

Mr. Speaker, we come to the well of the House often to speak of weighty and contentious issues. This morning, I speak on an important but a lighter note, because this week we have hundreds of cyclists from all over America who are coming to Capitol Hill as part of the National Bicycle Summit.

Fifty-seven million Americans ride bicycles every year. Thirty-three million rode bikes in the last month. And on a daily basis there are approximately one-half million bicycle commuters.

The bicycle industry is an important part of our economy. There are over 6,000 bicycle shops, 2,000 companies that deal with bicycle manufacturing, and tens of thousands of employees. There is a large and emerging industry of bicycle tourism. Yet there is a significant area of difficulty that the cyclists will bring to Capitol Hill pleading their case. Half the Americans are not satisfied with their cycling environment. And although cycling makes up about 7 percent of the total trips, it represents a disproportionate number of the fatalities, and it receives less than 1 percent of Federal funding.

There are significant areas where bicycling could make a difference, not just in terms of transportation. We find in the area of increasing focus on our health habits a growing concern about obesity. Public health officials agree that everyone should have 30 minutes of physical activity every day, and children need an additional 20 minutes, at a minimum, of vigorous activity several times a week, yet 78 percent of our children fall short of this goal.

Well, those of us in Congress can give some good news to the bicycle advocates we will be meeting with. The near unanimous passage of the transportation legislation last year continues the legacy of transportation funding in enhancing the community infrastructure. We have seen, under the ISTEA and the most recent legislation, the overall funding raised from less than \$5 million a year in 1988 to over \$423 million in 2003.

There is an opportunity to enhance the cycling environment with the important Safe Routes to School program that will be able to fund and plan routes that allow our children to be able to walk and bike safely to school. There are other opportunities that we might talk to our friends about. I have introduced, with my colleague, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. *Foley*), the Bicycle Commuter Act to extend transportation commuter benefits for those who bike to work. There is the Conserve by Bike program, wherein the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. *Oberstar*

) is seeking to explore additional ways to understand and communicate the energy savings associated with promoting bicycling.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, our friends from around the country will be joining us this week for the Bicycle Summit. I would urge my colleagues who are not part of the over 160 members of the Congressional Bike Caucus to join this week, to get their official Bike Caucus membership pen, and to join us for a ride at 2 p.m. on Friday with the members of the Bike Caucus and the Bicycle Summit around Washington, D.C..

Mr. Speaker, this is an opportunity for us to do something in a very "bike-partisan" way that will make America healthier, make our families safer, and enhance economic security while we do something that enriches the life of us all.