resembles the solid Senate measure crafted by Ms. Boxer and Mr. Inhofe, the chairwoman and ranking member of the Senate public works committee, than the appalling House version. It will sustain current financing for 27 months, at a cost of $120 billion, along the lines of the Senate bill. And it does not include two anti-environmental riders pressed by the House — one approving the risky Keystone XL oil pipeline from Canada, the other preventing regulation of toxic coal ash waste from power plants. As a welcome bonus, both houses agreed to establish a Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund and earmark 80 percent of civil penalties paid in connection to the BP oil spill to restoring the coastal ecosystem’s long-term health. There are flaws, some serious. Financing for “transportation alternatives” — bike paths, pedestrian walkways and the like — suffered modest cuts. The bill also directs the transportation secretary to suspend environmental reviews of highway and transit projects costing less than $5 million, in violation of environmental law.

#### Nonunique—Congress Just passed a recent Transportation Bill

Truckinginfo 7/2/12(Truckinginfo Staff, July 2, 2012, <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2012/06/29/house-passes-highway-jobs-bill-halts-student-loan-rate-hike/>, “ Congress Passes Highway Bill; House Bill Would Block EOBR Mandate”, KC)

The House and Senate passed the highway reauthorization bill Friday afternoon. The bill easily cleared both chambers: The House vote was 373-52, and the Senate vote was 74-19. It now goes to President Obama, who is expected to sign it. The bill holds transportation spending at current levels, authorizing $101.3 billion for highways and transit over the next 27 months. Highway interests, including state transportation departments, get a modicum of stability out of the 27-month bill. They didn't get the traditional six-year bill, so important for long-term planning, but certainly two-plus years is much better than the short-term extension that would have been the result had the negotiators failed. The agreement dodges the all-important question of how to secure long-term reinvestment in surface transportation - it does not touch the federal fuel tax - but it does continue the highway program at current funding levels. To get there, Congress had to overcome a push by conservative Republicans in the House to cut spending by about a third to levels that could be supported by the Highway Trust Fund alone, and the Senate had to cobble together a one-time package of funding transfers to make up the difference. "This measure includes historic reforms - cutting red tape and consolidating or eliminating nearly 70 federal programs," said Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman John Mica, R-Fla., in a statement. "This bill will provide a major boost to our economy by putting Americans back to work building our nation's bridges and highways," he said. "It has been a very long and winding road to get to this place," said Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee. "This sends a message to the people of America, and that is that we can work together." The measure includes a number of trucking-specific provisions, such as a field study of the 34-hour restart rule, a study of truck size and weight limits, laying the groundwork for the first national freight policy, a study of the need for crashworthiness in trucks, funding for truck parking and others.

#### **Current transportation infrastructure ensures loss of competitiveness – now is the key time to invest**

Shirey, 12 (Jessica Shirey, Gant Dailey Reporter, 7/2/12, “House Passes Highway Transportation Bill, Package Includes Reauthorization of Secure”, http://gantdaily.com/2012/07/02/house-passes-highway-transportation-bill-package-includes-reauthorization-of-secure/, ESW

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Rep. Glenn ‘GT’ Thompson recently voted to support H.R. 4348, a bipartisan House-Senate Highway Bill agreement that reauthorizes federal highway and transportation programs through the end of fiscal year 2014. Thompson on June 14th initiated a bipartisan letter to the House-Senate Highway Bill Conference Committee urging dedicated funding levels for bridges not on federal-aid highways, otherwise known as “off-system bridges,” which was included in the final agreement. H.R. 4348 passed the U.S. House by a vote of 373-52. “This reauthorization offers critical resources for our states and localities to improve road safety and boost economic activity,” said Thompson. “Adequate funding levels for the Off-system Bridge Program will ensure that communities not on federal-aid highways, including many rural communities in the 5th District, are able to undertake bridge safety improvements without undue financial burden.” H.R. 4348 also includes reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools program, which funds county expenses for public schools, road improvement projects, forest restoration and improvement projects in and around national forests. This funding is critical for many forest communities around the country who have seen significant losses in county revenue as a direct result of reduced timber harvesting on national forests. Additionally the Payment-In-Lieu-of-Taxes program, or PILT, was reauthorized for one year. Similar to Secure Rural Schools, this nationwide program is vital to rural communities as it provides federal payments to local governments to help offset losses in property taxes due to non-taxable federal land within national forest boundaries. “Counties in or close to national forests, such as those in an around the Allegheny National Forest, have been hit by hard economic times and rely on timber harvesting as a major economic engine for the region,” Thompson added. “The extensions of Secure Rural Schools and Payment-In-Lieu-of Taxes will provide a stable revenue stream to these communities, so that counties can provide basic services and children can access the education resources they deserve.”

#### **Current transportation infrastructure ensures loss of competitiveness – now is the key time to invest**

Fram & Lowy, 12 (ALAN FRAM and JOAN LOWY, Associated Press Reporters, 6/29/12, “House, Senate Pass Transportation Bill, Extend Current Student Loan Rates,”http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/06/29/transportation-bill-student-loans\_n\_1638116.html, ESW

WASHINGTON — Congress emphatically approved legislation Friday preserving jobs on transportation projects from coast to coast and avoiding interest rate increases on new loans to millions of college students, giving lawmakers campaign-season bragging rights on what may be their biggest economic achievement before the November elections. The bill sent for President Barack Obama's signature enables just over $100 billion to be spent on highway, mass transit and other transportation programs over the next two years, projects that would have expired Saturday without congressional action. It also ends a bare-knuckle political battle over student loans that raged since spring, a proxy fight over which party was best helping voters muddle through the economic downturn. Obama signed a one-week temporary measure Friday evening, permitting the highway and loan programs to continue until the full legislation reaches his desk. Under the bill, interest rates of 3.4 percent for subsidized Stafford loans for undergraduates will continue for another year, instead of doubling for new loans beginning on Sunday as scheduled by a law passed five years ago to save money. Had the measure failed, interest rates would have mushroomed to 6.8 percent for 7.4 million students expected to get the loans over the coming year, adding an extra $1,000 to the average cost of each loan and antagonizing students – and their parents – four months from Election Day. The Democratic-led Senate sent the measure to Obama by a 74-19 vote, just minutes after the Republican-run House approved it 373-52. The unusual display of harmony, in a bitterly partisan year, signaled lawmakers' eagerness to claim credit for providing transportation jobs, to avert higher costs for students and their families and to avoid being embarrassed had the effort run aground. This year has seen the two parties mostly drive each other's plans for tax breaks and economic revival into a stalemate, although lawmakers have enacted bills retaining the Social Security payroll tax cut for a year and renewing a government agency that promotes U.S. exports. "It's important for Congress to act, not just talk about problems we have but to get things done," said Rep. John Mica, R-Fla., a chief House author of the transportation measure. "We have a bill that will boost this economy," said Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., a sponsor who said the measure would create or save 2.8 million jobs. "We have a bill that is supported by conservatives and liberals, progressives and moderates. I think this is a great day." All the no votes were cast by Republicans. The compromise ended up sprinkled with unrelated nuggets dealing with Asian carp, roll-your-own tobacco and federal timber aid. But its most significant provisions dealt with transportation and student aid. The final transportation measure dropped a provision – which had drawn an Obama veto threat – that would have forced government approval of the controversial Keystone XL oil pipeline from Canada to the Texas coast. But it contains curbs on environmental reviews of transportation projects. Republicans sought those curbs in hopes of cutting construction time almost in half. The bill consolidates federal transportation programs and gives states more flexibility in spending money from Washington. It also contains an array of safety initiatives including requirements aimed at enhancing bus safety. And it makes advocates of bike and pedestrian paths compete for money with other transportation projects. White House spokesman Jay Carney said the administration was glad Congress acted "before middle class families pay the price for inaction." He said Obama will keep pressing for approval of more of his job-creating proposals from last year, to hire teachers, police officers and firefighters and for tax credits to companies that hire new workers.

#### Infrastructure Bill passed Friday thumps the Politics DA also gave States flexibility solving federalism on the CP

Associated Press 6/29 [June 6, 2012, Congress passes highway jobs bill, halts student loan rate hike, http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2012/06/29/house-passes-highway-jobs-bill-halts-student-loan-rate-hike/]

Finding rare political accommodation on the cusp of a holiday recess, Congress passed legislation Friday designed to salvage 2.8 million jobs and shield students from a sharp increase in loan interest rates. The legislation, which also revamps highway and transit programs and shores up the federal flood insurance program, now goes to the White House for President Obama's signatures. Lawmakers trying to leave town for a weeklong Fourth of July recess had been facing twin deadlines: Federal highway and transit aid programs and the government's authority to levy federal fuel taxes were expiring Saturday. And interest rates on new student loans were set to double on Sunday. The burst of legislating came just four months before the November elections, giving lawmakers achievements to show off to voters who have increasingly held Congress in low esteem while the economy continues to flounder. "We have a bill that will boost this economy. We have a bill that is supported by conservatives and liberals, progressives and moderates. I think it's a great day," said Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., who led Senate negotiations on the transportation portion of the package. Boxer estimated the bill would save about 1.8 million jobs by keeping aid for highway and transit construction flowing to states and create another 1 million jobs by using federal loan guarantees to leverage private sector investment in infrastructure projects. Rep. John Mica, R-Fla., chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, said: "Probably millions would have been put out of work if we hadn't acted." Not all lawmakers were happy. "At least it's not as bad as our Republican colleagues wanted," complained Rep. Earl Blumenauer, D-Ore., who has championed bike and pedestrian programs that the measure would squeeze. "But make no mistake, it is not a bill to be proud of." In the bargaining that led up to an agreement on the package earlier this week, House Republicans gave up their demands that the bill require approval of the contentious Keystone XL oil pipeline and block federal regulation of toxic waste generated by coal-fired power plants. Democrats gave ground on environmental protections and biking, pedestrian and safety programs. The bill consolidates various transportation programs and reduces the number of programs by two-thirds. States would have more flexibility on how they spend transportation aid. It also revamps rules on environmental studies of the potential impact of highway projects, with an aim toward cutting in half the time it takes to complete construction projects. And the measure contains an array of safety initiatives, including requirements that would make it more likely passengers would survive a tour bus crash.

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#### Nonunique-Transportation bill already passed in Congress

Fram, 6-29 ( Alan, reporter for the Huffington Post, House, “Senate Pass Transportation Bill, Extend Current Student Loan Rates” http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/06/29/transportation-bill-student-loans\_n\_1638116.html)

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#### Congress already passed transportation bill

Rosenthal 7-1(Andrew, New York Times Reporter, “At Last, a Transportation Bill”, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/02/opinion/at-last-a-transportation-bill.html)

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