

GOP Pitches Transportation Pipeline Bill As A Jobs Program

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Republicans are pitching a six-year transportation construction plan as a major jobs bill that can win bipartisan approval before next year's election, a key GOP lawmaker said Monday.

Even while prospects for enacting President Barack Obama's jobs plan have dimmed, Republican backing has grown for a long-term transportation bill to boost employment. Transportation and road-building industries, especially the beleaguered construction industry, are also pressuring lawmakers to make a multi-year commitment of federal funds. Without that, it becomes difficult for states and private investors to finance large infrastructure projects.

The most significant obstacle to passing the bill was eliminated when GOP leaders recently agreed to keep spending on highway programs at current levels even though gas tax revenues are declining, said Rep. John Mica, chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

The GOP bill would spend about \$285 billion over the six years, but would spur far greater investment in roads, bridges, and transit systems through federal loans and loan guarantees, Mica said at a media briefing.

"This is what we hope will be the core of not just a Republican, but a congressional jobs effort," Mica, R-Fla., told reporters.

Still unclear is where Republicans will find the funds to make up as much as a \$100 million shortfall between gas tax and other transportation tax revenues and what they are proposing to spend. House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, suggested last month that royalties from expanding oil and gas development might be one way to find the money, but any proposal along those lines is likely to draw strong opposition from Democrats on environmental grounds.

GOP leaders are exploring a variety of possible funding sources, Mica said.

"We haven't come up with a solution, but we will find a way to fund at least current (spending) levels," he said.

He said his target for passing the bill is March 31, when current authority for highway programs expires.

Last month, Obama announced a \$447 billion jobs plan that included new spending on infrastructure, education and aid to state and local governments paid for in part by tax increases on the wealthy. He also asked for \$50 billion to immediately put Americans to work building roads, bridges, airport runways and other projects. But efforts to pass the full measure were blocked by Senate Republicans, who see the president's proposal as a second economic stimulus.

Rep. Suzy Blake, D-Sioux Falls, sought unsuccessfully to change the boundaries of two districts on the southern edge of Sioux Falls. Blake, who represents District 13, said Republicans now outnumber Democrats by about 700 voters in her district, but the new plan gives Republicans an edge of about 2,300 voters.

"I'm disappointed, shocked and angry," Blake said.

But Rep. Jim Bolin, R-Canton, said the GOP plan creates compact, symmetrical districts that make sense.

Democrats also proposed putting all of North Rapid City into one district. About 25 percent of the area's population is Native American, and the plan would have given them a better chance of electing lawmakers they support, Democrats said.

But House Republican Leader David Lust of Rapid City said the GOP map is better because it tries to keep districts within the city as similar as possible to current districts. North Rapid City residents don't appear to be upset with how their current legislators are voting, he said.

From Page 1

and arguing the project will create jobs during the two-year construction phase.

"It's unfortunate that the governor chose to ignore these facts and instead put taxpayers on the hook for an exercise that will either yield no legislation or put the state in the middle of a costly litigation cycle," said Michael Whatley, executive vice president of the Houston-based Consumer Energy Alliance.

Pipeline opponents maintained the state already has so-called siting authority to control where the pipeline will run.

"We have the authority to re-

quire bond for road repairs. We have the authority to make sure landowners are not liable for oil spills," said Jane Kleeb, executive director of the group Bold Nebraska. "The list is long on what our state can do to ensure our land and water are safe."

Pipeline operator TransCanada last week offered new safeguards it said would limit the effect of a potential spill, but company executives maintained they cannot move the proposed route at this point in the federal permitting process.

Supporters of the project derided Heineman's decision to call the special session, noting a three-year State Department analysis found no major environmental threat from the project



Showcase what you love most about our area in the

PRESS & DAKOTAN

2012 Calendar Photo Contest.

This special feature will display readers' breathtaking photos of our coverage area.

PRESS & DAKOTAN 2012 Calendar Photo Contest

Here's how to enter:

All photos MUST be submitted online at <http://play2win.upickem.net/engine/Welcom.aspx?contestid=41866> or at www.yankton.net

No exceptions. Submit up to three of your own original photographs for consideration, and you'll be eligible to win \$25 in Yankton Chamber bucks and your photo will be featured in the Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan 2012 Calendar. All photo submissions must be received by Oct. 30, 2011 for inclusion in our photo contest. Photos will be voted on by our readers at www.yankton.net

Contest Rules:

1. By submitting a photograph, you give this newspaper permission to publish said photograph in our publications and 2012 Calendar.
2. Employees of this newspaper and contest sponsors, as well as their relatives, are not eligible to win.
3. All submissions must be received by this newspaper by Oct. 30, 2011. Online voting decision is final.

How to submit your photo online:

Log on to www.yankton.net or

<http://play2win.upickem.net/engine/Welcom.aspx?contestid=41866>

Upload your photo

Deadline is October 30 to submit!

Online voting by our readers will occur after deadline.

Promote your photo to be selected by sending it to friends and family via email and facebook!

YANKTON DAILY
PRESS & DAKOTAN
605-665-7811 • www.yankton.net

Pierre

From Page 1

over Democrats in the Senate and a 50-19 advantage in the House, which also has one independent. The plan was approved 50-18 by the House and 31-4 in the Senate, with both votes falling largely along party lines.

Each district elects one senator and two House members at large, except for two Senate districts that are split into two House districts, each of which elects its own House member. Those single-member House districts were created to give American Indian voters a better chance to elect candidates of their choice.

The debate in both chambers focused on Democratic plans to change districts in northeastern South Dakota, Sioux Falls and Rapid City. All the proposed changes were defeated in a series of party-line votes.

Democrats sought changes in the northeastern corner of the state because the Republican plan throws five incumbent Democrats into a district that could only elect three lawmakers.

The new District 1 includes Roberts, Marshall and Day counties and the northern part of Brown County. It throws together Sen. Jason Frerichs of Wilmot, Rep. David Sigdestad of Pierpont, Rep. Dennis Feickert of Aberdeen, Rep. Susan Wismer of Britton and Rep. Paul Dennert of Columbia, who is term-limited in the House and would have to run for the Senate to remain in the Legislature.

Another district includes most of Aberdeen, the state's third largest city. A third district puts the rest of Brown County with part of Spink County and all of Clark and Hamlin counties.

Elaine Elliott, D-Aberdeen, said Brown County should be split into only two districts, not three. Democrats unsuccessfully proposed changing District 1 to cover Roberts, Marshall and Day counties and the rural portion of Codington County outside Watertown. The Aberdeen district would have remained roughly the same, but the third district would have included all of Brown County outside Aberdeen, part of Spink and Hamlin counties and all of Clark County.

The plan would have separated rural areas from the city of Aberdeen and created more compact districts than the Republican plan, Elliott said.

But Olson said during the Senate debate that the Republican plan was better because it didn't split Hamlin County into two districts.

KYNT
AM 1450
MORNING COFFEE
WEEKDAYS
7:40 AM
MONDAY
THRU FRIDAY
Yankton's Home Team!



Call 1-855-674-5358
(TTY/TDD 711),

8 a.m. to 8 p.m., seven days a week.
Or go online for more information
www.MyCoventryMedicare.com/SD.



A Coordinated Care plan with a Medicare Advantage contract. The benefit information provided herein is a brief summary, not a comprehensive description of benefits. For more information contact the plan.

Y0022_CCP_2012_4002_356_FINAL5 File and Use: 10/02/2011

Lighting Your Path to Good HealthSM



See Medicare in a whole new light!

Find out how a Coventry Health Care Medicare Advantage plan can benefit you.

As your local health plan, Coventry is committed to offering you low-cost options designed to help you be healthy and save you money. And because we're your neighborhood plan, you have access to providers you trust who actively participate in the full scope of your care.

This year, Medicare enrollment runs from October 15 to December 7!

Call today to receive *Lighting Your Path to Good Health*, our no-cost, no-obligation informational kit. In it you'll discover important answers to your Medicare questions.



Let us shine a light on our Medicare Advantage plans with plan options that include:

- \$0 monthly plan premiums for the last 3 years!
- Low copays for primary care physician visits
- A maximum out-of-pocket cost protection that puts a fixed limit on how much you have to pay for health care costs in a year
- A large network that has the doctors and facilities you know and trust
- No-cost preventive vision and health club membership at participating facilities