

Gentleman, my name is Frank McCourt. As the chairman pointed out, I am the State senator from the Second Legislative District of Baltimore City, which is located in the Fourth Congressional District.

I have been closely associated with the bridge problem since a member of our lower house in Annapolis. I am appearing before this committee at the request of many of my constituents. I received calls and letter from people who simply do not understand how Maryland Congressmen can ignore the wishes of those that they represent by introducing this bill which calls for a parallel bridge.

The question of a parallel bridge was petitioned in the referendum in 1966. This was a long and difficult task, but it was done because the people of Maryland felt strongly that the decision to build a parallel crossing was based on the whims of the administration and not based on the unbiased and impartial study of whether a northern or southern crossing may be more advantageous for the future economic development of the State and for the overall highway development of the State. Several of you Congressmen asked about the history of the legislation. It was first introduced in 1965. It was defeated in the legislature. In 1966, we heard mention of political pressure. There was considerable pressure. At that time I was still a member of the house of delegates, and there were pressures put by the Governor. There was a bridge built in Ocean City for several million dollars. There were legislators who were told by the State roads commission that they would not get the programs in western Maryland if they did not vote for the parallel bridge. It finally was passed by a very slim majority. It was not an emergency measure then.

In answer to one of the Congressmen, I think Mr. Cramer, I think the voters did then at the same time go along with people they were electing. It was a 65 percent turnover. That did pass by one vote again after being petitioned. But each time the package grew. First we heard about a parallel bridge, then it was a tunnel, then it was a northern crossing, and then it was a southern crossing.

For you gentlemen that are concerned about a southern crossing, I do not think we will ever see one over the Chesapeake Bay.

No one would argue that a parallel bridge would be nice. Certainly the traffic does back up. It backs up about 70 hours a year.

The State roads commissioner tells you it is from May to October. It is from Memorial Day, it slacks off again and picks up in the hot summer until Labor Day, and then you have no more.

We would be spending approximately a million dollars an hour to alleviate congestion. I think you have heard testimony from Congressman Long, there are other things and methods that, although may be questioned, have never been tried.

The voters of Maryland again overwhelmingly rejected this parallel bridge in Baltimore City. You have heard of the ratio of 2½ to 1 against the parallel crossing.

Now, the people find their efforts to speak out on this issue were completely in vain. In spite of the vote, the bill is now being introduced by your committee which they feel is a disregard for the democratic process.

You and I, as elected officials, know that we seldom have a chance to learn by recorded vote precisely how the majority of our constituents feel on any given issue or bill. This is one of those rare times that there is no doubt how the people stand.