



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
5 September, 2003

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House Votes to Deny States Needed Flexibility on Transportation Funding

Amendment strips provision in the bill that allowed states to decide how to allocate their transportation funds.

WASHINGTON —The House of Representatives has passed an amendment to H.R. 2989, the Transportation, Treasury, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act of 2004. The amendment, introduced by Representative Thomas Petri (R-WI), eliminates a provision in the bill that allows states to decide how to allocate their transportation funds to meet their transportation needs.

Current federal law forces each state to spend 10 percent of all surface transportation program funds on “transportation enhancements.” Funding for these enhancements can go to build and maintain bicycle and pedestrian trails. However, they are also used to restore old buildings, construct and sustain transportation museums, and several other extraneous projects that do not help states meet their transportation needs.

“Transportation enhancements divert close to \$600 million annually from building or fixing bridges and roads,” said Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform. **“Instead of using these funds on roadway repair and infrastructure 327 Representatives decided that it was more important to have flowers planted on the side of the road and paintings to look at on the highway.”**

Twenty eight percent of all bridges in the United States are deficient and in need of repair. In addition, it is estimated that the current backlog of needed bridge and roadwork will require \$325 billion to \$400 billion to adequately fix the problem.

“Members of the House of Representatives have denied states the option to use the \$600 million earmarked for transportation enhancements to fund transportation projects that have the highest need,” said Norquist. **“Passage of this amendment ensures that states will not have the necessary flexibility to fund their transportation needs.”**

Americans for Tax Reform is a non-partisan coalition of taxpayers and taxpayer groups who oppose all federal and state tax increases. For more information or to arrange an interview please contact Jonathan Collegio at (202) 785-0266 or by e-mail at jcollegio@atr.org.

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