

Congressman Evans (PA-03)
Testimony to House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
May 1, 2019

Thank you, Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves, for allowing me the opportunity to provide written testimony. I would like to thank the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure for granting us the opportunity to discuss the crucial transportation and infrastructural issues challenging the country today.

I represent the 3rd Congressional District, which includes Northwest and West Philadelphia and parts of North, South, Southwest and Center City Philadelphia. Pennsylvania ranks fifth in the nation for population and sixth in gross state productivity. As such, its citizens—like so many others in the nation—depend on its infrastructure. The Keystone State hosts over 5,000 miles of freight rail, more than 20,000 highway bridges, and more than 3,000 state regulated dams. Philadelphia is also home to the country's sixth largest public transportation system, SEPTA.

Yet these critical systems and many more are in disarray. In Philadelphia, too many streets are riddled with potholes and cars are getting ruined by the on-going stress of hitting crater-sized holes in the road. In 2017, Pennsylvania's drinking water was ranked the 3rd most contaminated water in the nation. The aging water infrastructure that affects cities and small towns throughout our country, puts millions of Americans at risk every day.

In the city of Philadelphia, tens of thousands of children are attending schools that have had lead in the water, lead dust from chipped paint, and asbestos fibers in settled dust. Although city and state officials have put a limited amount of joint funding toward these issues, the School District of Philadelphia needs federal help to ensure the safety of our beloved children and teachers.

However, what is happening to school facilities in Philadelphia is not isolated to my city—there are crumbling school buildings throughout the nation and this problem needs to be addressed and included as we discuss infrastructure in Congress.

Across our country there are children and teachers who are wearing coats in their classrooms to stay warm, crowdsourcing to raise funds that will repair broken air conditioners ahead of summer months, and so much more.

Our youngest and brightest learners should have high-quality school facilities so they can achieve their dreams. Instead, too many of them are trying to learn in subpar facilities—even though we expect exceptional results.

I serve on the Ways and Means Committee, where I urge support for the Rehabilitation of Historic Schools Act, H.R. 158. Among other tools, my bill would make available a tax credit to repair our children's schools so they can succeed in education and in life. These are the same federal rehabilitation tax credits that President Trump used to renovate the Old Post Office Building in Washington, D.C. and turn it into his own upscale hotel. I believe this tax credit should be expanded to work 'For The People.'

But this solution is just one proposal. Our country needs more than \$4.5 trillion by 2025 to fix our crumbling roads, bridges, train tracks, and dams. We have an opportunity to work together across party lines to make a once-in-a-generation massive investment in infrastructure. Fixing our children's schools, ensuring the quality of our water supplies, and maintaining transportation networks must be part of that investment. Too often failures in our infrastructure affect those who live in poverty—a condition over which children have no control. Let us not abandon the responsibility we have to all our citizens, especially those most vulnerable.