

[VIDEO CLIP](#)

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the courtesy.

This is the sixth time that we are approaching a shutdown, but it is not any failure of Amtrak. It is a failure of Congress.

There are people here who have a theological zeal that somehow Amtrak should be self-supporting, but they sit back as we lavish subsidies on the airline industry, which has not shown a profit in its passenger service for 75 years, despite \$14 billion in airport subsidies, \$11 billion in air traffic control. After 9/11, we gave them \$15 billion in loans and grants. In fact, Amtrak and its operation helps keep down airline ticket prices because it provides some competition.

What is the problem? Well, first of all, our Republican leadership friends will not allow us to bring to the floor our bipartisan legislation that would reauthorize Amtrak. If we would do that, Amtrak would have stability rather than playing hand-to-mouth. Investing in Amtrak is the cheapest way to buy airport capacity and road capacity.

Amtrak is not refusing. To the contrary, David Gunn and the management there are a breath of fresh air. They are being very cooperative with the Congress that changes signals, makes unrealistic demands, will not let it manage, and yet ignores subsidies in other areas and pretends that we should be the only Nation in the world with unsubsidized rail passenger service, a test that Congress will not apply to the airline industry. Well, they do not apply it to the airline industry because they should not. We should have balanced transportation.

Last but not least, this starvation of Amtrak ignores the huge shutdown costs that will mean for years to come we will still be paying more but more so that Amtrak can't operate. Approve the amendment, reauthorize Amtrak, and we will make sure that we have a balanced transportation system for the future.