

Branstad 'weak-kneed' over gas tax increase

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I don't agree with the Iowa Tea Party's radical anti-government positions, but the one area where I thought we might be in agreement is the necessity of maintaining our road system. Now it becomes obvious that even maintaining our vital transportation infrastructure is too much government "interference" for the Tea Party ("Branstad Abandons Bid to Raise Gas Tax," Nov. 10).

While a recent report ranks Iowa's bridges the third worst in the nation and roads in rural counties are closed or returned to gravel, our weak-kneed governor has caved in to Iowa Tea Party chairman Ryan Rhodes' request to drop his bid to raise the gas tax during 2012.

Both Republican and Democratic representatives have voiced support for raising more tax funds to prevent further deterioration to our aging 114,000-mile road system. The gas tax is obviously the fairest way to pay for saving our roads from deteriorating even more.

Good roads are important for individuals and businesses. Rather than bowing to political pressures from the Tea Party fringe, we expect our governor to take the thoughtful, scientific advice of engineers and transportation experts who have studied the problems closely.

— Ray Benter, Des Moines