

## **Biden builds bridges over troubled waters**

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On Jan. 4 we watched a tale of two cities. In Washington, Kevin McCarthy lost his sixth vote for House Speaker because Republicans refused to cooperate...with each other! In Cincinnati, Pres. Biden shook hands with Republican Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell and announced \$1.6 Billion to repair the Brent Spire Bridge, connecting the South with the Midwest.

The bridge is crumbling and has needed replacement since 1998. It's been called "functionally obsolete" and America's "No. 1 Infrastructure Emergency."

Pres. Obama proposed repairing it in 2011, but Senate Republicans filibustered his legislation. In 2017, Pres. Trump said "It's dangerous" and promised "We're going to get it fixed." Trump couldn't even get a Republican-controlled House and Senate to cooperate on crumbling infrastructure.

Sharing the stage with Biden, McConnell called Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law a "legislative miracle to deal with the crumbling infrastructure we've all been talking about for years. It's the government working together to solve a major problem at a time when the country needs to see examples like this of coming together and getting an outcome."

One day earlier, Democratic Governor Roy Cooper announced a \$110 million federal grant to replace the Alligator River Bridge to the Outer Banks. "This bridge is a lifeline for the people of North Carolina both to and from the Barrier Islands," said Cooper. "This is a great example of how President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law helps move along large projects that otherwise would be difficult to fund through traditional means."

Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides North Carolina with \$7.2 billion for roads and highways, \$457 million for bridge repair and \$440 million for clean water over the next five years. Senator Budd and Congressman Rouzer voted against it. Is it asking too much that they put aside partisanship for once and cooperate with Biden to replace the Cape Fear Bridge?

Or is cooperation a bridge too far?

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