Negative Brief: Abolish the Highway Trust Fund

By Harrison Durland

***"Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially reform its transportation policy."***

The AFF plan abolishes the Highway Trust Fund, a pot of federal money Congress allocates to the states for roads and mass transit subsidies, and the taxes that fund it. The Negative strategy will argue that most of their harms are unsolved or economically invalid, and the current level of federal involvement is justified by economic theory and public safety. Affirmatives will likely focus on at least one main issue: That states and/or private companies would better handle the funds/do the jobs, based on economic theory (e.g. regarding responsibility and accountability). They may also raise the issue that federal oversight increases costs, for example because of Davis-Bacon (“Prevailing wages”) regulations required for all projects done with federal money. Your responses will be to minimize the impact of these harms and outweigh them with disadvantages.

There are also a fair number of evidential and empirical examples of where private toll roads (the most likely alternative to federal funding) fail. The affirmative may likely identify some valid flaws in federal government involvement, but you want to say their plan tends to make the problems worse, and where it doesn’t (i.e. where it does solve) you outweigh with those turns and other disadvantages.

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OPENING QUOTES / NEG PHILOSOPHY

Negative Philosophy

Note to reader: This stance does not need to be read aloud; you should consider time constraints when choosing whether to read this or not.

1. The *\*****federal\**** government’s current degree and forms of involvement are overall justified by economic theory and public safety.
2. Furthermore, removal of federal involvement will abolish a key tool in upholding the public interest in areas such as safety and even prevailing wage regulations.
3. Their hopes for solvency—including “free markets” and “state management” are deeply flawed in reality.

Reverse Advocacy: American Highways Users Alliance calls for continued federal leadership

American Highway Users Alliance 2010 (AHUA is a nonprofit 501 (c)(6) advocacy organization/coalition that has represented the interests of various motorists and businesses since 1932) (No designated author) October 2010. “A Primer on the Federal Highway System” <http://www.highways.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/TAB2-primer-on-the-federal-program-FINAL.pdf> (Brackets added)

As we move further into the 21st Century, Americans are driving more than ever. In fact, highways are the most heavily used mode of transportation for both personal and commercial travel, accounting for 3,000,000,000,000 (3 trillion) miles driven last year (99 percent of America’s surface travel). Trucks moving over highways in 2010 will ship 84 percent of the dollar value of all domestic freight sold in the U.S. Yet investments in our national system of highways and bridges have not kept pace with those increases in demand. As our infrastructure crumbles and people are injured and killed, underinvestment continues. Safe and efficient roads are critical to our nation — impacting the well-being and mobility of its citizens, its productivity and employment base, its competitiveness, its national security and the health of its economy. Given their fundamental national importance, the federal government should continue to play a leading role in constructing and maintaining a top-quality, nationwide network of highways and bridges.

Importance of National Interstate System

Federal Highway Administration 2013 (The FHWA is the branch of the Federal Department of Transportation that oversees and administers highways, among other functions) (Date is unclear, but appears to be 2013) (Specific authors not listed) “2013 Status of the Nation’s Highways, Bridges, and Transit: Conditions & Performance” <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/2013cpr/pdfs/cp2013.pdf>

President Eisenhower wrote in his memoirs that “more than any single action by the government since the end of the war, this one would change the face of America. Its impact on the American economy . . . was beyond calculation.” The Dwight D. Eisenhower National System of Interstate and Defense Highways, as it is now called, accelerated interstate and regional commerce, enhanced the country’s competitiveness in international markets, increased personal mobility, facilitated military transportation, and accelerated metropolitan development throughout the United States. Although the Interstate System accounted for only 1.2 percent of the Nation’s total roadway mileage in 2010, it carried 24.2 percent of all highway travel.

INHERENCY

1. A/T “HTF constantly running out of funds”

FAST Act funds HTF through 2020

**We don’t agree that there’s any problem with the spending levels of the HTF, but even if there is, the problem is solved until 2020, so there’s no rush to do this plan.**

Robert Kirk and William Mallett 2016 (Both authors are experts in transportation policy with the Congressional Research Service. The CRS is the well-established research organization serving congress since 1914) 1 November, 2016. “Funding and Financing Highways and Public Transportation” <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R44674.pdf>

The most recent reauthorization act, the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act; P.L. 114-94), was enacted on December 4, 2015, and authorized spending on federal highway and public transportation programs through September 30, 2020. The act provided $70 billion in general fund transfers to the HTF to support the programs over the five-year life of the act. This use of general fund transfers to supplement the HTF will have been the de facto funding policy for 12 years when the FAST Act expires at the end of FY2020. The FAST Act did not address funding of surface transportation programs over the longer term. Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projections indicate that the HTF revenue shortfalls relative to spending will reemerge following expiration of the FAST Act.

1. A/T “Wasteful spending: earmarks” – Earmarks are banned

Gabriel Roth 2010 (civil engineer and transportation economist) “Federal Highway Funding” 1 June 2010 <https://www.downsizinggovernment.org/transportation/federal-highway-funding>

The inefficient political allocation of federal dollars can be seen in the rise of "earmarking" in transportation bills. This practice involves members of Congress slipping in funding for particular projects requested by special interest groups in their districts. In 1982, the prohibition on earmarks in highway bills in effect since 1914 was broken by the funding of 10 earmarks costing $362 million. In 1987, President Ronald Reagan vetoed a highway bill partly because it contained 121 earmarks, and Congress overrode his veto.

However, earmarks have been banned since the year that article was published.

Stephen Dinan 2017 (Journalist) 10 January, 2017 “Senate votes to keep ban on earmark spending” <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/jan/10/senate-votes-keep-ban-earmark-spending/> (Brackets added)

Senate Republicans voted Tuesday to reimpose a ban on earmarks in the new Congress that just began, meaning lawmakers will once again be prevented from slipping their favored pork projects into bills. Some senators had been agitating to try to cut back on the ban and allow some earmarking, but in the end the GOP conference voted to renew the total prohibition that’s [has] been in place for six years now.

1. A/T “P3s are restricted” – 2015 FAST Act promotes P3s

**Note to reader:** Be careful of running this with the “P3s = bad” DA. You can and should, however, combine it with the “wait and see about P3s” DA+inherency point. **Also,** it is important to check the date/context of their evidence before running this, because this point will not be strong if the evidence says that even after FAST, P3s are harmed.

Schmidt, Narefsky, and Seliga 2015 (John Schmidt, David Narefsky, and Joseph Seliga are all partners with the legal advising firm Mayer Brown, which is a global legal services provider advising clients across the Americas, Asia, Europe and the Middle East) 15 December, 2015. “How The FAST Act Will Benefit Public-Private Partnership” <https://www.law360.com/articles/736145/how-the-fast-act-will-benefit-public-private-partnership> (Brackets and their ellipses added)

For the first time in a decade, Congress has passed, and the president has signed, a long-term surface transportation reauthorization bill, providing approximately $305 billion of funding for highway and transit projects over the next five years and revising federal transportation policy on a number of important topics. This article provides an overview of the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act), H.R. 22, and examines the act’s positive impact on the burgeoning U.S. public-private partnership market.

[Later in the article]

On balance, by providing a relatively stable but still under-funded federal revenue stream, the FAST Act is largely positive for the continued use of the P3 delivery model by U.S. states. The FAST Act will end much of the short-term funding uncertainty that caused states to postpone or cancel projects during prior weeks- or months-long Highway Trust Fund patches, but the lack of fully realized surface transportation funding will encourage states to continue to seek project delivery efficiencies and private funding sources through P3s.

SIGNIFICANCE

1. A/T “General revenue funding is bad” – Turn: General beneficiaries justify this

Chad Shirley with the Congressional Budget Office 2011 (The CBO is the federal agency that provides legislative research and information to Congress) January 2011. “Spending and Funding for Highways” <https://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/112th-congress-2011-2012/reports/01-19-highwayspendingbrief.pdf>

To the extent that benefits from highway spending accrue to the nation as a whole, to both people who use highways and people who do not, some commitment of revenues from the Treasury’s general fund may be economically justified. A potential advantage of using general revenues is the large amount that can be raised. Moreover, concerns about equity can be addressed directly through the setting of tax rates, and the incremental costs of collecting additional general revenues are negligible.

**Impact/Summary:** If emergency vehicles use highways to get to your house or business, if someone can visit and connect with you via highways, if highways reduce congestion on the local roads you use, etc. then you would be benefitting from highways without having to pay for the costs of using it. Thus, a portion of funding through general revenues is not only okay, but actually required for the purposes of economic efficiency.

1. A/T “Higher costs from Davis-Bacon Act”

Summary / Overview

**Note to reader**: This is addressing the study referenced by James Sherk (with the Heritage foundation), who is referenced by Dr. Veronique de Rugy (with the Mercatus Center). Evidence for some of the various points here are provided below. These points are focused on the “Beacon Hill” study, but for any study that an affirmative references, **these should be the basis of methodology questions in CX**.

* The study never once mentions the word “productivity,” meaning it likely failed to account for changes in skill and thus, savings based on higher productivity and decreased injuries.
* It assumes that labor makes up 50% of construction costs, whereas the actual figure is around half of that.
* It appears to use Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data to determine what prevailing wages “should” be, even though on one BLS page, in bold letters, it says **“The OES program cannot make official classification determinations for… prevailing wages.”**
* The “loss” figure they give does not account for jobs gained by the money spent.

Colorado study: No difference in the cost of federal versus state contracts, so no impact to Davis-Bacon

Dr. Kevin Duncan 2014 (Holding a PhD in economics from the University of Utah, he currently serves as professor of Economics in Hasan School of Business at Colorado State University-Pueblo) 5 September 2014. “The Effect of Federal Davis-Bacon and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Regulations on Highway Maintenance Costs” published in the Journal of Industrial Relations and Labor, in association with Cornell University, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0019793914546304>

A challenge of previous research addressing the cost implications of prevailing wage laws has been to isolate the effect of the wage policy from other regulations that may also influence construction costs. I compare cost differences between state and federally funded highway resurfacing projects in Colorado and confront the same challenge. While federal and state highway projects are built under the same antidiscrimination, quality, and safety regulations, federal projects are covered by Davis-Bacon prevailing wage regulations and by the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program. Highway resurfacing projects funded by the State of Colorado are not covered by either of these regulations. So the cost comparison between federal and state highway maintenance projects is a test of the effect of the wage and disadvantaged business policies on construction costs. Results indicate that when measures of project size and complexity are included, there is no statistically significant difference in the low bids of state and federal projects.

*Supposed* public expenses from Davis-Bacon are offset by other savings it creates

Dr. Kevin Duncan, Dr. Peter Philips, and Frank Manzo 2017 (Kevin Duncan is a professor of economics in the Hasan School of Business at Colorado State University-Pueblo || Peter Philips holds a PhD in economics from Stanford and is a professor of economics at University of Utah || Frank Manzo IV is the policy director at the Illinois Economic Policy Institute, holding a Masters in Public Policy from University of Chicago) 14 April 2017. “BUILDING AMERICA WITH PREVAILING WAGE” <https://illinoisepi.files.wordpress.com/2017/04/building-america-davis-bacon_final.pdf>

The Davis-Bacon Act reduces spending on materials, fuel, and equipment on public works projects. Repeal of the Davis-Bacon Act would increase spending on public assistance for construction workers. By increasing worker incomes, the Davis-Bacon Act increases state and federal tax revenues.

Davis-Bacon critics ignore a multitude of offsetting factors, especially productivity increases

Nooshin Mahalia with the Economic Policy Institute 2008 (Mahalia is an economic policy analyst with the EPI, graduated from Georgia Tech with a BA in Journalism || The EPI is a nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank that seeks to broaden the public debate about strategies to achieve a prosperous and fair economy.) 3 July 2008. “Prevailing wages and government contracting costs: A review of the research” <http://www.epi.org/publication/bp215/>

A growing body of economic analysis finds that prevailing wage regulations do not inflate the costs of government construction contracts. A simple premise underlies the hypothesis that prevailing wages raise costs: the laws result in higher wage costs for contractors, and contractors pass these costs on to the government. Although this seems like a plausible outcome, there are many reasons why the costs to the government might be the same regardless of the wage differences. For example: Contractors might pay the wages required under prevailing wage laws even if the law does not require it. Labor costs are not the dominant costs in government construction contracts. Even including benefits and payroll taxes, labor costs are roughly 20-30% of construction contracts, according to the Census of Construction (Phillips 1998).Thus, for example, if labor costs are 25% of total costs and prevailing wage rules raise wages by 10%, the impact on contract costs would be no more than 2.5%. Thus, even if there is an increase in contract costs, it is likely to be small—to the point of being undetectable in some instances and/or by some studies. Higher wages might be offset by a rise in productivity. Prevailing wages can attract better-skilled, more productive workers, or firms may rely on higher managerial productivity or invest in labor-saving technologies to offset higher labor costs (Philips 1996). Higher wage costs might also be offset through “factor substitution,” i.e., substituting more expensive labor with, say, cheaper materials. Contractors not subject to prevailing wage laws might retain the money they save in wages as higher profits rather than passing the savings on to the government. Alternatively, contractors paying prevailing wages might absorb the higher wage costs, paying for them out of their profits rather than passing them on.

As with any economic analysis examining the impact of a policy on an economic outcome, the challenge is to isolate the impact of the policy from all of the other factors that might influence the outcome.

A/T “Labor costs are 50% of construction costs” – Labor costs are far less, at least for highway/streets

Dr. Peter Philips 1998 (PhD in economics from Stanford and professor of economics at Univ of Utah ) 20 February 1998. “Kansas and Prevailing Wage Legislation,” prepared for the Kansas Senate Labor and Industries Committee <http://www.faircontracting.org/PDFs/prevailing_wages/kansas_prevailing_wage.pdf> (Brackets and bolding added)

When Kansas repealed its prevailing wage law, Kansans were promised anywhere from a 6% to a 17% savings on public construction costs. How were such estimates calculated? The answer is the estimates were hypothetical calculations. The calculation typically went like this. Assume that labor costs are 50% of total construction costs. Assume wage rates fall by 12% to 40% with the repeal of Kansas’ prevailing wage law. Assume labor productivity does not fall when wage rates fall by 12% to 40%. With these three assumptions in hand, the hypothetical calculation is simple. If 50% of total costs fall by 40%, then 100% of total costs will fall by 20%. If 50% of total costs fall by 12%, then total costs fall by 6%. There you have it. A savings of 6% to 20% on total construction costs. Kansans can now build five schools for the cost of four (a 20% savings) by repealing the state's prevailing wage law. The only problem with this hypothetical calculation is that all its assumptions are wrong. Labor costs are not 50% of total costs. They are around 30% in building construction and less on street and highway construction. Furthermore, labor productivity is not constant when wage rates fall. Skilled and experienced workers leave for better jobs elsewhere. Training falls off. Consequently, productivity falls--offsetting in part, or in full, the fall in wage rates. The key source on information for the construction industry is the U.S. Census of Construction. This Census comes out every five years. The results for 1997 are not yet released. In 1992, for all construction in Kansas, labor costs--wages, benefits, payroll taxes of construction workers--as a percent of total construction costs were 25%. Total cost here does not include land acquisition, architect fees or construction management fees. It also adjusts for possible over-counting by netting out of each contractor's value of construction the cost charged to that contractor by subcontractors.

Impact/Summary: AFF has to prove what their labor cost estimate for Davis-Bacon is based on to refute this.

Beacon Hill Study relies on BLS numbers, which aren’t accurate because BLS doesn’t estimate prevailing wages

***Note*** *to reader: The affirmative’s Beacon Hill evidence is unclear as to what BLS program they base their estimates on; the methodology does not appear to make this clear. However, it does at one point state “In contrast [to the WHD survey], the BLS uses the Occupational Employment Survey (OES), which collects wage data from over 1.2 million establishments.” Thus, you should ask the affirmative to explain the methodology on this issue.*

Bureau of Labor Statistics 2017 (The BLS is the government agency tasked with recording data on labor, among other functions) last modified 31 March, 2017. “Occupational Employment Statistics: Frequently Asked Questions” <https://www.bls.gov/oes/oes_ques.htm> (click on “expand all” or D-13) (Bold and italics are in original)

However, this guidance is solely to help users of statistical data find workers who perform a specific set of work activities or to help statistical data collectors. The OES program cannot make official classification determinations for non-statistical purposes, such as prevailing wages. It is up to customers using the SOC for non-statistical purposes to review the detailed definitions for the SOC codes and determine the best match, in light of their own program and policy purposes.

Can’t use BLS numbers to estimate prevailing wages

Drs. Duncan and Philips, and Manzo 2017 (Kevin Duncan is a professor of economics in the Hasan School of Business at Colorado State University-Pueblo || Peter Philips holds a PhD in economics from Stanford and is a professor of economics at University of Utah || Frank Manzo IV is the policy director at the Illinois Economic Policy Institute, holding a Masters in Public Policy from University of Chicago) 14 April 2017. “BUILDING AMERICA WITH PREVAILING WAGE” <https://illinoisepi.files.wordpress.com/2017/04/building-america-davis-bacon_final.pdf>

By including wages, fringe benefits, and training contributions by job classification where the work is performed, Davis-Bacon wage surveys reveal actual market rates in more than 3,000 counties across America. The Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor Statistics says that use of BLS data is not appropriate for prevailing wage determinations because it excludes benefits, over-represents residential construction, does not account for the skill level of workers, does not survey actual construction sites, and is often based on small sample sizes. Changing the Davis-Bacon wage survey by using BLS data or other faulty procedures would impose a significant wage cut on millions of middle-class American construction workers.

3. A/T “HTF’s formulas are unfair/ineffective” (Some States don’t get fair share back from what they pay in)

There are good justifications for variations in highway funding grants

Congressional Research Service 2011 (The CRS is the research arm for congress, established in 1914) (Author not listed) 13 June 2011. “The Donor-Donee State Issue in Highway Finance” <https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20110613_R41869_022e25b987ede4fa48bb59f3f571293c27b96f1c.pdf> (Brackets added)

The donor state argument is that for the sake of equity each state should receive federal highway funding roughly equal to the fees and taxes that the state’s highway users pay into the HTF. Equity advocates tend to view highway account as if it were a sealed system in which the overall inflow and outflow are equal each year. In such a system, simply having each state’s percentage of total national spending equal the state’s percent of the total nation-wide payments to the HTF would achieve equity.

[**End quote. Later in the same section, it continues. Quote:]**

Donee states argue that fairness should not be separated from need. They assert that the age of their highway infrastructures (especially those in Northeastern states), the high cost of working on heavily congested urban roads, as well as the limited financial resources of large, sparsely populated western states justify those states’ donee status. They also argue that some needs are inherently federal, such as a national highway network, and that these needs cannot be funded solely according to state or regional boundaries. Furthermore, donee states argue that Midwestern and Southern donor states often spend less local and state money, relative to the federal funding they receive, on highways than donee states, and chide these donor states for pleading for federal funds when they are unwilling to ante up their own state and local resources. It is worth noting that the Federal-Aid Highway Program is the only federal program that considers rate-of-return criteria. Objections to viewing federal highway spending in the conceptual framework of donor and donee states are often based on the fact that some highway program donor states are donee states in terms of federal tax and spending flows overall, or with respect to specific federal spending such as defense or human service programs.

Status Quo has a good balance of equity and need

Congressional Research Service 2011 (The CRS is the research arm for congress, established in 1914) (Author not listed) 13 June 2011. “The Donor-Donee State Issue in Highway Finance” <https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20110613_R41869_022e25b987ede4fa48bb59f3f571293c27b96f1c.pdf>

The distinction between formula and discretionary programs becomes especially significant in the process of creating equity programs, such as the current Equity Bonus Program (EB), which was designed to make sure that states receive federal highway grants equal to at least a specified share of their federal highway tax payments—a percentage referred to as the “rate of return.” It is difficult to conceive of how discretionary programs could be constructed to guarantee a designated rate of return to every state and still remain discretionary. Also, the formula programs were originally created to fulfill policy needs, such as maintenance of the Interstate System or the repair and reconstruction of deficient highway bridges. Some highway needs, such as roads on federal lands, border crossing infrastructure, trade corridors, and Interstate System maintenance, have inherently federal aspects that would likely not be addressed fully if the Federal-Aid Highway Program were predicated on a rate of return to all states. Even advocates of devolving the FAHP to the states have acknowledged the existence of some federal needs. In addition, donor states themselves have in the past recognized the need for some states to get larger than normal shares of federal-aid funds. During the debate that preceded passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Act of 1991 (ISTEA; P.L. 102-240), for example, donor states agreed that large, sparsely populated states and some small states should receive larger shares. To deal with these problems in a way that retains programmatic policy goals and at the same time achieves improvement in the uniformity of states’ return on payments, Congress has decided to leave some programs outside of the equity programs, such as the Federal Lands Highways programs and the National Corridor Infrastructure Improvement Program. The programs included in the current Equity Bonus Program and subject to the program’s guarantees and distribution requirements are collectively referred to as the “scope” of the program.

SOLVENCY

1. A/T “Wasteful federal spending / States more efficient” - States waste money just like the federal government

Tennessee

J. Owen, C. Butler, R. Turbeville, and contributors K.Lawson and M. Thompson, with the Citizens Against Government Waste 2011 (CAGW is a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to educating the American public about waste, mismanagement and inefficiency in various levels of government—primarily federal) 2011. “2011 Tennessee Pork Report,” commissioned by the Tennessee Center for Policy Research. <https://www.cagw.org/archives/state-piglet-books/2011/2011-tennessee-pork-report.pdf> (Brackets and their ellipses added)

In all, the 2011 Pork Report uncovers $371 million that state and local governments wasted over the past year.

[**END QUOTE. They go on to report later in the same context QUOTE:]**

The 2011 Tennessee Pork Report identifies $371 million in government waste, including the fat in Tennessee’s state budget and wasteful spending at the local level. From perennial losers to newfound waste and largesse in 2011, Tennessee’s governments are very poor stewards of taxpayers’ money.

Rhode Island

Citizens Against Government Waste 2011 (CAGW is a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to educating the American public about waste, mismanagement and inefficiency in various levels of government—primarily federal) 2011. “2011 Rhode Island Piglet Book,” created with the Ocean State Policy Research Institute <https://www.cagw.org/archives/state-piglet-books/2011/ri-piglet-2011-final.pdf> (Brackets and their ellipses added)

As the hundreds of examples and more than $600 million in wasted tax dollars exposed in the 2011 Rhode Island Piglet Book illustrate, the state of Rhode Island has a spending addiction, as do our lawmakers in Washington, DC. For their part, state and local leaders have a unique opportunity to get serious about bridling government spending and prove to taxpayers that elected officials in Rhode Island view them as more than just ATMs ready to be tapped for the next pork project or pricey scheme.

[**End quote. Later, in the conclusion, they continue, quote:]**

First, as the Piglet Book points out, wasteful spending and questionable programs are rampant in Rhode Island. Simply shuttering ineffective programs and cutting the wasteful projects exposed in this publication would save federal, state and local taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars with little or no noticeable impact on the quality of services received by Rhode Island residents.

Illinois

Citizens Against Government Waste 2012 (CAGW is a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to educating the American public about waste, mismanagement and inefficiency in various levels of government—primarily federal) 2012. “ILLINOIS PIGLET BOOK” published with the Illinois Policy Institute <https://www.cagw.org/archives/state-piglet-books/2012/2012_Illinois_Piglet_digital.pdf> (Brackets and their ellipses added)

The 2012 Illinois Piglet Book highlights nearly 200 examples of wasteful spending, which robs taxpayers of about $350 million in hard-earned income. This is a real problem that hurts real people.

[**End quote. Later, in the conclusion, they continue, quote:]**

Unfortunately, politicians in Illinois don’t know how to set priorities. The money they are wasting is real, the lost economic activity is real and the families in Illinois struggling to keep up with the state’s ever-increasing taxes are real. The waste means lost opportunities, wasted energy and foregone prosperity.

1. A/T “States will fund instead”

Some might, but most won’t: Gas taxes are unpopular at the state level in most of the country.

Alan Greenblatt 2016 (covers politics as well as policy issues for Governing; coauthor of a standard textbook on state and local governments; previously worked as a reporter for NPR and CQ.) 5 February 2016, with Governing.com (provides nonpartisan news, insight and analysis) “Gas Tax Increases Still a Hard Sell in States and Congress” [http://www.governing.com/topics/transportation-infrastructure/gov-raising-gas-taxes-states-obama-oil.html](http://www.governing.com/topics/transportation-infrastructure/gov-raising-gas-taxes-states-obama-oil.htmlr) (brackets added)

Raising the gas tax is a tough sell in Missouri. For one thing, the state's constitution limits the total annual increase in all taxes and fees to about $90 million. Since each penny of tax on gasoline brings in $39 million, lawmakers couldn't increase the tax by much more than 2 cents. There's widespread recognition that roads require more revenue, and the state's gas tax is among the lowest in the nation. But even a modest-sized bump is unlikely to pass this year. "In an election year, it's an uphill battle," said Glen Kolkmeyer, who chairs the Missouri House Transportation Committee. The same is true all over the country. Many states have long lists of projects that are approved but not paid for. Even with the recent passage in Congress of a five-year, $300 billion package -- the first major federal transportation bill in a decade -- there's not enough money to make up the shortfalls in states. Despite all that, most governors and legislators are reluctant to raise their gax tax rates to increase infrastructure funding. "Raising taxes in any form continues to be a very radioactive strategy," said Sujit CanagaRetna, a senior fiscal analyst with the Council of State Goverments.

[**End quote. Later in the same article, it continues. Quote:]**

Eight states did approve gas tax increases last year -- including conservative places like Georgia, Idaho and Nebraska -- and another eight did so the previous two years. "That's more than we've seen in a significant amount of time," said Allison Premo Black, senior economist with the American Road and Transportation Builders Association. Nevertheless, gas taxes remain highly unpopular throughout most of the nation. In California, the tax rate is tied to the price of gas, much like a sales tax, rather than taxing a certain number of cents per gallon. Falling prices have meant plummeting revenues, leading the California Transportation Commission last month to cancel $754 million worth of projects over five years, or 38 percent of the total. In his [State of the State address](http://www.governing.com/topics/politics/tns-california-jerry-brown-state-address.html), California Gov. Jerry Brown implored legislators to "bite the bullet and enact new fees and taxes" to reduce the state's $77 billion backlog of road repairs. But what couldn't pass in a special session last year isn't expected to get much further in an election year.

States historically have neglected infrastructure

Elizabeth McNichol 2016 (Senior Fellow at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities) 23 February 2016 (CBPP is a nonpartisan research and policy institute, founded in 1981 with the goal of analyzing federal budget priorities) “It’s Time for States to Invest in Infrastructure” <http://www.cbpp.org/research/state-budget-and-tax/its-time-for-states-to-invest-in-infrastructure>

Every state needs infrastructure improvements that have potential to pay off economically in private sector investment and job growth. But rather than identifying and making the infrastructure investments that provide the foundation for a strong economy, many states are cutting taxes and offering corporate subsidies in a misguided approach to boosting economic growth.  Tax cuts will spur little to no economic growth and take money away from schools, universities, and other public investments essential to producing the talented workforce that businesses need. This pattern of neglect of infrastructure by states — the primary stewards (along with their local government partners) of the nation’s infrastructure — has serious consequences for the nation’s growth and quality of life as roads crumble, school buildings become obsolete, and outdated facilities jeopardize public health.

[**End quote. Later in the same article, it continues. Quote:]**

But overall, states are cutting infrastructure spending as a share of the economy, the opposite of what is needed.  Spending by state and local governments on all types of capital dropped from its high of 3 percent of the nation’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the late 1960s to less than 2 percent in 2014. Falling federal spending on infrastructure is exacerbating the problem.

States are “ill-suited” to deal with increased responsibility for transportation funding

Prof. Christopher Yoo and Timothy Pfenninger 2015 (Yoo, - professor of law at Univ of Pennsylvania Law School, has authored books on technology and law, and frequently testifies before congress on such issues as technology and law || Pfenninger is a J.D. candidate at the Penn Law School, and has frequently worked as a research assistant and/or interns at places such as the US Attorney’s Office) 13 October 2015, with the Univ of Pennsylvania School of Law. “CONVERGING ON CRISIS: SAVING THE HIGHWAY TRUST FUND” <https://publicpolicy.wharton.upenn.edu/live/news/989-converging-on-crisis-saving-the-highway-trust-fund/for-students/blog/news.php>

When American surface transportation infrastructure requires the largest influx of capital investment due to lifespan obsolescence, deferred maintenance, and mothballed projects, the HTF faces constrained revenues due to (1) hypothecation, (2) inflation, (3) technological advancements, and (4) shifting microeconomic behaviors. Furthermore, the states are ill-suited to accept increased responsibility for transportation administration and capitalization due to serious budgetary constraints, the incongruence of state gas tax rates with transport needs, and the appropriation of gas tax receipts for mandatory state spending.  The myriad impediments to government infrastructure investment preclude modernization and adaptation for changing transport modes and shifting economic demands.

**If states use gas taxes for funding, it’s** ineffective and won’t meet the needs

Remember, the federal government adds general revenues sometimes to the Highway Fund to supplement what the gas tax brings in. This point is more effective if you ask the affirmative in CX as to how states will fund their programs; you want them to say “Gasoline tax.” Also, see the sig A/T about general revenue funding. In case an affirmative challenges the uniqueness of this, you should point out that the federal government’s current means of funding is not 100% based on hypothecated excise taxes, whereas the states would likely have a higher such rate.

Prof. Christopher Yoo and Timothy Pfenninger 2015 (Yoo, - professor of law at Univ of Pennsylvania Law School, has authored books on technology and law, and frequently testifies before congress on such issues as technology and law || Pfenninger is a J.D. candidate at the Penn Law School) 13 October 2015, with the Univ of Pennsylvania School of Law. “CONVERGING ON CRISIS: SAVING THE HIGHWAY TRUST FUND” <https://publicpolicy.wharton.upenn.edu/live/news/989-converging-on-crisis-saving-the-highway-trust-fund/for-students/blog/news.php>

However, our primary source of federal surface transportation funding is a hypothecated excise tax on fuel sources. Washington spends approximately $50 billion per year on surface transportation, mainly in the form of grants to local authorities and states for authorized projects. Although the “user fee” model satisfies a sense of fairness in that use of federal resources is pegged to a commensurate cost for such use, it ensures that revenues rather than project need is the determining factor for the scale and breadth of federal transportation initiatives. Back to the healthcare example: if our healthcare programs were primarily funded by hypothecated excise taxes, we would be unable to expand services, despite popular demand and expert advisement, without a significant uptick in receipts from the healthcare excise taxes.

1. A/T “States can solve better”

States are even worse at managing highway funding than the federal government

Prof. Christopher Yoo and Timothy Pfenninger 2015 (Yoo, - professor of law at Univ of Pennsylvania Law School, has authored books on technology and law, and frequently testifies before congress on such issues as technology and law || Pfenninger is a J.D. candidate at the Penn Law School) 13 October 2015, with the Univ of Pennsylvania School of Law. “CONVERGING ON CRISIS: SAVING THE HIGHWAY TRUST FUND” <https://publicpolicy.wharton.upenn.edu/live/news/989-converging-on-crisis-saving-the-highway-trust-fund/for-students/blog/news.php>

New Jersey also exemplifies another problem with state gas taxes: states do not spend these funds on roads. In New Jersey, the state government, spent 95 percent of over $500 million in gas tax revenues to service its debt. Meanwhile, Texas spends 25 percent of its fuel receipts on education. Then, these states are forced to pull funds from the HTF to pay for infrastructure maintenance and expansion, drawing from the already-depleting fund.  While this may be interpreted as an argument for hypothecated state gasoline taxes, it also demonstrates that the states are even less able to administer a transportation program than Washington is. It would seem that states should have less authority over transportation revenues and expenditures so that they can stop robbing Peter (the HTF) to pay Paul (their state transportation funds) to pay Patty (their state debt servicing and other programs).

States are poor planners for regional or national projects

The Economist 2011 (respected British news magazine, does not cite the names of individual authors) 28 April 2011. “Life in the Slow Lane” <http://www.economist.com/node/18620944>

States can make bad planners. Big metropolitan areas—Chicago, New York and Washington among them—often sprawl across state lines. State governments frequently bicker over how (and how much) to invest. Facing tight budget constraints, New Jersey's Republican governor, Chris Christie, recently scuttled a large project to expand the railway network into New York City. New Jersey commuter trains share a 100-year-old tunnel with Amtrak, a major bottleneck. Mr Christie's decision was widely criticised for short-sightedness; but New Jersey faced cost overruns that in a better system should have been shared with other potential beneficiaries all along the north-eastern corridor. Regional planning could help to avoid problems like this.

1. A/T “Public-private partnerships (P3) will solve”

Even Heritage disagrees: “P3s are not the solution” – too many problems

William Reinhardt and Dr. Ronald Utt 2012 (Reinhardt is is editor and publisher of Public Works Financing. || Utt, Ph.D., is a Senior Research Fellow in the Thomas A. Roe Institute for Economic Policy Studies at The Heritage Foundation.) 13 January 2012, with the Heritage Foundation. “Can Public–Private Partnerships Fill the Transportation Funding Gap?” <http://www.heritage.org/transportation/report/can-public-private-partnerships-fill-the-transportation-funding-gap>

Thus, despite the successes beginning with Denver’s E-470 tollway in 1989, P3s are still a minor part of the surface transportation landscape. Opposition to tolling, opposition to private profits from operating public infrastructure, and concern over foreign investment in government assets in the U.S. have generated political opposition in some states. These challenges need to be overcome before the P3 concept can become a significant supplement to taxpayer funding. As a consequence, policymakers should recognize that P3s are not the solution to the transportation infrastructure investment gap that threatens to undermine commerce in the United States. There are too few financially viable P3 projects to meet the national need for new highway capacity and to modernize existing roads. No amount of enabling legislation will bring private investors into projects that are not financeable, and very few highways could support themselves on tolls alone. Thus, some combination of gas taxes, sales taxes, fees, and appropriations of state funds is necessary to make a creditworthy public–private partnership.

Contracting costs and opportunism often overwhelm any advantages of P3s

Finn Poschmann , Dr. Aidan Vining and Dr. Anthony Boardman 2005 (Poschmann is Associate Director of research at the C.D. Howe Institute || Vining - Ph.D. from Berkeley, professor of business and government relations at Simon Fraser University || Boardman - PhD from Carnegie-Mellon, professor in the Strategy and Business Economics Division at the Univ of British Columbia) September 2005. “Public-Private Partnerships in the US and Canada: ‘There are no Free Lunches’” published in the Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis. This article was accessed through an inter-library loan.

Some of the reasons why governments are drawn to P3s – especially lower cost provision – clearly have some validity. But, even if valid, it is important to emphasize that from a social perspective the key issue is whether the total cost of the P3 is lower than the total cost of government provision, including production costs and all contracting costs. To investigate this issue we examined six North American infrastructure P3s (all those we could gather reasonable information on from secondary sources). The evidence suggests that these potential benefits are often overwhelmed by contracting costs and opportunism. The reality that “there are no free lunches” applies to P3s as much as it does to anything else.

Little study and experience so far

Dr. Joseph Kile with the CBO 2014 (PhD economics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison; assistant director for microeconomic studies at the Congressional Budget Office) 5 March 2014. “Public-Private Partnerships for Highway Projects,” testimony before the Panel on Public-Private Partnerships, of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure in the U.S. House of Representatives. (Brackets added) <https://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/113th-congress-2013-2014/reports/45157-PublicPrivatePartnerships.pdf>

Some observers apply the term “public-private partnerships” only to projects that include capital from private sources. For this testimony, however, CBO has adopted a broader definition of the term to include any contractual arrangement that transfers more risk from the public sector to the private sector than is the case under the traditional (design-bid-build) approach. That definition allows consideration of potential increases in efficiency from the private sector’s involvement in ways that do not include private financing. The use of such [public-private] partnerships for providing highway infrastructure is limited in the United States. Between 1989 and 2013, the value of contracts for all such projects whose costs exceeded $50 million was only about $61 billion, representing about 1.5 percent of the approximately $4 trillion (in 2013 dollars) that was spent on highways during that period by all levels of government. The use of public-private partnerships is increasing, however; about half of that $61 billion was committed in the past five years.

A/T “P3s worked in Australia/Canada/UK” – But they depend on national uniformity, which AFF won’t have since they send everything to the states

Deborah Ballati and Richard Robinson 2014 (Ballati is a partner at Farella Braun + Martel, LLP, and a former president of the American College of Construction Lawyers || Robinson is an associate at Farella Braun + Martel, LLP) Fall 2014. “Public-Private Partnerships: Lessons Learned and Predictions for the Future” published in The Construction Lawyer) <http://www.fbm.com/files/Uploads/Documents/2014-12%20-%20Contruction%20Lawyer_CON_v34n04_fall2014_reprint.pdf> (Brackets added)

Australia’s commitment to the use of P3s has been significant. The early creation of a centralized P3 agency to develop standardized agreements, and to shepherd and oversee the use and implementation of the P3 model for such projects, seems to be one of the key factors that has contributed to Australia’s success, or at least to have lessened the number of severe failures. Canada has a similar central P3 agency, and the UK study discussed in the next section credits that central agency as a key factor in Canada’s relatively low P3 procurement time. Australia’s commitment to the use of P3s was further demonstrated in November 2008, when the Council for Australia Governments (COAG) endorsed the National Public Private Partnership Policy and Guidelines (P3 Guidelines). The P3 Guidelines, driven by the National Public Private Partnership Forum (Forum), replace all previously existing policies and guidelines held by state, territorial, and Australian governmental agencies.   
  
[**End quote. Later, in the same article, they conclude Quote:]**Third, the centralized management and oversight of P3 projects, with an emphasis on standardized agreements, which is characteristic of the projects in the UK, Australia, and Canada, are not likely to be fully achievable in the United States due, in part, to our 50-state configuration.

Canada’s experience found problems with P3s when local governments are unprepared

Charles Lammam, Hugh MacIntyre, and Dr. Joseph Berechman, 2013 (Lammam - M.A. in public policy and a B.A. in economics with a minor in business administration from Simon Fraser University; Associate Director of the Centre for Tax & Budget Policy and the Centre for Studies in Economic Prosperity at the Fraser Institute || MacIntyre - Masters of Science in Multilevel and Regional Politics from the University of Edinburgh, Policy Analyst in the Fraser Institute’s Centre for Tax and Budget Policy || Berechman – PhD;Professor and Chairman of the Department of Economics at City College, the City University of New York) May 2013, with the Fraser Institute (The Fraser Institute is a non-profit public policy research organization.). “Using Public-Private Partnerships to Improve Transportation Infrastructure in Canada” <https://www.fraserinstitute.org/sites/default/files/using-public-private-partnerships-to-improve-transportation-infrastructure-in-canada-rev.pdf>

While effective risk allocation is a critical determining factor for P3 success, achieving demands certain capabilities from the public sector, particularly in the realm of contract, risk, and project management (Murphy, 2008; OECD, 2008). Murphy argues that the success of a P3 hinges on the government’s ability to deliver in three key areas. First, the government must create and maintain support for P3s within government, in the community, and in the private sector. Second, the government must provide effective project management. This requires a business plan that includes reasonable and transparent value-for-money assessments and risk analyses, as well as the specific outcomes that are desired. A key part of project management is ensuring that the public-sector partner continues to monitor the project throughout the contract. Finally, the government must have specialized expertise, independent from the political process, with a sophisticated understanding of the legal, technical, and financial aspects of P3 projects. This expertise is needed to handle highly technical aspects of the project such as risk allocation, value-for-money assessments, and contractual oversight. Unfortunately, governments, particularly municipal governments, often lack the expertise needed to structure successful P3s. Expertise in writing and negotiating contracts is especially lacking, which could result in poorly designed contracts. In addition, incentives that encourage the use of P3s when they are not appropriate and a lack of coordination between government agencies are potential risks when the public partner lacks sufficient capability (Istrate and Puentes, 2011). A well-structured contract is key to the success of P3s and the risk of opportunism is real, as both the public and private partners may uncover loopholes in the contract and exploit them to their advantage.

1. A/T “Private sector will significantly increase funding”

Private sector will not stimulate increases in highway spending

Government Accountability Office 2004 (The Government Accountability Office is the government agency that provides auditing, evaluation, and investigative services for the United States Congress) March 2004. “HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT: Private Sector Sponsorship of and Investment in Major Projects Has Been Limited” <http://www.gao.gov/assets/250/241822.pdf>

We continue to believe that under current conditions and circumstances, active private sector sponsorship and investment seems unlikely to stimulate significant increases in the funding available for highways and transit. While we agree that the limited experience to date may not reflect future interest on the part of some states, the many barriers and challenges we have cited in this report would still need to be overcome in order for increased private sector sponsorship and investment to occur.

DISADVANTAGES

1. High private dependence is risky for public goods

**Note to reader:** This point might not apply if the affirmative specifically says “we will not allow turning to private,” but it is questionable how they would fiat this, and subpoint A of this DA would challenge the plan’s feasibility. Also, this is an important argument, but one does not need to read all of the impacts (or at least all of their evidence). However, it is suggested that one reference the Camino Colombia case (Subpoint F).

1. Link: AFF Encourages privatization

***Note*** *to reader: this evidence can be skipped if the affirmative says that their plan will do this, or if they endorse private market involvement. This is especially the case if you can* ***get them to say so in CX.***

William Reinhardt and Dr. Ronald Utt 2012 (Reinhardt is is editor and publisher of Public Works Financing. || Utt, Ph.D., is a Senior Research Fellow in the Thomas A. Roe Institute for Economic Policy Studies at The Heritage Foundation.) 13 January 2012, with the Heritage Foundation. “Can Public–Private Partnerships Fill the Transportation Funding Gap?” <http://www.heritage.org/transportation/report/can-public-private-partnerships-fill-the-transportation-funding-gap>

The House of Representatives and the Senate are working to complete the legislative language for their respective highway reauthorization plans. Proposals circulating in the House and Senate indicate that Congress could exercise some degree of restraint in federal transportation spending compared with earlier proposals and the President’s exceptionally generous plan of February 2011. As a consequence, federal, state, and local transportation programs may need to find alternative financial resources just to maintain current levels of inflation-adjusted spending. Under the right circumstances, public–private partnerships could play a targeted role.

[**End quote. Later in the same article, it continues. Quote:]**

The disparity between transportation spending needs and wants as defined by congressional transportation committees, the Obama Administration, and the program’s stakeholders is growing as shrinking trust fund revenues limit future investment. Under the circumstances, a non-tax alternative procurement approach based on private-sector involvement using tolls and other types of user fees would fill part of the yawning gap.

B. Impact 1: Public worse off. There’s no free market, so private infrastructure builders can charge monopoly prices

Dr. Ian Savage 2006 (Ph.D. from the School of Economic Studies/Institute for Transport Studies at the University of Leeds, transportation economist with appointments in both the Department of Economics and the Transportation Center at Northwestern University; specializes in research into urban public transportation and the economics of transportation safety.) 2006. “Economic Regulation of Transport: Principles and Experience” published in International Handbook on Economic Regulation (Book), but accessible online at: <http://faculty.wcas.northwestern.edu/~ipsavage/210-manuscript.pdf>

There are a number of leading characteristics of transport that both engender the need for regulation, and present practical problems to the regulator. Probably the most important is that all forms of transport are dependent on extensive and expensive infrastructure, which is ‘fixed’ in both an economic and geographic sense. Roads, railway tracks, airports, waterway improvements, ports and pipelines require large amounts of capital to build. Moreover, the infrastructure only comes in lumpy increments, and each increment (a single-track railway line, a highway lane) can accommodate many users. Therefore, average total costs will fall over wide ranges of levels of demand. With the exception of markets with very high demand, where it is feasible for multiple infrastructure providers to exist, there are natural monopolies in infrastructure provision. Consequently, there is the fear that the monopoly provider may charge prices that are high enough to produce excess profits and a decrease in social welfare, yet are not sufficient to encourage a rival firm to build a competitive infrastructure.

C. Impact 2: Non-compete clauses hamper infrastructure development - makes infrastructure worse in some cases

Tony Dutzik, Kari Wohlschlegel, and Dr. Phineas Baxandall, with the PIRG Education Fund, 2009 (Dutzik - masters in print journalism, senior policy analyst with Frontier Group|| Wohlschlegel - policy analyst and legal associate at various institutes and universities || Baxandall – PhD in political science from MIT, directs the tax and budget program for the U.S. Public Interest Research Group; previously worked at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government; previously worked for the research department of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston) Spring 2009 “Private Roads, Public Costs: The Facts About Toll Road Privatization and How to Protect the Public” <http://www.uspirg.org/sites/pirg/files/reports/Private-Roads-Public-Costs-Updated_1.pdf>

Toll road investors want assurances that traffic levels will meet or exceed predictions, even in the event of toll increases. Some privatization contracts therefore explicitly limit states’ ability to improve or expand nearby transportation facilities. The U.S. Department of Transportation, in its Report to Congress on Public Private Partnerships (December 2004), strongly supported the inclusion of such “noncompete” clauses to help attract private investment. In Colorado, one deal went so far as to require adjacent municipalities to add stop lights and reduce speed limits on local roads as a way to reduce potential competition. Though the operator of the road was technically a public entity, it was heavily financed by private investors who demanded protection of future revenues. California, which used a private concession deal to create new toll lanes in the median of State Road 91, was subsequently forced to buy back the road because non-compete clauses prevented the state from improving the corridor and led to high-profile litigation. Similarly, Indiana is prevented from building a four-lane, divided highway more than 20 miles long (or expanding a current highway to Interstate standards) within 10 miles of the East-West Toll Road for at least 55 years without providing compensation to the toll road operator for lost revenue. Non-compete clauses are included in many privatization contracts to protect the investors. A report by the Texas Legislative Study Committee on Private Participation in Toll Contracts claims that non-compete provisions are necessary for private entities to be able to sell bonds.

1. Impact 3: Congestion, pollution and economic losses

Tony Dutzik, Kari Wohlschlegel, and Dr. Phineas Baxandall, with the PIRG Education Fund, 2009 (Dutzik - masters in print journalism, senior policy analyst with Frontier Group|| Wohlschlegel - policy analyst and legal associate at various institutes and universities || Baxandall – PhD in political science from MIT, directs the tax and budget program for the U.S. Public Interest Research Group; previously worked at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government; previously worked for the research department of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston) Spring 2009 “Private Roads, Public Costs: The Facts About Toll Road Privatization and How to Protect the Public” <http://www.uspirg.org/sites/pirg/files/reports/Private-Roads-Public-Costs-Updated_1.pdf>

The goal of private toll operators is to find the right balance of toll rates and traffic to produce the maximum amount of revenue. Private toll operators can generally increase revenues by raising toll rates, even though the higher rates will cause some truck and car drivers to choose alternative routes. For the private operator, the additional toll rates may more than make up for income lost from diverted vehicles. But from the public perspective, the diverted traffic may clog local roads, increasing congestion and pollution in local communities. There was substantial traffic diversion, particularly of trucks, after the 1991 New Jersey Turnpike toll hike. New Jersey responded by rolling back some of the toll hike for trucks to entice them back onto the Turnpike, a move that would not have been possible under privatization, at least not without paying the private firm for the lost projected revenue. From a private toll road operator’s perspective, gridlock and pollution on local roads may actually be desirable because drivers will be more likely to pay still-higher tolls. A study by researchers at Penn State University and Wayne State University found that the private operation of toll roads could lead to increased accidents and maintenance on nearby public roads and lower quality of life for residents on parallel roadways. The study also found large economic losses to nearby communities associated with diversion of truck traffic.

1. Impact 4: Privatization harms equitable provision of public goods

**Analysis: The federal government can more equally distribute funding without as much regard to regional income. This ensures that people in poor states or regions get the highways they need.**

Elizabeth McNichol 2016 (Senior Fellow at the CBPP, specializing in state fiscal issues including the economy’s impact on state budgets and long-term structural reform of state budget and tax systems.) 23 February 2016 with the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP is a nonpartisan research and policy institute, founded in 1981 with the goal of analyzing federal budget priorities, especially as it relates to effects on low-income Americans.) “It’s Time for States to Invest in Infrastructure” <http://www.cbpp.org/research/state-budget-and-tax/its-time-for-states-to-invest-in-infrastructure>

A major reason for public (as opposed to private) investment in infrastructure is to ensure that people of all income levels have access to amenities like good roads, schools, and hospitals.  When an investment’s benefits are so spread out over time and place that it is not feasible to profit from them, the private sector cannot be relied upon to provide those investments. Rather, it is up to government at all levels to ensure equal access. But even when the public sector plays the leading role in providing for an asset such as elementary and secondary schools, inequities can arise.  For example, a higher percentage of public schools in poor areas are in need of repair than those in the wealthiest places.  (See Figure 6.)  Part of the reason for this is that schools are often funded by local property taxes and property values are lower in poor areas.

1. Impact 5: The Camino Colombia Toll Road case. Public rip-offs and denial of service when roads are privatized

Tony Dutzik, Kari Wohlschlegel, and Dr. Phineas Baxandall, with the PIRG Education Fund, 2009 (Dutzik - masters in print journalism, senior policy analyst with Frontier Group|| Wohlschlegel - policy analyst and legal associate at various institutes and universities || Baxandall – PhD in political science from MIT, directs the tax and budget program for the U.S. Public Interest Research Group; previously worked at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government; previously worked for the research department of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston) Spring 2009 “Private Roads, Public Costs: The Facts About Toll Road Privatization and How to Protect the Public” (brackets added) <http://www.uspirg.org/sites/pirg/files/reports/Private-Roads-Public-Costs-Updated_1.pdf>

The Camino Colombia Toll Road is a prime example of problems with lack of public control associated with privatization. The Camino Colombia Toll Road, located in Texas, first opened to traffic in 2000. Completely financed by private investors at a cost of $90 million, this road was intended to support the increased traffic associated with the North American Free Trade Agreement. Politicians predicted the road would be a “generator of regional economic activity” and provide congestion relief. However, the road fell far short of its projections. An independent auditor predicted that the Camino Colombia road would generate $9 million in revenue within the first year, but instead it only received $500,000. By 2004, the toll road had failed and bondholders foreclosed on the remaining $75 million note. The road was sold at an auction for $12.1 million to John Hancock Financial Services Inc. TxDOT [Texas’ Department of Transportation] had initially bid $11.1 million for the road, but was unwilling to increase its offer. After purchasing the roadway, John Hancock Financial Services, Inc. immediately closed the road to all traffic. This move forced TxDOT to pay the private company $20 million to purchase the road, allowing it to finally reopen the route after five months. This clearly shows one of the pitfalls of privatization. Texas lost complete control of transportation along the toll road, while a private entity had the right to close the route regardless of the public consequences. Unfortunately, many transportation officials do not appear to have learned from this experience, and future privatization agreements may have similar results.

1. Summary (e.g. for rebuttals): Public control is crucial to achieve net benefits

Elizabeth McNichol 2016 (Senior Fellow at the CBPP, specializing in state fiscal issues including the economy’s impact on state budgets and long-term structural reform of state budget and tax systems.) 23 February 2016 with the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP is a nonpartisan research and policy institute, founded in 1981 with the goal of analyzing federal budget priorities, especially as it relates to effects on low-income Americans.) “It’s Time for States to Invest in Infrastructure” <http://www.cbpp.org/research/state-budget-and-tax/its-time-for-states-to-invest-in-infrastructure>

Transportation policy has tremendous impacts on quality of life, health, and the cost of living. It determines the level of traffic congestion and air pollution, the safety and quality of the roads, the many costs of driving and car ownership, the availability of high-quality and affordable public transit alternatives, and the development of future land-use patterns. What may seem beneficial from a narrow profit perspective does not necessarily benefit the broader public interest. Public control of key toll roads is therefore necessary to ensure coherent transportation planning and policy making over long periods of time.

1. Lost leverage on state safety laws
2. The link: Highway funds are used as leverage

Dr. Lilliard Richardson and Dr. David Houston 2008 (Richardson - PhD in government from the University of Texas, professor and executive associate dean of the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University || Houston - PhD in political science from Binghamton University, professor of political science at the University of Tennessee Knoxville) 3 October 2008. “Federalism and Safety on America’s Highways” published in Publius, the Journal of Federalism <https://academic.oup.com/publius/article-abstract/39/1/117/1911971/Federalism-and-Safety-on-America-s-Highways>

Starting with the Highway Safety Act of 1966, Congress has frequently utilized its spending power to partially preempt state discretion regarding traffic safety (Zimmerman 2005). The sticks wielded by Congress are in the form of crossover sanctions, which are penalties placed on grants-in-aid or privileges in one policy area for not complying with requirements in a different policy area (Posner 2007). This use of spending power is coercive in that these conditions on intergovernmental grants-in-aid require the recipient to meet policy goals for purposes not directly served by the grant. Additionally, these sanctions are often placed upon existing funds that the recipient has come to rely upon.

1. The impact: Lives saved. Influence on state policies has saved lives

Dr. Lilliard Richardson and Dr. David Houston 2008 (Richardson - PhD in government from Univ of Texas, professor and executive associate dean of the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University || Houston - PhD in political science from Binghamton Univ, professor of political science at the Univ of Tennessee Knoxville) 3 October 2008. “Federalism and Safety on America’s Highways” published in Publius, the Journal of Federalism <https://academic.oup.com/publius/article-abstract/39/1/117/1911971/Federalism-and-Safety-on-America-s-Highways>

Overall, there is considerable evidence that state traffic safety laws can contribute to public health by averting thousands of fatalities, but it also appears that states have been averse to adopt such policies without federal intervention. In particular, it appears that the federal reluctance to use stronger fiscal tools and the limited success of grants-in-aid for promoting seat belt adoptions had serious public health costs as thousands of fatalities could have been averted with earlier adoptions of primary enforcement. Likewise, the removal of federal crossover sanctions and the resulting state actions on speed limits and motorcycle helmet laws negatively impacted public health. On the other hand, the federal government has been more willing to use strong sanctions to encourage state adoption of impaired driving laws, which has likely contributed to greater public safety with the MLDA laws and 0.08 BAC laws even though it is less clear on open container and high-BAC laws. Clearly, the federal government has played a substantial role in this important arena of public health, and while evidence on the effectiveness of grants-in-aid to promote public health is limited, the use of crossover sanctions appears to be an effective, albeit controversial tool for influencing the nation's health and safety.

1. Example: Drinking age laws in the 1980s. Federal highway funding “strings attached” saved lives

Dr. Lilliard Richardson and Dr. David Houston 2008 (Richardson - PhD in government from Univ of Texas, professor and executive associate dean of the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University || Houston - PhD in political science from Binghamton Univ, professor of political science at the Univ of Tennessee Knoxville) 3 October 2008. “Federalism and Safety on America’s Highways” published in Publius, the Journal of Federalism <https://academic.oup.com/publius/article-abstract/39/1/117/1911971/Federalism-and-Safety-on-America-s-Highways>

In particular, studies showed an increase in alcohol-related fatalities among young drivers in states that had lowered the MLDA (Cook and Tauchen 1984; Smart and Goodstadt 1977; Whitehead et al. 1975). Many states responded with increased enforcement and tougher punishment, but slow progress in reducing fatalities and the considerable variation in state laws prompted advocates to push for federal fiscal incentives to induce states to adopt more stringent laws. To induce states to adopt the MLDA of twenty-one years, the federal government used the crossover sanction of threatening to withhold federal highway funds (King and Dudar 1987). In 1984, Congress passed the Federal Uniform Drinking Age Act (P.L. 98-363), which authorized the withholding of 10 percent of highway funds each year for any state with a MLDA below twenty-one years. Further, the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (approved in April 1986, P.L. 99-272) directed the Transportation “Secretary to permanently withhold ten percent of highway funds apportionments from any State which does not have in effect a permanent 21-year-old” MLDA. By 1987, forty-nine states had an MLDA of twenty-one, and Wyoming complied in 1988. While the prohibition on underage drinking has other health benefits (Wagenaar and Toomey 2002), states have sought to specifically deter impaired driving with illegal *per se* laws (setting a certain blood alcohol content level as evidence of legal impairment), dram shop laws (holding alcohol servers liable), open container laws, and sobriety checkpoints. Studies suggest many of these policies were effective (Wagenaar et al. 1995). To promote such policies, Congress has used incentive grants, crossover sanctions relying on the withholding of highway funds, and crossover sanctions using the diversion of money from highway funds to traffic safety purposes.

1. Bypassing Davis-Bacon Act (DBA)
2. Link: AFF sends everything to the States, taking it out of federal jurisdiction over contracting rules
3. Link: DBA is tied to federal funding of infrastructure

Federal Highway Administration 2014 (The FHWA is the branch of the Federal Department of Transportation that oversees and administers highways, among other functions) 16 September 2014. “DAVIS-BACON AND RELATED ACTS: Questions and Answers” <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/construction/contracts/dbra_qa.pdf> (Brackets and their ellipses added)

In general, the DBA, as amended, requires that each contract over $2,000 to which the United States or the District of Columbia is a party for the construction, alteration, and/or repair (including painting or decorating) of public buildings or public works shall contain a clause setting forth the minimum wages to be paid to various classifications of laborers and mechanics employed under the contract. (The Davis Bacon Act is incorporated under 23 U.S.C. 113 as a Davis-Bacon related act statute and is applicable to construction of Federal-aid highways funded with Federal-aid funding. See the discussion on Applicability to Federal-aid Highway projects, questions 7 and 8.) Contractors and subcontractors are required to pay their laborers and mechanics employed directly upon the “site of the work” no less than the locally prevailing wage and fringe benefit rates for corresponding work on similar projects in the area “regardless of any contractual relationship which may be alleged to exist.” The Department of Labor determines and sets the prevailing wage rates. The geographical scope of the DBA is limited, by its terms, to the 50 States and the District of Columbia.

[**End quote. Later in the same article, it continues. Quote:]**

The Davis-Bacon Related Acts are those Acts extending the Davis-Bacon Act provisions to Federal agencies that provide financial assistance for public works construction through grants, loans, loan guarantees, and insurance. The Federal-aid Highway Acts extended the Davis-Bacon Act provisions to Federally funded construction contracts on Federal-aid highways in the 50 United States, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands or other territories.

1. Link: DBA corrects market failure. Without it, workers get inadequate training

Dr. Kevin Duncan, Dr. Peter Philips, and Frank Manzo 2017 (Kevin Duncan is a professor of economics in the Hasan School of Business at Colorado State University-Pueblo || Peter Philips holds a PhD in economics from Stanford and is a professor of economics at University of Utah || Frank Manzo IV is the policy director at the Illinois Economic Policy Institute, holding a Masters in Public Policy from University of Chicago) 14 April 2017. “BUILDING AMERICA WITH PREVAILING WAGE” <https://illinoisepi.files.wordpress.com/2017/04/building-america-davis-bacon_final.pdf>

The construction industry is inherently seasonal in nature, with major projects built and repaired during peak months with desirable weather. Construction work is also cyclical and contingent on both private market conditions and public sector investment. When workers finish a project, there is often a period of unemployment while they look for another job, sometimes with new employers. The turbulence caused by these seasonal, cyclical, and fiscal factors creates strong disincentives for employers and employees to invest in the type of training that leads to a highly-skilled, efficient, and safe workforce. Contractors are afraid of losing the investment if workers who they train decide to leave to work for a competitor after a project is finished. On the other hand, workers do not have the incentive to pay for training out-of-pocket because the possibility of prolonged spells of unemployment could prevent the investment from paying off. The result is a “market failure” in which insufficient worker training is provided in construction. The Davis-Bacon Act helps correct this market failure by reflecting local, market-based standards for wages, benefits, and training contributions in the community where the project is being built. The law ensures that the next generation of construction workers is trained, the current skilled workforce is retained, and the previous generation is cared for in retirement. For over eight and a half decades, the Davis-Bacon Act has helped employers to invest in the human capital development of construction workers, promoting a skilled workforce that completes high-quality public construction projects on-time and under budget. Furthermore, these benefits are not confined to the public construction projects themselves. The apprenticeship training that is incentivized and supported by the Davis-Bacon Act and “related” laws carries over to private infrastructure construction projects because once a worker is trained, he or she retains that training throughout his or her career.

1. The impact: Reduced productivity, safety, and efficiency without Davis-Bacon

Dr. Kevin Duncan, Dr. Peter Philips, and Frank Manzo 2017 (Kevin Duncan is a professor of economics in the Hasan School of Business at Colorado State University-Pueblo || Peter Philips holds a PhD in economics from Stanford and is a professor of economics at University of Utah || Frank Manzo IV is the policy director at the Illinois Economic Policy Institute, holding a Masters in Public Policy from University of Chicago) 14 April 2017. “BUILDING AMERICA WITH PREVAILING WAGE” <https://illinoisepi.files.wordpress.com/2017/04/building-america-davis-bacon_final.pdf>

The Davis-Bacon Act Boosts Productivity, Safety, and Efficiency. The Davis-Bacon Act promotes hiring and retention of higher-skilled workers. Worksite productivity is up to 33% higher in states with little Davis-Bacon Acts. States with little Davis-Bacon Acts have 15% fewer injuries on construction sites. Repeal of the federal Davis-Bacon Act would result in 76,000 more injuries and 675,000 more workdays lost to injury every year. The Davis-Bacon Act prevents skilled trade workforce shortages by boosting investment in apprenticeship training. At the state-level, states that have repealed little Davis-Bacon Acts have seen training drop by 40%.

1. Impact: Fatalities. Prevailing wage laws reduce fatalities at no additional cost to government

Nooshin Mahalia with the Economic Policy Institute 2008 (Mahalia is an economic policy analyst with the EPI, having graduated from Georgia Tech with a BA in Journalism || The EPI is a nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank that seeks to broaden the public debate about strategies to achieve a prosperous and fair economy.) 3 July 2008. “Prevailing wages and government contracting costs: A review of the research” <http://www.epi.org/publication/bp215/>

An overwhelming preponderance of the literature shows that prevailing wage regulations have no effect one way or the other on the cost to government of contracted public works projects. And as studies of the question become more and more sophisticated, this finding becomes stronger, and is reinforced with evidence that prevailing wage laws also help to reduce occupational injuries and fatalities, increase the pool of skilled construction workers, and actually enhance state tax revenues.

1. Decreased overall infrastructure spending
2. Internal link: AFF abolishes federal highway spending
3. Link: Federal money increases state spending on infrastructure

Sylvain Leduc and Dan Wilson 2014 (Leduc is a vice president in the Economic Research Department of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco || Wilson is a research advisor in the Economic Research Department of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco) 25 August 2014. “Fueling Road Spending with Federal Stimulus” <http://www.frbsf.org/economic-research/publications/economic-letter/2014/august/recovery-act-federal-stimulus-highway-spending/> (Brackets added)

It is no surprise then that the 2009 fiscal stimulus package known as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) contained $48 billion in transportation funding, $27 billion specifically for roads. These funds generally took the form of grants to state governments and were in addition to the usual federal transportation grants sent to state governments every year from the national Highway Trust Fund. Thanks to ARRA, federal highway grants to states jumped nearly 75% in 2009.

[**End quote. Later in the same article, it continues. Quote:]**

Our results indicate that each dollar of ARRA highway grants received increased states’ road spending by about 50 cents in 2009 and by about 75 cents in both 2010 and 2011. Thus, over the course of three years, the cumulative effect of one dollar of grants was nearly two dollars in higher state road spending. This greater than dollar-for-dollar response suggests that federally funded road projects may encourage complimentary state-funded road projects. For instance, new or expanded highways and bridges often spur new nearby commercial and residential development, creating demand for new local roads around that development. As we document in more detail in Leduc and Wilson (2014), these results are very robust to changes in the simple specification described above.

1. Impact 1: Reduced infrastructure spending = Economic harm

Isabelle Cohen, Thomas Freiling, and Eric Robinson 2011 (Cohen has served as a policy and research assistant/fellow at various institutions, PhD candidate in economics at Berkeley || Masters in Public Policy, Freiling has served in positions including research and operations administration || Masters in Public Policy, Robinson is currently a research programmer and analyst at the RAND Corporation in Washington, DC) 14 December 2011. “The Economic Impact and Financing of Infrastructure Spending” <https://www.wm.edu/as/publicpolicy/documents/prs/aed.pdf>

However, money spent on infrastructure does much more than just maintain current stock. The effects of that spending multiply as they ripple throughout the economy, stimulating growth and output in other sectors, and ultimately return substantial tax revenue to the government per our findings. In the short-run, spending on infrastructure produces twice as much economic activity as the level of initial spending. These effects are most heavily concentrated in the manufacturing and professional and business services sectors, but also accrue to smaller sectors like agriculture. In the long-run, spending on all types of infrastructure generates substantial permanent positive effects across the economy as a whole. Money spent now will produce significant tax revenue returns to the government’s budget over twenty years. Given the substantial economic benefit of infrastructure spending, current budget deficits, and concerns regarding the future economic growth of the economy, it is crucially important that the United States invest in infrastructure like road networks, power stations, sewer systems, public safety buildings, and airfields. We must find innovative new ways to fund infrastructure construction and maintenance, and we can be secure in the knowledge that our economy will grow and strengthen as a result.

1. Impact 2: Decreased road safety and lives lost

Dr. Ted Miller and Dr. Eduard Zaloshnja 2009 (Miller has led more than 150 studies, including 25 surveys, dozens of statistical analyses of large data bases, and more than 50 economic analyses. || Zaloshnja has a background in applied economics and econometrics and is working as a safety/substance abuse economist/statistician) April 2009, with the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (an independent, nonprofit organization merging scientific knowledge and proven practice to create solutions that improve the health, safety and well-being of individuals, communities, and nations around the world). “ON A CRASH COURSE: THE DANGERS AND HEALTH COSTS OF DEFICIENT ROADWAYS,” a study commissioned by the Transportation Construction Coalition. <http://pahighwayinfo.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/PireStudyLowRes.pdf>

As Table 1 shows, in 5.32 million crashes, or in 31.4% of all traffic crashes nationally in 2006, road conditions contributed to crash occurrence or severity. Road-relatedness rose with crash severity. Road-related crashes accounted for 38.2% of non-fatal injuries (2.2 million cases) and 52.7% of fatalities (22,455 deaths).The estimated comprehensive cost of traffic crashes where road conditions contributed to crash frequency or severity was $217.5 billion in 2006 (Table 2). This represented 43.6% of the total comprehensive crash cost of $498.8 billion. The $217.5 billion figure is more than three-and-one-half times the amount of money government at all levels is investing annually in roadway capital improvements—$59 billion, according to the Federal Highway Administration. This societal cost includes $20.2 billion in medical costs; $46.5 billion in productivity costs; $51.9 billion in property damage and other resource costs; and $98.9 billion in monetized quality of life costs. Road-related crash incidence and costs were similar in 2000 (Tables A-3 and A-4, page 29). As the Annex details, this study relied on the crash costs and crash incidence data sets that the U.S. Department of Transportation uses in its regulatory analyses. Given the lack of detailed information on the contribution of road conditions in the national crash data, large truck crash data were used to model the probability of a crash relating to road conditions. This choice assumes that truck crashes have reasonably similar causes to other crashes in the U.S. To the extent they do not, the study over-estimates or under-estimates the cost of road-related crashes. Three events—first impact with a bridge or any harmful impact with a large tree or a medium/large non-breakaway pole—were considered road-related factors whose presence increased the severity of moderate injury to fatal crashes. More than 40% of serious to fatal crashes and 30% of moderate injury crashes involved one of these events. Conservatively, the estimates do not account for the greater risk of injury associated with a wider range of harmful events involving the roadway and roadside. The large share of crash costs related to road conditions underlines the importance of these factors in highway safety. Road conditions are largely controllable. Road maintenance and upgrading can prevent crashes and reduce injury severity.

A/T “States will replace federal funding, so no decrease” - Federal support brings infrastructure beyond what state/local/private would do

Congressional Budget Office 2015 (The CBO is the federal agency that provides legislative research and information to Congress) March 2015. “Public Spending on Transportation and Water Infrastructure, 1956 to 2014” <https://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/114th-congress-2015-2016/reports/49910-Infrastructure.pdf>

In CBO’s view, the federal government has raised productivity by funding infrastructure projects that either would not have been pursued by the private sector or by state and local governments alone or that would have received smaller amounts of investment from those sectors than warranted by the broad public benefits they provide. According to CBO’s review of the literature on the economic effects of infrastructure spending, returns on investment in public capital projects in the United States, where the infrastructure network is well developed, are generally positive; however, they are lower than they once were because returns from additional spending on a mature infrastructure network are typically smaller than those derived from the initial investments that established that network in the first place.

1. Lost mass transit funding

Link: AFF cancels the federal highway trust fund

Link: Federal highway trust fund has $8 billion for mass transit

Michael Sargent 2015 (Policy Analyst, Transportation & Infrastructure, Thomas A. Roe Institute for Economic Policy Studies, Heritage Foundation) 11 May 2015 “Highway Trust Fund Basics: A Primer on Federal Surface Transportation Spending” http://www.heritage.org/transportation/report/highway-trust-fund-basics-primer-federal-surface-transportation-spending

In fiscal year (FY) 2015, Highway Trust Fund spending is projected to reach $52 billion. The Highway Account is expected to spend $44 billion, but take in only $34 billion in revenue and interest, while the Mass Transit Account is expected to spend $8 billion compared with $5 billion in revenue, resulting in a combined deficit of $13 billion.

Brink: Federal funding cuts would be devastating for major city transit systems

Yonah Freemark 2013 (Master of Science in Transportation, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering; Master of City Planning, Department of Urban Studies and Planning at MIT.) 25 Jan 2013 “The Federal Role in Surface Transportation Funding” <http://www.thetransportpolitic.com/2013/01/25/the-federal-role-in-surface-transportation-funding/>

The problem with this whole line of discussion is that it would likely be devastating for transit systems in major cities, particularly in conservative states with no history of state support for public transportation. One major advantage of the current federal finance system is that it devotes a fifth of all transportation funding to transit. The consequence is that cities are awarded funds for maintaining their bus and rail systems by formula at about $8 billion a year (and that’s not even including the $2 billion annually devoted to new transit construction). That funding plays an essential part in ensuring cities can keep their systems up to date.

Link & Brink: Poorer cities can’t afford to fund their transit systems

Yonah Freemark 2013 (Master of Science in Transportation, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering; Master of City Planning, Department of Urban Studies and Planning at MIT.) 25 Jan 2013 “The Federal Role in Surface Transportation Funding” <http://www.thetransportpolitic.com/2013/01/25/the-federal-role-in-surface-transportation-funding/>

There is some argument to be made that cities that [want to invest in public transportation should simply pay for it themselves](http://www.thetransportpolitic.com/2012/02/16/clearing-it-up-on-federal-transportation-expenditures/), yet that approach has a number of serious flaws. First, it would be a serious impediment for poorer cities to continue the funding of their transit systems, since they lack adequate local funds; there is a [very strong correlation between metropolitan-area income and the amount of money cities spend on transit operations, producing highly inequitable results](http://www.thetransportpolitic.com/2011/12/28/local-funding-for-public-transportation-operations-producing-inequitable-results/). Second, cities in low-tax states may find their ability to actually raise taxes locally stymied by state legislatures that believe that any tax increase should be prevented.

Impact 1: Poor harmed. Public transit is essential to daily needs for large numbers of poor who don’t have cars

Kevin DeGood and Andrew Schwartz 2016 (DeGood - Director of Infrastructure Policy at the Center for American Progress. Schwartz - Research Associate on the Economic Policy team at the Center) “Can New Transportation Technologies Improve Equity and Access to Opportunity?” 27 Apr 2016 https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/reports/2016/04/27/135425/can-new-transportation-technologies-improve-equity-and-access-to-opportunity/

Public transportation is an essential part of our surface transportation system. For many families, especially those without access to a car, public transportation is that critical link to employment, education, and child care facilities, among other services. In 2014, the last year for which complete data are available, more than 2,100 public transit operators provided 10.5 billion unlinked trips, carrying passengers more than 57 billion miles. Nationwide, 20 percent of households at or below the federal poverty line lack access to a car. The percentages of low-income African American and Latino households without a car are even higher at 33 percent and 25 percent, respectively. For these families, public transportation provides the only way to meet daily needs.

Impact 2. Transit access is key to better health and lower health care costs for the poor

Dr. Christopher E. Ferrell 2015 (PhD in City & Regional Planning; began his career in 1995 as a planner for the Metropolitan Transportation Commission; has been the principal investigator for five research projects for the Mineta Transportation Institute, where he has been a Research Associate since 2005.) Jul 2015 “The Benefits of Transit in the United States: A Review and Analysis of Benefit-Cost Studies” <http://transweb.sjsu.edu/PDFs/research/1425-US-transit-benefit-cost-analysis-study.pdf>

Transit improves health care access and outcomes while reducing costs: Few of the published b-c studies surveyed for this white paper measured the health care cost benefits of transit. However, Godavarthy et al. (2014) found that giving people low-cost and reliable transit access to medical services decreases the tendency of low-income people living in rural and small urban areas to forgo treatments, thereby improving public health and reducing the costs of health care to society.

Impact 3. More disease, higher cost to society. Quantification: 3.6 million/year miss health care from lack of transportation.

Dr. Christopher E. Ferrell 2015 (PhD in City & Regional Planning; began his career in 1995 as a planner for the Metropolitan Transportation Commission; has been the principal investigator for five research projects for the Mineta Transportation Institute, where he has been a Research Associate since 2005.) Jul 2015 “The Benefits of Transit in the United States: A Review and Analysis of Benefit-Cost Studies” <http://transweb.sjsu.edu/PDFs/research/1425-US-transit-benefit-cost-analysis-study.pdf>

While most studies did not explicitly measure the effects of transit service availability on the costs of health care, Godavarthy et al. (2014) reasoned that many low income people living in rural or small urban areas with poor access to transportation and relatively long trips from home to medical services will forgo their medical trips and treatments. Therefore, transit can play a critical role in reducing health care costs and improving outcomes. Wallace et al. (2005, 2006) estimated that 3.6 million Americans do not obtain medical care every year because they lack adequate transportation. Hughes-Cromwick et al. (2005) found that these people are disadvantaged in other ways than simply their access to transportation. They are disproportionately older, low income, female, minorities, and without college degrees. As a consequence, those lacking transportation have an inordinately high prevalence of disease. In turn, the costs to society from people who lack adequate transportation access to medical care are high because foregoing health care trips can lead to more expensive treatments later.

Impact 4. Road congestion. Mass transit reduces road congestion, leading to negative total net benefits if it goes away

Dr. Michael Anderson 2013 (PhD in economics from MIT, Associate Professor of Agricultural and Resource Economics at the Univ of California, Berkeley. February 2013, with the National Bureau of Economic Research (a private, non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to conducting economic research and to disseminating research findings among academics, public policy makers, and business professionals.). “Subways, Strikes, and Slowdowns: The Impacts of Public Transit on Traffic Congestion” <http://www.nber.org/papers/w18757.pdf> (Brackets and their ellipses added, as well as bolding)

Public transit accounts for only 1% of U.S. passenger miles traveled but nevertheless attracts strong public support. Using a simple choice model, we predict that transit riders are likely to be individuals who commute along routes with the most severe roadway delays. These individuals’ choices thus have very high marginal impacts on congestion. We test this prediction with data from a sudden strike in 2003 by Los Angeles transit workers. Estimating a regression discontinuity design, we find that average highway delay increases 47% when transit service ceases. This effect is consistent with our model’s predictions and many times larger than earlier estimates, which have generally concluded that public transit provides minimal congestion relief. We find that the net benefits of transit systems appear to be much larger than previously believed.

[**End quote. Later, in the article’s introduction, it continues. Quote:]**

Our estimates imply that the total congestion relief benefit of operating the Los Angeles transit system is between $1.2 billion to $4.1 billion per year, or $1.20 to $4.10 per peak-hour transit passenger mile. We consider the potential gap between the short-run effect of ceasing transit provision (i.e., our estimates) and the long-run effect of a permanent shutdown. We find that reducing the long-run effect to less than 50% of the short-run effect’s lower bound requires implausibly large elasticities of travel with respect to travel costs. We consider the net benefits of constructing the Los Angeles rail system and conclude – contrary to the existing literature on rail capital investment – that they are large and positive.

[**End quote. Later, in the article’s conclusion, it continues. Quote:]**

Contrary to the conclusions in the existing transportation and urban economics literature, the congestion relief benefits alone may justify transit infrastructure investments. Both the model calibration and the regression discontinuity estimates apply specifically to the Los Angeles metropolitan area. The exact magnitudes of the effects are thus unlikely to generalize to other U.S. urban areas. Nevertheless, there are good reasons to believe that the qualitative effects of transit on congestion are similar in other large cities.

A/T “States will fund mass transit” – They can’t: not enough funding

Yonah Freemark 2013 (Master of Science in Transportation, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering; Master of City Planning, Department of Urban Studies and Planning at MIT.) 25 Jan 2013 “The Federal Role in Surface Transportation Funding” <http://www.thetransportpolitic.com/2013/01/25/the-federal-role-in-surface-transportation-funding/>

There is some argument to be made that cities that want to invest in public transportation should simply pay for it themselves, yet that approach has a number of serious flaws. First, it would be a serious impediment for poorer cities to continue the funding of their transit systems, since they lack adequate local funds; there is a very strong correlation between metropolitan-area income and the amount of money cities spend on transit operations, producing highly inequitable results. Second, cities in low-tax states may find their ability to actually raise taxes locally stymied by state legislatures that believe that any tax increase should be prevented. Finally, there is little evidence that locally funded transit projects are “better” or “more efficient” than federally funded ones, since most projects already require a significant local contribution.

1. Lost public benefits due to Spillovers or Externalities

States by themselves will not create all the highways that the public could benefit from, because some benefits are “externalities” – they occur at the interstate level and would not be considered by a State in making its highway funding decisions

Congressional Research Service 2015 (The CRS is the well-established research organization serving congress since 1914) (Author not listed) 8 December 2015. “Federalism Issues in Surface Transportation Policy: A Historical Perspective” <https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/R40431.html> [Brackets added]

ACIR [The Advisory Committee on Intergovernmental Relations] also introduced the notion of interstate spillovers, or externalities, as an example of the use of the geographic range of benefits criteria. Economists use the term spillover or externality to describe the market imperfection that results when producers and consumers in a market either do not bear all of the costs or do not reap all of the benefits of an economic activity. Wastewater and air pollution treatment are often used as examples where economic spillovers occur. The primary beneficiaries of cleaner water and air are often those who live downstream or downwind from a pollution source, not those who live where the effluent or polluted air is treated. Those living at the source of the pollution have no, or little, incentive to pay for activities that primarily benefit those living downstream or downwind. Economists argue that services with spillover effects are not likely to be provided at optimal levels without some form of government intervention, typically by providing an incentive to the provider to undertake the service at optimal levels or by a mandate to do so. ACIR [The Advisory Committee on Intergovernmental Relations] argued that highways, especially interstate highways, are subject to spillovers and the "best government for providing services is one with an appropriately large jurisdiction so that the jurisdiction can encompass the externalities." It argued that an interstate spillover occurs when road benefits are not fully captured in-state, or are not fully captured by taxes and other charges levied by the providing state. The state budgetary process has little reason to value fully out-of-state benefits. An all too logical consequence might be underfinancing of roads with large out-of-state benefits relative to their in-state benefits.

Spillovers/Externalities Example: Pennsylvania turnpike vs. I-80

Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations 1987 (ACIR was an independent, bipartisan agency in the United States federal government formed to study and consider the federal government's intergovernmental relationships. It was established in 1959 and operated until 1996.) (Authorship is not specific; it is too broad) September 1987. “Devolving Selected Federal-Aid Highway Programs and Revenue Bases: A Critical Appraisal” <http://www.library.unt.edu/gpo/acir/Reports/policy/a-108.pdf>

As an instance of the concept of the range of highway benefits, consider the routing of the Pennsylvania Turnpike, which was designed before the Interstate system. Generally, its east-west direction serves an intrastate interest by connecting Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. While the turnpike has been used also to link northeastern and midwestern states, its relatively southern location cannot connect New York and Chicago with the shortest possible route, which is accomplished by Interstate 80 of the Interstate system. Even if Interstate 80 were devolved to state control, Pennsylvania would be most unlikely to close that road. However, the state's spending priorities for maintenance and improvements might jeopardize the interstate link in favor of its turnpike, because of the latter's predominantly intrastate benefits.

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