



Issue Essentials

Oct. 31, 2018

Jay Webber, Weak on Gateway Tunnel Critical to Region, U.S.

The \$30 billion Gateway Project and its proposed second Hudson River rail tunnel are crucial to the region and the nation – but Jay Webber rarely refers to it. He failed even to mention it on his [website](#) until Sept. 25, and then only as an afterthought. And Webber seems unconcerned President Trump rejected federal funds for the project.

- Trump, in fact, threatened a veto and [government shut down](#) if any Gateway money was in last March's government funding bill. He rejected President Obama's commitment to 50-50 fund sharing between the federal government and NJ and NY.
- Webber's [nonsensical](#) answer is to elect a Republican to NJ-11 because he could persuade Trump to restore the funding. Webber must have forgotten Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen – **a Republican** – has represented the district for 24 years, chairs the powerful House Appropriations Committee, is a staunch Gateway supporter – and failed to persuade Trump.
- Trump [broke the Gateway agreement](#) because Democrats refused to support funding for his border wall – and spitefully, [as many believe](#), because NJ and NY voted against him in 2016.
- The Gateway Project is "*arguably the nation's most urgent infrastructure project,*" [wrote](#) Cameron Davidson for Politico Magazine. The project would include:
 - building a second rail tunnel to connect NJ and New York City,
 - renovating the current 106-year-old rail tunnel, and
 - replacing the 108-year-old [Portal Bridge](#), that carries trains over the Hackensack River and often fails, causing frequent delays.
- [The consequences](#) would be tragic if the current tunnel fails before a new one is built. It would cripple the region, disrupt the lives of 200,000 daily riders, and [send NJ home prices falling](#).
- Webber errs in calling Gateway a "[regional priority.](#)" **No, it's a regional and national priority.** It's critical to the U.S. economy because [20%](#) of the gross domestic product runs through the Northeast Corridor, from Washington, D.C., to Boston, with NJ crucially in the middle.
- The tunnel is the linchpin to the corridor – the nation's busiest passenger route. Its failure would cause an economic meltdown to the tune of [\\$100 million per day](#).
- When the *Morristown Patch* [asked](#) Webber for the "*three top issues you intend to fight hard for ... if elected,*" he failed to mention the Gateway Project.
- Mikie Sherrill, his Democratic opponent, didn't hesitate to answer, in part, "*Investing in our infrastructure ... Congress's refusal to fund the Gateway Project is not only a major setback to our region, but a threat to the national economy.*" She gets it.