

## DAILY NEWS CLIPS

### FEDERAL NEWS CLIPS

June 8, 2012

#### **BOEHNER IRKS BOXER WITH REMARK ON TRANSPORTATION BILL**

By Ashley Halsey III  
Washington Post  
June 7, 2012

It was the kind of off-hand response a fellow might make after he felt like he'd done enough talking to reporters and was ready to get on with the rest of his day.

House Speaker John A. Boehner (R-Ohio) had reached the one-last-question moment in his daily briefing with reporters Thursday after fielding queries on all sorts of topics, and he obviously wasn't prepared for the closer to be about transportation.

Are you getting an extension bill ready for when transportation funding runs out on June 30?

His response was, more or less, I don't know, but if it comes to that it won't be a 30-day extension.

"We're going to go with a six-month extension," he said.

When that word reached to other side of the Capitol, Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) exploded.

She has been the architect of a Senate-led effort to get the transportation bill out of conference committee and to save transportation funding from the disaster of another extension that would allow the Highway Trust Fund to run virtually dry.

All week she has tried to keep the lid on what's being discussed behind closed doors to avoid a lot of counterproductive political posturing that could ensue. The chatter has continued, nonetheless, fueled largely by Politico's Morning Transportation newsletter, which is widely read on the Hill and whose authors are adept at catching the slightest muttering of lawmakers about the bill.

Now, Boehner himself was doing the muttering.

With the Senate eagerly awaiting a House response to the latest proposal, Boxer clearly felt that the speaker wasn't helping matters.

"I am very disappointed that Speaker Boehner is even talking about a long-term transportation extension, which would lead to the Highway Trust Fund going bankrupt," she said. "Three million jobs and thousands of businesses are at stake."

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## **SPEAKER BOEHNER SAYS HE PREFERS SIX-MONTH HIGHWAY BILL EXTENSION**

By Keith Laing  
The Hill  
June 7, 2012

House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) said Thursday that he would like to see a six-month extension of federal surface transportation funding if the committee of lawmakers that is conferencing on a new highway bill fails to reach an agreement.

The 47-member transportation conference has been negotiating on a possible multi-year funding bill for road and transit projects for the past month, but the talks have appeared to reach an impasse in recent days.

Speaking to reporters at the Capitol Thursday, Boehner said his fallback plan is to extend the current funding that is scheduled to expire on June 30 through the November elections.

"If we get up to June 30th, I am not interested in some 30-day extension," he said. "Frankly, I think if we get to June 30th, it'd be a six-month extension, and move this thing out of the political realm that it appears to be in at this moment."

Boehner said he has a "lot of confidence" in the committee of lawmakers that has been trying to meld a two-year, \$109-billion transportation bill that was passed earlier this year by the Senate with a pair of temporary extensions of current funding that were approved by the House.

"I believe in a bipartisan way, the conference on the highway bill wants to come to a resolution," he said. "So, I'm very hopeful that they'll get into serious discussions quickly."

The chairwoman of the conference committee, Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), sharply criticized Boehner for talking about an extension before the clock runs out on.

"I am very disappointed that Speaker Boehner is even talking about a long-term transportation extension, which would lead to the Highway Trust Fund going bankrupt, when all of our efforts must be focused on passing a transportation bill by the June 30th deadline," Boxer said in a statement released by her office.

"Three million jobs and thousands of businesses are at stake," she continued.

Boxer has tried to sound optimistic notes about the conference committee's negotiations as pessimism surrounding the congressional talks has grown. She said this week that she and Republican Sen. James Inhofe (R-Okla.) had delivered a draft of a compromise to House Republicans, but GOP leaders on the conference committee have said only that they are studying the plan.

The House has already passed an extension of current transportation funding beyond the scheduled June 30 deadline, which would carry highway spending through Sept. 30. But in order for that measure to become law, it would have to also be approved by the Senate.

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## **THIRD ALLEGED CO-CONSPIRATOR IDENTIFIED IN DONOVAN CAMPAIGN PROBE**

By John Lender, Edmund H. Mahoney and Dave Altimari  
The Hartford Courant (CT)  
June 7, 2012

Joshua Nassi, the fired congressional campaign manager for House Speaker Christopher Donovan, has been identified by sources as the third alleged co-conspirator mentioned in a federal affidavit about how thousands of dollars ended up in Donovan's congressional campaign from hidden donors.

The sources said that Nassi, the former legislative aide to Donovan who joined his 5th Congressional District campaign as manager, is "CC-3" in the affidavit. The document outlined how the FBI says CC-3 accepted multiple political contribution checks of \$2,500 from so-called "conduit" donors, passing through money from donors who wanted their identities hidden.

Nassi has been unavailable for comment since last week, when the U.S. Attorney and FBI arrested Robert Braddock Jr., the finance director for Donovan's campaign. Braddock was charged, following an FBI sting, with conspiring to hide the source of \$20,000 in political contributions, most of them to Donovan's Democratic campaign, in April and May. No one else has been charged.

Nassi's attorney, William Bloss of Bridgeport, declined to comment this week when asked to confirm that his client is the CC-3 in the affidavit, which also included references to CC-1 and CC-2. The Courant has identified CC-1 and CC-2 in earlier reports:

-- An article last week said that CC-1 has been identified by sources as Ray Soucy of Naugatuck, a correctional industries supervisor at the Cheshire state prison complex and labor union activist who supports Donovan.

-- On Wednesday, sources told The Courant that CC-2 is a former employee of a smoke shop in Waterbury, Smoke House Tobacco on Watertown Avenue, a retail outlet that has "roll-your-own" cigarette machines. The machines and proposed taxes on them have figured prominently in the

continuing criminal investigation of alleged influence-buying at the state Capitol. Smoke House Tobacco was not mentioned in the affidavit.

According to the FBI affidavit, CC-1 and CC-2 helped conceal the true source of two groups of \$10,000 payments collected by the Donovan campaign.

Those two co-conspirators allegedly found people to put their name on \$2,500 checks for money that ostensibly came from an investor in a "roll-your-own" tobacco shop who wanted to kill a legislative proposal to impose taxes on such shops. In reality, the money appears to have been provided by an undercover FBI agent posing as such an investor in one or more of the "roll-your-own" tobacco shops.

It remains unclear from the FBI affidavit if anyone who was fighting against the "roll-your-own" tax bill under consideration in the recently concluded legislative session was trying to funnel money to Donovan's campaign — or if the effort was an FBI sting operation from the start.

The role of CC-3 was at the receiving end of those checks, on behalf of the Donovan campaign, the FBI affidavit said. CC-3 was "an aide to the [Donovan] campaign" other than Braddock, the affidavit said.

Federal authorities, who have refused to discuss the investigation in the past, again declined Thursday to discuss Nassi's role in their investigation.

In addition to firing Braddock, Donovan also dismissed Nassi and another campaign worker, Sara Waterfall, who worked in the finance office. All three have been unavailable for comment since federal authorities announced Braddock's arrest last week. Before joining Donovan's campaign payroll, Nassi had been the \$110,000-a-year chief policy counsel in the House Speaker's office at the legislature — a job he left Oct. 7.

The affidavit says that after four \$2,500 "conduit" contributions went into Donovan's campaign in April, another four "conduit" checks for \$2,500 each were handed over to CC-3, now identified by sources as Nassi, at Donovan's campaign, on May 14. He allegedly received them from CC-1, who has been identified as Soucy, the affidavit said.

Three of those May 14 checks were made payable to the Donovan campaign, and one payable to "a political party," the affidavit said. Party executive director Jonathan Harris identified Nassi as the person who delivered a \$2,500 check to the party. Harris said the party thinks that the check Nassi delivered was one of the "bad checks" from a "conduit" contributor as payment for Donovan's share of the May 14 party convention expenses.

The party originally deposited the check — written to the state Democrats and dated May 14, the day of the convention — but has since written a new check for \$2,500 and sent it back to the contributor, Joseph M. Daddona Jr. of Wolcott, a registered Democrat, Harris said earlier this week.

Daddona and his attorney have been unavailable for comment.

Donovan is the convention-endorsed candidate for the party's nomination for the congressional seat, but he still faces an Aug. 14 primary for the nomination against Democratic challengers Elizabeth Esty and Dan Roberti.

Meanwhile, new details emerged Thursday about an involuntary, paid leave on which Soucy was placed this week by a Department of Correction supervisor.

"This letter is to confirm our conversation advising you that you are being placed on Administrative Leave, with pay, effective Tuesday, June 5, 2012, pending an investigation into an incident that may subject you to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from State service," David A. Brown, director of correctional enterprises, wrote in a certified letter on Monday.

Soucy is not supposed to go to, or communicate with, the Cheshire prison complex unless he's asked, the letter said. "You are not to visit the facility grounds, report to or telephone the facility unless notified by my designee or me," Brown wrote. "If there is a change in your leave status you will be notified."

Brown also wrote: "While you are on Administrative Leave you are responsible for making yourself available and cooperate fully with the department." He added that Soucy's paycheck would be mailed to his home address.

Soucy was already on a voluntary, paid personal leave for more than a month before the involuntary leave began Tuesday. The paid leave began April 29, three days after the law enforcement affidavit says that Soucy was confronted by the FBI about his activities, and was persuaded to cooperate with investigators. That cooperation included allowing federal agents to record his conversations with members of Donovan's campaign staff about further possibly illegal campaign contributions.

*Originally published here:* <http://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-donovan-probe-0608-20120607,0,3938996.story>

## **ALLEGATIONS DO NOT EQUATE TO GUILT**

Opinion by Brandon T. Bisceglia  
Connecticut Post  
June 7, 2012

The allegations against House Speaker Chris Donovan's campaign finance director, Robert Braddock Jr., and an unknown number of co-conspirators are serious indeed. But any cynical dismissal of Donovan (or politics more generally) as corrupt is premature.

Donovan has reacted appropriately so far. He fired key players in the controversy and is cooperating with federal authorities. His first public statement was slow in coming, but hit the right notes. He hasn't been charged with any wrongdoing, and has said he didn't know that anyone might be trying to funnel illegal contributions to his campaign.

That denial is credible. Braddock was a new face in Connecticut. And Donovan is well-known as a crusader against the very types of influence-peddling now being rooted out at the Capitol. Unless the federal investigation turns up evidence that contradicts his statements, we must take him at his word.

This doesn't mean that Donovan is off the hook. He will need to be honest and forthright with investigators and voters as the probe continues. And he will need to redouble scrutiny of his own staff to make sure he is not plagued by scandals in the future.

In the meantime, it's prudent to wait for all of the facts to come out before making any judgments.

We shouldn't be surprised that corruption exists -- that's why we have campaign finance laws in the first place. If anything, the discovery of these illegal contributions is proof that vigilance and enforcement can keep corruption from overtaking the system.

*Originally published here:* <http://www.ctpost.com/news/article/Allegations-do-not-equate-to-guilt-3617252.php#ixzz1xCwicQ2t>

## **PUT ON THE BRAKES**

By Editorial Staff

Westfair Business Communications (CT)

June 7, 2012

It is perfectly apparent to us – what we cannot understand is why it appears that was not the case with the people who represent us.

Gov. Dannel P. Malloy, U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal and U.S. Rep. Chris Murphy did not immediately say it, so we will: Christopher Donovan must temporarily suspend his campaign for Murphy's Fifth District seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. The reason being that the FBI arrested Donovan's campaign director and levied charges of influence peddling on legislation in the Connecticut General Assembly where Donovan represents Meriden and is speaker of the state House of Representatives.

Meriden resident Robert Braddock Jr. was charged on suspicion of soliciting and concealing campaign payments and then stubbing out legislation in the Connecticut General Assembly deemed burdensome by "roll-your-own" tobacco shops.

Braddock pleaded innocent and Donovan was not named in a May 31 FBI affidavit. Consider this an ironclad statement – we do not presume any guilty conduct on the part of Donovan. The actions alleged by the FBI could have easily transpired without his knowledge.

Lock this one in iron as well – we do presume he has no right to campaign to represent the state of Connecticut in Washington, D.C. until he has come out with that full explanation.

We fully believe in the doctrine that someone is innocent unless proven guilty. But this is not a trial – it is a campaign, with a different set of standards. Connecticut cannot send a man to Congress with even a whiff of graft floating in his general vicinity. Not after former Gov. John Rowland. Not after umpteen instances of funny money in Bridgeport, Hartford, Waterbury, Shelton – the list goes on and on, ad nauseam. Until Donovan can answer all questions on the allegations, he cannot continue his quest for Congress.

Malloy immediately issued a statement demanding Donovan give a full explanation of what he knows. After trotting out his new campaign manager Tom Swan to field questions, Donovan took questions himself a few days later – but did not shed any additional light on details surrounding Braddock.

With that information not immediately forthcoming, Malloy's immediate next move, as one of the two most prominent Democrats in Connecticut, should have been a demand for Donovan to suspend his campaign until he airs that explanation.

Contacted the morning of June 1 after the FBI filed its charges, Malloy office spokesman Andrew Doba declined to speak immediately on the record about whether the governor considered making such a demand, while noting the short time that had elapsed and the calling attention to the governor's statement decrying the charges as "despicable" and demanding facts.

Whatever statements Malloy has made on the situation and or plans to make going forward, he simply should have done more in the moment – the word "suspend" should have been in the first sentence rolling off his tongue. There are demands for explanations, and then there is demanding accountability until such explanations are forthcoming.

It was Malloy who in 2010 ran on a platform of transparency, who touted his background as a onetime federal prosecutor.

It was Malloy who promised businesses a fair playing field in Hartford – incidentally, a playing field kept pretty clean by his predecessor Gov. M. Jodi Rell who was left with the unenviable job of cleaning up Rowland's mess.

The candidate and our other elected representatives must be made to recognize that no immediate action in the form of a temporary campaign suspension demand simply deepens the distrust the residents and businesses of Connecticut have for the whole lot of them.

A suspended campaign is just that – one that can be resumed, and in Democrat-dominated Connecticut, one that any individual in that party can resume with little difficulty.

If Donovan's lawyers have any boilerplate legal concerns about him making statements, the good news is that there is a U.S. House of Representatives election every two years. There is nothing stopping Donovan from picking up his quest in 2014 when presumably all facts are out. If he's the best Democrat for the job, he can prove it in the primary that year.

It's your vote. Use your best judgment – just expect your elected representatives to do the same.

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