

Hanna Publishes Op-ed in POLITICO

U.S. Rep. Richard Hanna writes an op-ed in today's POLITICO on the importance of a six-year highway bill. Hanna is Vice Chairman of Highways and Transit, the largest subcommittee on the House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure. [CLICK HERE](#) to read the piece.



Opinion Contributor Expressway to economic growth

By REP. RICHARD HANNA | 11/15/11 9:26 PM EST

The path to reauthorize our highway and transit programs since the previous highway bill expired has been as bumpy and dysfunctional as the roads we drive and the subways we crowd. America's crumbling bridges, decaying transit assets and unsafe roads are indicative of Congress's neglect in passing a long-term surface transportation reauthorization.

For decades, all levels of government have neglected our infrastructure. For two years, Congress has failed in one of our fundamental responsibilities — long-term reauthorization of our nation's highway and transit programs.

We are now on the law's eighth extension. Yet facilitating interstate commerce is one of the federal government's most basic roles. We cannot afford a ninth extension.

We talk a lot about legislating to create jobs. The best opportunity to put people back to work in the short and long term has always been through infrastructure work.

With every \$1 billion spent on infrastructure, we create 25,000-35,000 well-paying construction and related jobs. We can put tens of thousands of people back to work by passing a multiyear surface transportation bill, at current funding levels.

House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) is committed. Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman John Mica (R-Fla.) has been diligent. Our constituents are clamoring for it. I'm convinced there is a groundswell of support within Congress to get a serious bill done.

Now is the time to pass a six-year bill.

But unlike years past, we need to pay for what we buy. As receipts to the Highway Trust Fund dwindle, we must find additional revenue. No more bailouts for the Highway Trust Fund, no gimmicks and no earmarks. We can find more revenue from many sources — including expanding safe American energy production.

We know the economic costs of underinvesting in our infrastructure. We also know that tens of thousands of jobs will be created, and we'll become more competitive on a global scale if we provide a steady, certain funding stream through a multiyear surface transportation bill with a more efficient permitting process.

If we continue to neglect our responsibility as policymakers, we most likely will continue to limp along, filling potholes and resurfacing roads. We have to pass a long-term bill so that states can take on large-scale projects — including bridge replacements and major highway improvements. These are projects that will put people back to work for years — instead of weeks — and spur real economic growth.

This Congress is rightly committed to responsive government, national pride, fiscal responsibility, pro-growth policy and economic competitiveness. Reauthorizing our nation's highway and transit programs is not only consistent with these principles but also a condition for achieving them.

It's time to do our job and pass a robust highway and transit bill to get this country on the expressway to economic growth and job creation.

Let's get to work so our constituents can too.

Rep. Richard Hanna (R-N.Y.) serves as vice chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Highways and Transit.