

# Matt Yglesias

Sep 16th, 2009 at 4:01 pm

## Bike/Ped Safety Funds Survive Senate Vote



CalTrain station, Menlo Park, CA (cc photo by Richard Masoner)

Elana Schor reports on [failed efforts to strip funding for bicycle and pedestrian safety](#) in the Senate:

**Sens. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Jim Webb (D-VA) voted with Coburn** to allow states to opt out of a current mandate to spend 10 percent of federal transportation aid on bike and pedestrian paths, bike-ped safety education, and other programs.

Coburn's amendment fell short by a vote of 39-59, with **three other Democrats, Sens. Russ Feingold (WI), Evan Bayh (IN), and Claire McCaskill (MO), also aligning with the majority of Republicans** in favor of the opt-out.

Shame on everyone. Small amounts of money to promote walking and cycling are good for the environment and for public health.

On a related note, I look forward to the day when the Cato Institute does a blog post denouncing [each and every publicly financed parking lot or garage](#) in the United States of America. Somehow I think that if we equalized public funding for car park and bike parking at \$0 that would on net work to the advantage of non-drivers.

- [Comments](#)
- [34](#)

Filed under: [Bicycles](#), [transportation](#),

### 34 Responses to “Bike/Ped Safety Funds Survive Senate Vote”

1. *Paulie Carbone* Says:

[September 16th, 2009 at 4:03 pm](#)

Cars suck, blah, blah, blah.

2. *Mixner* Says:

[September 16th, 2009 at 4:11 pm](#)

Transportation subsidies are bad, except when they favor modes of transportation Matthew likes.

3. *ibc* Says:

[September 16th, 2009 at 4:15 pm](#)

*Cars suck, blah, blah, blah.*

Baby wants his bottle, waa waah waah.

Also, I love that Mixner seems incapable of making it through all 150 words of the post:

“Somehow I think that if we equalized public funding for car park and bike parking at \$0 that would on net work to the advantage of non-drivers.”

4. *zak822* Says:

[September 16th, 2009 at 4:15 pm](#)

“Somehow I think that if we equalized public funding for car park and bike parking at \$0 that would on net work to the advantage of non-drivers.’

Dude, that’s the problem, an advantage to non-drivers. Our car-centric culture ain’t supporting non-car stuff. Look at how hard it is to keep public transportation funded.

5. *Fracture You* Says:

[September 16th, 2009 at 4:16 pm](#)

Shame on you Yglesias for being such an awful ninny. The idea that the US Gov’t should be forcing states to make bike lanes is just ludicrous. Local control only makes sense when you’re talking about local roads.

6. *David Sucher* Says:

[September 16th, 2009 at 4:17 pm](#)

*Russ Feingold?!*

That’s interesting. Wonder what his vote is all about.

7. *chappy* Says:

[September 16th, 2009 at 4:21 pm](#)

As a frequent bike to work rider, I'm about as pro-bike as one can be, but \$4 million does seem like a lot of money to build 150 back racks and some showers/lockers. Also, why is the bike shop necessary. I suspect most people that religiously ride their bikes can do simple repairs? Further, the site is at union station, so the bike rider, most likely, can make it home via public transport or cab...

8. *Mixner* Says:

[September 16th, 2009 at 4:21 pm](#)

I love the ibc always completely misses the point.

9. *ibc* Says:

[September 16th, 2009 at 4:27 pm](#)

*As a frequent bike to work rider, I'm about as pro-bike as one can be, but \$4 million does seem like a lot of money to build 150 back racks and some showers/lockers. Also, why is the bike shop necessary. I suspect most people that religiously ride their bikes can do simple repairs? Further, the site is at union station, so the bike rider, most likely, can make it home via public transport or cab..*

It's intended to be a transportation hub. That means folks can ride from the 'burbs into the city, park the bike, take a shower, grab the Metro, cab, etc...

More here: <http://www.thewashcycle.com/2009/09/bikestation-dc-stories-just-begining.html>

10. *ibc* Says:

[September 16th, 2009 at 4:28 pm](#)

@Mixner:

If, at some point in the future, you make a point, I'll do my best to "get" it.

11. *Ryan2* Says:

[September 16th, 2009 at 4:30 pm](#)

I think that there are certain types of people (conservative movement, I'm looking at you), that simply think 1) liberals are annoying — 2) comprehensive problem solving is somehow "liberal" — so therefore 3) we should never actually solve any problems.

Take global warming. If you don't "believe" in global warming, fine. But if you DO, that means we need to address the problem. Sometimes I get the sense that if someone dropped a policy memo on Obama's desk that found a way to solve the entire climate change problem QUICKLY, EASILY, and FOR FREE, there would be some people who opposed the plan on the grounds that the newly developed technology was "sciencey" and therefore associated with those godawful annoying academics.

In this sense, being politically conservative really just means fucking up everything as much as possible and daring those poor liberals to address the problems you've created just so you can mock them for caring about things.

12. *bperk* Says:

[September 16th, 2009 at 4:39 pm](#)

I live in NoVa, and there are not enough sidewalks. I'm close to a school where kids have to walk along the street to school because there aren't any sidewalks. Wake up, Webb.

13. *iibc* Says:

[September 16th, 2009 at 4:39 pm](#)

@Ryan2:

You give too much credit to movement conservatives. Actually the thought process works something like this (Let's take your example of global climate change):

1) There is a debate about this thing called "global climate change"; 2) Carefully way which side of the issue would send the biggest "fuck you" to Jane Fonda?; 3) Adopt that position as stridently and steadfastly as possible...

14. *ibc* Says:

[September 16th, 2009 at 4:40 pm](#)

"way == weigh"

Sorry, started drinking early today.

15. *Aqua Regia* Says:

[September 16th, 2009 at 4:41 pm](#)

In my city this year they have started a [public bike rental program](#). 3,000 bikes and 300 bikeracks right now, to go up to 5000 and 400. Lemme tell ya, it has been EXTREMELY popular around here. All the bikes near where i work are almost always booked. Apparently the same company is expanding into Boston and London too. Its especially great for visitors, easy and cheap way to see the city.

16. *Mixner* Says:

[September 16th, 2009 at 4:44 pm](#)

ibc,

ooh, devastating.

17. *TW Andrews* Says:

[September 16th, 2009 at 5:02 pm](#)

I'm all for more walkable areas, and improved bike lanes, but it seems like 10% of federal transportation money is a lot for bike and pedestrian programs. What am I missing?

18. *Elton* Says:

[September 16th, 2009 at 5:09 pm](#)

*Shame on you Yglesias for being such an awful ninny. The idea that the US Gov't should be forcing states to make bike lanes is just ludicrous. Local control only makes sense when you're talking about local roads.*

Yep. I too am a big cyclist, but seriously: Do states like Wyoming really need to spend 10% of their federal transportation funds on biking and walking? One-size-fits-all federal mandates are dumb.

19. *Aqua Regia* Says:

[September 16th, 2009 at 5:15 pm](#)

*I'm all for more walkable areas, and improved bike lanes, but it seems like 10% of federal transportation money is a lot for bike and pedestrian programs. What am I missing?*

That it's about 90% too much for cars?

All someone like Matt is asking for is to not have funding QUITE so slanted in favour of cars as it is now. But apparently that is crazy to even suggest.

20. *Aqua Regia* Says:

[September 16th, 2009 at 5:16 pm](#)

However,

I do agree with Elton that 10% may not be the right number for all states, and they should probably decide that. Wyoming, for example can maybe get by with less, while in a place like New York 10% might be too little.

21. *pseudonymous in nc* Says:

[September 16th, 2009 at 5:21 pm](#)

*What am I missing?*

Sidewalks, usually.

22. *Max424* Says:

[September 16th, 2009 at 5:24 pm](#)

@17 TW Andrews: "it seems like 10% of federal transportation money is a lot for bike and pedestrian programs. What am I missing?"

Nothing. 10% of not much is hardly anything.

Where is the Bicycle Lobby? They should be pedaling around the Capitol grounds throwing bags of cash at Senators. Hell, they should have their own bank. The National Bicycle Bank. Put a ten billion dollars in it, leverage the money at 20-1, and fire \$200 billion around the country building bike lanes that creep into every nook and cranny of the country.

We need as Americans to get off our fat asses and ride, baby, ride.

23. *AaLD* Says:

[September 16th, 2009 at 5:25 pm](#)

Looks like even Wyoming needs more bike paths.

<http://www.ci.laramie.wy.us/cityhall/council/documents/05B.CCPH.06.02.09.TEAL.pdf>

I guess it's not all open countryside, horses and pickup trucks.

24. *sweaty* Says:

[September 16th, 2009 at 6:58 pm](#)

I would be more supportive of this if it meant leveling the the rather large and steep set of hills between

my home and office.

25. *ibc* Says:

[September 16th, 2009 at 7:39 pm](#)

*I would be more supportive of this if it meant leveling the the rather large and steep set of hills between my home and office.*

Never fear:

[Prediction: DA 7900 will be 12 speed by 2010.](#)

Problem solved.

26. *ibc* Says:

[September 16th, 2009 at 7:40 pm](#)

*I would be more supportive of this if it meant leveling the the rather large and steep set of hills between my home and office.*

Never fear:

[Prediction: DA 7900 will be 12 speed by 2010.](#)

Problem solved.

27. *TFT* Says:

[September 16th, 2009 at 7:45 pm](#)

It's really hard to take your kid to school, 10 miles from home, on your bike when your middle has been cut out of you so you don't die of cancer.

Also, trying to take all your stuff to work in a public school is rather hard on a bike.

And I hate how bikers think the rules of the road are not for them.

I get the sense that so many riders I see have cars, but they're affluent enough to be able to get to work late, so they ride their bike (okay, that was silly).

Seriously Matt, you need to start hanging out with some grownups.

Here is an idea: Allow public school teachers use of the diamond lane, no matter how many folks are in the car (it has nothing to do with bikes, but Matt references schools and teachers and transportation so I feel it all fits).

28. *AaLD* Says:

[September 16th, 2009 at 8:01 pm](#)

*It's really hard to take your kid to school, 10 miles from home, on your bike when your middle has been cut out of you so you don't die of cancer.*

No one is saying everyone has to ride a bike. We're only talking about 10% of one funding bill, so there's no need to panic.

*And I hate how bikers think the rules of the road are not for them.*

As both a bicyclist and a driver, I hate that, too. I also hate how some drivers think that bikes don't belong on the roads. And I rarely hear about a motorist who was killed by an errant bike rider.

*I get the sense that so many riders I see have cars, but they're affluent enough to be able to get to work late, so they ride their bike (okay, that was silly).*

I frequently ride my bike to work. When I do, I usually arrive earlier than half the other staff. Plenty of time to shower and dress.

*Seriously Matt, you need to start hanging out with some grownups.*

I'm 51. Is that grown-up enough for Matt to hang out with? (If he ever finds himself stuck in the central San Joaquin Valley.)

29. *Micah K Says:*

[September 16th, 2009 at 9:23 pm](#)

I know it's a couple links deep from this post, but if you read the [proposed legislation](#), you'd see that the 10% set aside is CURRENT policy, not a change. And you'd also see that the category of spending is much broader than just bike and pedestrian improvements. It includes: acquisition and improvement of scenic and historic routes, landscaping, historic preservation, conversion of abandoned rail rights of way, environmental mitigation, and "establishment of transportation museums." If you divvied that up equally, and rest assured many states will, the share going to bikes and pedestrians would be 1.4%. Not so impressive anymore.

30. *down with the Dérailleur Bourg Says:*

[September 16th, 2009 at 9:35 pm](#)

There are certainly class, age and other demographic variables at play in any 'how I get to work' debate. I would save my populist rage up for the healthcare and financial regs fight.

31. *Bloix Says:*

[September 16th, 2009 at 10:39 pm](#)

Publicly funded garages allow dense urban areas to compete with malls for shopper and restaurant dollars. Go to Bethesda some Saturday night – the streets and restaurants and movie theaters are packed, and you can't get a space in the many garages, all of which charge up to 10 pm. If those garages didn't exist, the people would be at the mall and the streets would be empty, and a hell of lot of good restaurants, not to mention the best movie house in the area, would be out of business.

32. *Old Guy Says:*

[September 16th, 2009 at 10:49 pm](#)

I'm 68, so long past "grown up." Its a matter of preferring walking, or cycling, or taking mass transit. The more of these that are available, the better. When I do the first two, I am depriving some petrodictator or fat cat oil baron of a tiny, tiny bit of revenue, and it makes me very, very happy. The third is not quite as effective, but still beats driving the private auto. Remember always who makes those profits when you use gas. Sorry Norway, it's not your fault you are in such bad company. You did fine before your oil boom anyway.

33. *Tyro Says:*

[September 16th, 2009 at 11:55 pm](#)

*It's really hard to take your kid to school, 10 miles from home, on your bike when your middle has been cut out of you so you don't die of cancer*

I was convinced this was a parody-comment until I read the rest of it. Every. Damn. Thread. on bicycling and creating more walkable neighborhoods contains a comment like, “Well, you can't expect someone like me with no arms and no legs who has to transport 12 children and 300 pounds worth of food and furniture every day to walk or bicycle!” Sheesh. If you can't read threads like this without getting upset that it doesn't apply directly to you, try thinking about it in terms of thinking that pro-bicycling policies mean less cars on the road that you have to contend with.

34. *TC Says:*

[September 17th, 2009 at 12:48 am](#)

10 bikes on the road mean 10 more car parking spots at the mall. think of it as an entitlement program for more liberal parking opportunities.

sheesh. look at the bright side once in a while.

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