

Friends fight for Musgrave

By FAITH BREMNER
Gannett News Service

WASHINGTON

Powerful friends rode to Colorado Rep. Marilyn Musgrave's rescue this week after her 4th Congressional District, which includes Fort Collins, was left out of a \$275 billion transportation bill that will fund highway and transit projects for the next six years.

The Fort Morgan Repub-

Highway funds cut from bill to be restored

lican got a scolding last year on the House floor from the powerful head of the transportation committee, Don Young, after she circulated a letter opposing his proposal to raise the gas tax by 8 cents per gallon.

So it was no surprise this week when Young's com-

mittee approved the transportation bill with no money in it for Musgrave's district, which includes Fort Collins and the Eastern Plains.

The bill contains \$2.6 billion for the state of Colorado to spend on transportation projects, which is nearly \$600 million more

than the state received from the last big federal transportation bill six years ago.

It also contains \$92 million requested by Colorado House members for special projects in their districts and \$412 million for public transit projects.

Every other district in

Colorado got funds except Musgrave's.

Even American Samoa, a tiny U.S. territory with 70,000 people and only one nonvoting delegate in the House, has \$13 million in the bill for special highway projects.

However, when the bill



MUSGRAVE

goes to the floor for a vote as early as next week, \$14 million will be tacked on for special road projects in Musgrave's district, her chief of staff, Guy Short, said Friday.

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Musgrave —

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Improvements to Interstate 25 between Colorado Highway 14 in Fort Collins and Colorado Highway 52, near Frederick and Firestone, would get \$8 million, and projects on Interstate 76 and U.S. Highway 287 would get \$3 million each, he said.

And how will this money get into the final bill?

"This is a nine-inning game. You don't report the score in the seventh inning," Short said. "There are a lot of ways to work the process.

"She played on a team with the (House) leadership and the president. And when you play on a good team, team players tend to take care of their own."

Although the bill still has several legislative steps ahead, most of the projects laid out in the House bill likely will be part of the final compromise Congress is expected to adopt this spring.

Congressional leaders have been known to delete the projects of members deemed uncooperative.

John Samples, a political analyst for the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, said he would not be surprised if House leaders intervened on Musgrave's behalf.

"Part of it's the gay marriage issue," Samples said. Musgrave's bill that would amend the Constitution to ban gay marriages is supported by House leaders and President Bush. "They don't want her disgruntled while she's on a major issue for them," he said.

How Colorado's legislators voted in Congress

Here are highlights from action in the Senate and House in the past week, along with the votes of Colorado legislators. Colorado's senators are Republicans Wayne Allard and Ben Nighthorse Campbell. In the House, Colorado has seven legislators: Republicans Joel Hefley, Scott McInnis, Marilyn Musgrave, Tom Tancredo and Bob Beauprez, and Democrats Diana DeGette and Mark Udall.

SENATE

■ On Thursday, the Senate passed on a 61-38 vote a bill that makes it a separate crime to injure or kill a fetus during a violent federal crime against a pregnant woman.

How Colorado's legislators voted:

Allard, Yea
Campbell, Yea

HOUSE

■ On Wednesday, the House passed on a 419-5 vote a bill that would reauthorize the school lunch program and separate programs to provide subsidized breakfasts and milk through 2008. Republican Reps. Todd Akin of Missouri, Jeff Flake of Arizona, Jeb Hensarling of Texas, Ron Paul of Texas and John Shadegg of Arizona voted "no."

■ Also Wednesday, the House passed a bill that would authorize grants to states and organ donor organizations to help cover expenses for people who make living donations of organs. Republican Reps. Jeff Flake of Arizona and Ron Paul of Texas voted "no."

■ On Thursday, the House passed on a 215-212 vote a budget

On the Internet

- House of Representatives: www.house.gov
- Senate: www.senate.gov

blueprint for fiscal 2005.

How Colorado's legislators voted:

Beauprez: Yea
DeGette: Nay
Hefley: Nay
McInnis: NV
Musgrave: Yea
Tancredo: Yea
Udall: Nay

WHAT'S AHEAD

The Senate plans to begin work on its version of a much-delayed bill to extend the historic welfare reform law of 1996. The House plans to take up a massive transportation bill that states rely heavily upon for funding for highway construction and mass transit projects.

Source: Highlights compiled from Gannett News Service stories and *Congressional Quarterly Daily Monitor*, roll call votes from Senate Internet site and House press gallery.

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