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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY  
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ELIZABETH HANFORD DOLE  
TO THE WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL FORUM  
HIGH POINT, NORTH CAROLINA  
OCTOBER 13, 1984

What a joy it is to be home in North Carolina tonight among this outstanding group of professional women. The Women's Professional Forum represents the talent, diversity and commitment of the 53 million working women across this country. Together, American women earn \$500 billion a year and take home nearly one-third of the nation's pay. Those of you who are business owners are among the three million American women entrepreneurs whose businesses generate over \$40 billion in receipts. Businesses owned by women are the fastest growing segment of the small business community, growing at a rate five times faster than those owned by men.

I suggest we are natural allies in what I like to call America's "quiet revolution," the tidal wave of qualified women who are entering the work force in record numbers. More than half of all American women now work, a significant shift from 20 years ago.

The impact of this change has been tremendous. The number of women receiving masters degrees in business administration has soared by 2400 percent in the last decade alone. In my own experience, I have seen the number of women entering Harvard Law School increase from 4 percent when I was there in 1962, to almost 40 percent today. Your President, Maureen Demarest -- an attorney and partner with the largest law firm in Guilford County -- exemplifies the high achievements women are making in the legal profession today.

I recall well my first day at Harvard Law School. I was one of only 25 women in a class of 550 students. I'll never forget being accosted by a male classmate on my first day at Harvard, who demanded to know what I was doing there. "Don't you realize," he said in tones of moral outrage, "that there are men who'd give their right arm for your place in law school? Men who would use their legal education?" Obviously, the inference was that I was taking the place of a man. And come to think of it, some may have felt that way when I became the first woman Secretary of Transportation.

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This is a time of firsts for many women. This evening, you are hosting your first annual national program. I wish you every success for the future. We can all take pride in the first woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court -- Justice Sandra Day O'Connor -- who was offered a legal typist's job upon her graduation from law school in 1952. I have found my own footnote in history as the first woman to head a branch of the Armed Services -- the U.S. Coast Guard -- which is part of my Department.

It's fascinating what's happening with the "quiet revolution" and I don't think the ramifications have been fully realized yet. By 1995, more than 80 percent of all women between the ages of 25 and 34 are expected to be working. A girl born in this decade is likely to spend almost 30 years of her adult life on the job.

Working women are reshaping the American economy. To quote the Rand Corporation, "Women are such a fundamental part of the labor force that without them, the economy would not exist as we know it."

I come before you at a time when our nation's economy is causing many of the experts to revise their assumptions and reprogram their computers. Families and businesses are once again able to plan for the future, secure in the knowledge that our economy is healthy, perhaps stronger than it has been in two decades.

As business women and professionals, you comprise a vibrant part of the economy. Personally, you are serving as role models for a new generation of women who find their way into the business and professional worlds easier because of your efforts. Frankly, I hope the words "role model" will soon disappear from our vocabulary, for in my mind there is a thin line between role model and tokenism -- as if our society is still unwilling to entrust the true responsibilities and power in policy making beyond a limited few. For who among us can yet claim the banishment of that insidious brand of prejudice -- what I call the tyranny of perfection?

Social critic Marya Mannes put it best, I think, when she wrote: "Nobody objects to a woman being a good writer or sculptor; or geneticist if, at the same time, she manages to be a good wife, a good mother, good-looking, good-tempered, well-dressed, well-groomed and unaggressive."

Women in the 1980s comprise a diverse group with varied interests. Some seek their own careers in business. Some run for political office. Others focus on the home and family. No role is superior to another. What's important is that every woman has the right and opportunity to choose the role she wishes. And whether the choice be career, homemaking, or both -- this Administration is trying to help in many different ways. And it's been my privilege to help identify problem areas and formulate solutions.

That's why we've struck hard in this Administration at the so-called "marriage tax" which unfairly penalized working women. Business owners who are married women can reap even greater benefits from this change. Since most of their businesses pay personal rather than corporate taxes, they have more money to invest or save. Women-owned businesses have also been aided by the accelerated depreciation schedule established in the 1981 tax reform law.

We have been outspoken in seeking pension reforms. We went to the Supreme Court to argue against pension benefit schedules that treat men and women differently.



We have acknowledged that women's employment careers are often interrupted for family reasons, which has often made it more difficult for women to accumulate enough years' credit to qualify for pensions. This Administration strongly suggested corrective legislation, which President Reagan signed into law in August. The new pension reform law will enable those now entering the work force to begin pension participation at age 21 instead of 25. Further, through our reforms, men can no longer waive their wife's pension rights without her signature, her agreement to that waiver in writing.

Millions of women stand to gain from the virtual elimination of the estate tax. This permits a surviving spouse to keep a small business or family farm instead of selling it to pay the taxes. Also, women, especially those in low or middle-income families, benefit greatly from substantial increases in tax credits for child care expenses. Not only was the child care tax credit increased, but this year -- for the first time -- the short tax form, the 1040A form, contains a line for this credit so that low income families who do not usually itemize, are able to take advantage of this deduction.

As women committed to the free enterprise system, you recognize that government -- any government -- can only do so much at the top. Our efforts, to be successful, must permeate every agency, every department and ultimately, every manager and planner. When I arrived at the Department, I asked how many of our employees were women. I was told 19 percent. Then I asked, what was the percentage when the Department was established in 1967? The answer: 18.5 percent. What's more, women in upper grade positions made up only one percent of the entire Department's work force. It didn't take long for us to design a program to change all that. Now we are helping more women enter our work force, and we're preparing more women than ever before to assume managerial responsibilities and expand existing skills. For example, we are helping women enter the air traffic controller field -- a traditionally male profession -- and to move into higher paying jobs.

Women throughout our society are grappling with tough issues as they do what was once considered men's work. For example, at Transportation, I am dealing with questions ranging from the surface of our roads to the heights our commercial space industry can reach.

To better meet our highway responsibilities, this Administration's Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1982 added a nickel a gallon to the Federal gasoline tax, the first increase in 25 years. The increased revenues took us a giant step forward in meeting our highway construction and rehabilitation needs. In fiscal 1983, states received a record \$12.8 billion in Federal highway funds, 56 percent more than in 1982. Nationwide, work began on nearly 1,000 miles of new roads. Resurfacing projects accounted for 11,000 miles of improvements on the Federal-aid system. Bridge replacement and rehabilitation projects increased 56 percent. Here in North Carolina, Federal highway funding in the last two fiscal years totalled \$465 million.

Our commitment to rebuilding our transportation infrastructure extends as well to our national airspace system. In fact, we are already in the midst of an \$11.7 billion airways modernization program. The National Airspace System Plan, when completed, will double the capacity of our airways, "weatherproof" air operations, and improve the precision of airport landing systems. It will make the safest air transportation system in the world even safer.



The Department recently became a "space agency" as well, in addition to our responsibilities on land, sea and in the air. Recognizing the potential for private sector opportunities in space, the President has asked us to serve as the lead Federal agency for the commercialization of expendable launch vehicles -- ELVs. The Office of Commercial Space Transportation, within my own Office, is headed by Jennifer Dorn, who has done outstanding work in both the Executive and Legislative branches of government. The commercialization of space is an infant transportation industry. We will work to remove regulatory barriers and to provide a climate for this industry to grow and develop. Our job is to ensure that private industry has access to space and its market prospects.

Free enterprise has a role in space -- that frontier has commercial potentials far beyond present voice and telecommunications capabilities. For example, recent space flights have demonstrated that materials can be processed in a zero-gravity environment. That means purities in certain compounds can be extracted in greater quantities and to a far more successful degree than is possible now. As a result, pharmaceutical companies someday may be able to reduce or avoid the impurities that creep into drug compounds today causing undesirable side-effects. There are also possible new biological products, and new or purer alloys awaiting our discovery in space.

Remote sensing to assist in mineral exploration holds great promise. We already know what meteorological satellites can do in plotting weather patterns, and we're using satellites to pick up signals generated by transmitters aboard downed aircraft. And we may be on the threshold of a global monitoring system capable of tracking pollutants in the air and oceans. The result: a comprehensive view of our environment never before available.

Those are just uses we see today. The potential is as vast and vivid as we dare to dream -- the only limits our human imagination. If we are to turn our dreams into reality, if we are to maintain America's competitive edge, we must do more to introduce American industry to the commercial possibilities of space.

Surely, we already have one of the finest national transportation systems in the world. That does not prevent us from working together to improve it. And while we are privileged to use a system noted for its safety, we are committed to improving on that record as well. All safety experts agree that we could dramatically reduce highway deaths and injuries if we removed drunk drivers from our roads, persuaded more people to wear safety belts, and increased the use of child safety seats.

We are making progress on all three fronts. Traffic fatalities have declined by 17 percent since 1980. The 1983 highway death toll was the lowest in 20 years, the fatality rate the lowest every recorded in our country. Still, 42,500 people died on our highways last year, and we must do more to reduce that number.

Three months ago, President Reagan signed into law a bill providing Federal incentives for states dealing sternly with those convicted of drunk driving--and encouraging states to set 21 as their legal minimum drinking age for all alcoholic beverages. About half the states already have such a law. A uniform drinking age, as the President said, will do away with today's "crazy quilt" of different state drinking laws that has resulted in what have been called "blood borders" -- where teenagers cross state lines to take advantage of lower drinking laws. We normally defer to state



governments on traffic law issues, but this was one instance where the interstate nature of the problem justified Federal action. We know there are a lot of responsible young people, but statistics show that drivers between the ages of 18 and 20 are more than twice as likely as older drivers to become involved in alcohol-related accidents. In every state where the drinking age has been raised, teenage driving deaths have declined. We want to work with the states and communities to eliminate this tragedy on our highways.

But getting drunk drivers off the road is only one approach to a king-size problem. The cost of highway accidents -- in lives, injuries and property losses -- demands greater efforts toward occupant protection. Safety belts, for example, are proven lifesavers. Studies show that safety belts can cut moderate to serious injuries in half. However, for people who won't wear them, their effectiveness is zero.

We have made some progress in the last two years through our concerted public and private sector campaign to increase safety belt use. More and more, communities and employers are joining in this effort, through volunteer incentive programs, and in urging drivers and passengers to buckle up. At Chapel Hill, a community-wide incentive program raised safety belt use from 14 to 41 percent in six months. As with the fight against drunk driving, the campaign in North Carolina to get people to buckle up must be led by concerned people, like those in this room tonight.

Encouraging parents to use child safety seats is an extension of our safety belt campaign. North Carolina has made real progress in child protection. The comprehensive child restraint program in effect here since 1977 is operational in 88 of your 100 counties. The program, which includes public information, education and safety seat loaner programs, has gained widespread support among civic groups and health organizations. In 1981, North Carolina passed a child restraint law and as a result, use of child safety seats increased from 16 percent to 57 percent. There are now 124 loaner programs staffed by many hours of volunteer work. There is also a dollar-for-dollar match by the private sector for each dollar contributed in state funds for parents who need safety seats for their children and cannot afford them.

As we work to improve highway safety on all three fronts -- seat belts, child safety seats and drunk driving -- we need your help. As executives, lawyers, physicians and administrators, you can accomplish so much at the community level. I pledge to do all I can in this crucial campaign to make the nation's highways safer for all our citizens.

Sometimes the women of today must take a moment to learn from the women of the past. One of the greatest Americans was a woman who never entered a voting booth. She never held public office. Yet her spirit and her example have inspired millions. Her name was Helen Keller -- and she summed up her philosophy in a single sentence. "One can never consent to creep," she said, "when one feels an impulse to soar." Your commitment to the advancement of working women here in Guilford County and everywhere makes our spirits soar. We all prosper from the efforts of groups such as the Women's Professional Forum. As a public servant, I salute you. As a woman, I admire you. As a fellow American, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Thank you very much.

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