

wishing to speak on this conference report later.

First of all, I compliment the chairman and ranking member from the Senate side. I think they have done an extraordinary job on the conference report. I appreciate the work they have done on a range of issues. I think the Senate owes them a debt of gratitude.

I could spend some long period of time talking about the important provisions in this Transportation conference report. I know it took a long while to get to this point. Senator MURRAY, chairing the subcommittee on the Senate side, and others who have worked on this bill for some length of time undoubtedly wish this had been completed much earlier, but there were a series of things that prevented it from happening. In any event, at the end of this session we have a conference report that contains a lot of important items for this country's transportation system. I compliment Senator SHELBY and Senator MURRAY and thank them for their work.

I do want to say—and I will say it briefly—there are two items in the conference report that provide some heartburn for me. The conference was required—or forced, I guess—to accept a provision dealing with the spending of \$400,000 to put airport signs up that describe National Airport really as Reagan National Airport. This conference report, because the House insisted, requires the Metro Airport Authority to spend \$400,000 changing signs so that people will not be confused that they are at the airport when, in fact, the signs now say “National Airport.”

George Will had a little something to say about that in a piece in April of this year. He said:

Travelers too oblivious to know they are at an airport, when large, clear signs say they are, should be given those little plastic pilot wings that are issued to unaccompanied children taken into protective custody. The conservatives want to get Congress to order Metro officials to spend several thousand dollars to add Reagan's name to the station signs and all references to the station on the maps.

He is talking about the station at the Metro stop.

He said:

Reagan had a memorable thing or two to say about bossy Federal institutions meddling in local affairs.

I want to make the point that the House of Representatives has insisted on this for some long while. I regret they forced their will into this conference. I think it is a waste of \$400,000 that probably could have better been used, if the House had thought clearly about this, for security.

We have a range of security needs, given post-September 11, on a range of transportation systems. I would have much rather seen, if the \$400,000 is to be spent, that it be spent on Metro security. I know the Senators from Washington and Alabama share my concern about that.

Let me make one additional point, and that is on the issue of Mexican

trucks. The House of Representatives had a provision that actually prohibited the Mexican trucks from coming into this country beyond the 20-mile limit. The Senate provision was not as strong but was a pretty good provision. I would have preferred a stronger provision. The provision that came out of conference is weaker than both.

I understand the work that Senator MURRAY and Senator SHELBY did. I am not here to criticize their work. I respect the work they did in conference to try to resolve this issue. They make the point—and it is an accurate point—that this is a restriction on funding for 1 year during the appropriations year. So this issue will not be concluded with this judgment in this conference committee. This issue will be a part of the interests of the authorizing committee, oversight by this subcommittee, and also will be a part of the interest of others of us in the Congress who still believe it will be unsafe to have any wholesale movement of Mexican trucks beyond the 20-mile border limit.

It is interesting to me that we now have a limitation on the movement of Mexican trucks in this country, and yet Mexican truck drivers with Mexican trucks have been apprehended in North Dakota, which, of course, is significantly beyond the 20-mile limit from the Mexican border. And it is true they have been apprehended in a good many other States as well.

We have a lot of difficulties, problems, and concerns trying to merge two different kinds of economies with respect to transportation, two different kinds of systems dealing with short- and long-haul trucks, and two different safety standards, different standards with respect to both drivers and trucks.

I wish we had in fact had the House position, which originally came to conference with a prohibition until adequate safety standards were in place and adequate inspection opportunities were in place. That, regrettably, is not the case. And I am not here to suggest that our two Senators—Senator MURRAY and Senator SHELBY—in any way weakened this provision. I am here to say the conference itself forced that weakening. I think that will not and cannot be the last word on this subject. Those on the authorizing committee and those of us who will return to this subject in the appropriations process next year will have more to say.

But having spoken on both of those issues, let me again say to my colleague, Senator MURRAY, and my colleague, Senator SHELBY, they operate in good faith and do an extraordinary job. They run a subcommittee that is very important to this country, especially again in relation to post-September 11, the issue of transportation, the security of our transportation systems in the country.

Our transportation industry is so important to this country's economy. There is no way you can overstate it. The appropriations bill offered to us

today by Senators MURRAY and SHELBY is an appropriations bill that I think the Senate will want to approve. This conference report will get the Senate's approval today.

Madam President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. If the Senator will withhold, the Chair recognizes the Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the time be divided as before.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CARPER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I understand under the UC I have 15 minutes; is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time has been reduced by a series of quorum calls. The Senator has 6 minutes.

Mr. MCCAIN. Six minutes. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent I be granted 4 additional minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I wish to express my strong opposition to the conference agreement on H.R. 2299, the fiscal year 2002 Transportation appropriations bill approved by the House and Senate conferees last week.

I once again find myself in a position in which I must express strong concerns with yet another appropriations bill. This measure, like the eight appropriations bills approved by the Congress this year and like so often has been the case during recent years, continues what I believe is an inappropriate overreach by the appropriators in an effort to fulfill their own agendas at the expense of both current law and the work of the authorizers.

They again are redirecting programmatic funding, funding that in many cases is authorized to be distributed by formula or at the discretion of the Secretary and based on competitive merit.

Instead of allowing the normal funding distribution process to go forward, the appropriators have earmarked that funding for pet projects for the members of the Appropriations Committee.

Before citing a host of examples of the pork barrel spending associated with this conference report, I want to first address the very important trade issue that the appropriators have tied to the pending measure, that is, the North American Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA.

As my colleagues well know, provisions in both the House and the Senate versions of the Transportation appropriations bill proposed to restrict the