

Mr. BLUMENAUER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, as we in Congress prepare to adjourn the 104th session, and we turn our attention to the next session and its business, we need to focus on the reauthorization of ISTEA. Citizens and local governments around the country are calling for the ISTEA reauthorization with enhancements programs and flexibility intact. Representatives from 118 cities asked me earlier this month to deliver to my colleagues a message that is signed, an open letter to this Congress.

We need ISTEA and the money that it brings. But more important, to deal with the problems of our increasingly mobile populations, is the flexibility that that legislation entails. More important than money is the local planning framework that is involved. And most important of all is the public involvement that is entailed.

Our citizens, our constituents, know what they need. If we engage them in the process of planning for our future, they will respond with innovation and nontraditional solutions. We in Congress talk a lot about empowerment and doing more with less. ISTEA is a chance to deliver on that promise.