

Department of Transportation offices Re-Open, Congress Passes 30-Day Extension State Reimbursements for Highway Construction Resume After 2-Day stoppage.

The Senate floor has seen some spectacular partisan politics the past two days. With Senator Jim Bunning (R-KY) essentially filibustering the bill, HR 4691 for fiscal conservative reasons and Senator Harry Reid and his Leadership refuting Bunning all the way. Bunning refused to let the bill pass by voice vote so he demanded a roll call vote, something every Senator has the power to do. Reid refused to allow the roll call vote. Bunning relented late Tuesday in exchange for a vote on his proposal. The original bill, HR 4691, passed 78-19.

As a result this bill permitted DOT agencies to re-open, authorized spending from the Highway Trust Fund, and allowing reimbursements to the States for highway work. Including an additional 2 years for the motorcycle safety programs contained in SAFETEA-LU (PL109-59). Those programs, known as the section 2010 grants provide grants to States to be used for rider education and motorist awareness campaigns.

Perhaps the most troubling aspect of the this week's shutdown of the Federal Highway Administration has made it clear that Congress has no problems with subjecting the Nations highway progress and programs to a seriously broken political process.