

Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Mr. Chairman, my route to Congress was from State and local government. One of the legacies that I think is indisputable for President Reagan is that he focused more perhaps than any American President the attention of governance on the State and local level, his assertion that big government at the Federal level is not necessarily the best approach to solving our problems.

I think history will note that this will be one of his most important and lasting legacies, refashioning partnerships with local governments.

I can think of no more bizarre way to recognize President Reagan than to undercut that important part of his legacy when we have a designation of an airport, over the objection of the local business community, over the objection of the local airport authority, and where the Congress itself has no ability to go out and change the signs, to say Ronald Reagan Airport.

We had our distinguished committee counsel explain that what we could do is simply withhold passenger landing fees and other Federal funds. We could basically force the local authority to bend to the will of the United States Congress, and in the alternative force them to put at risk the safe and orderly administration of that airport.

Think about that extraordinary response.

I have no doubt in my mind that if Ronald Reagan were President and a Congress came forward with a proposal like this that would thwart the will of the local community, establish a precedent that would allow the renaming of any airport in America; for instance, the John Wayne Airport, this principle could allow the John Wayne Airport to be renamed the Jane Fonda Airport by withholding the same revenue stream, force them to comply with the will.

I think this is an embarrassment to our former President. I think it is actually the wrong way to go, and I hope that the Congress will not follow this path in a way that I think has a very dangerous precedent in the long term.