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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ELIZABETH DOLE
AT SEAHOLM HIGH SCHOOL IN HONOR OF
THE LOREN B. FISCHER YOUTH MEMORIAL FUND
FEBRUARY 28, 1986
BIRMINGHAM, MICHIGAN

It is a pleasure to join you this morning at Seaholm High School, home of the famous Seaholm Maple Leafs. It is a privilege and honor for me to greet you as the speaker for the Loren B. Fischer Youth Memorial Fund --one of Seaholm's finest traditions. I'd like to thank Philip and Myrna Fisher; Jill Fischer; Andrea Fischer; and her husband, Ron Schy for inviting me. Loren Fischer was a very special young woman, whose life touched many people. There is no better testimonial to her than seeing this morning's gathering of bright, eager students, representing the best of what Seaholm High School has to offer. What a joy it is to visit with this outstanding group of Michigan youth, talent and leadership.

In the next few years, you will be making crucial decisions on the direction of your future -- deciding what to do with your life. your choice may lead you to a challenging career in the private sector, or it may lead you to the path I chose -- to public service. I recall receiving the Civitan Citizenship Award when I was a high school freshman in North Carolina. That was an exciting moment for me, and while it was not the single event that launched me on the career that followed, it was clearly an inspiration in those early years of my life. Today, when people ask me why I choose to work in the public sector, I can only tell them that -- for me--

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one of the great satisfactions in life is the opportunity to face challenging issues, to help shape policies that affect us as a nation, and most of all, to make a difference, a positive difference, in people's lives. And let me assure you, even in an institution as big as government, the individual does count. One vote can make a difference in an election; one voice an impact on public policy. One suggestion or idea can start the wheels of government turning or, conversely, one well-reasoned, well-documented argument can change the course of public action.

Service in the public arena today means confronting, face-to-face, some of the most challenging issues of our time. Whether you serve in the executive or legislative branch of our federal government, you are inevitably thrust into a swirl of issues and decisions that can stretch you to the very limit of your being. Nothing, in my view, is more exhilarating. and I can't wait to get to my office each day.

Public service can also be demanding. For government will be most effective when it attracts conscientious, dedicated men and women, with a real sensitivity to human needs.

It is this concern for human needs -- for making a positive difference for people -- that led me to make safety my highest priority as secretary of transportation. And within the area of safety, perhaps our biggest challenge is on our nation's highways, where 92 percent of transportation fatalities occur and where approximately 44,000 Americans lose their lives each year.

We are working to enhance safety on our roads and streets in three ways -- what I like to call my "three-pronged" approach. We are, first of all, repairing our nation's roads and bridges. Over the last three years, money to the states for highway improvements has increased by approximately 50 percent -- thanks in large part to legislation congress passed, with our strong support in 1982. And I've proposed legislation to keep funding our highways at record levels for the next four years, thus ensuring our commitment to safer roads and streets.

The second part of our three-way approach to highway safety includes the design of the vehicle itself. Let me offer one example. Recently, I required high-mounted stop lamps to be placed at the bottom of the rear window on all new cars. The cost of this light is only a few dollars, but it is expected to prevent about 900,000 accidents and \$434 million in property damage every year once it's installed on all new cars. Some people call it the "Dole light" in certain circles and I must say I'm delighted to be associated with such a great safety device.

You know, 10 years ago many thought that "safety doesn't sell cars." Today, not only does "safety sell" but consumers are using their buying power to demand it in the marketplace. And the auto industry is using its technology to give them what they want. Federal safety standards are important, but government can never fully address all safety issues.

Companies have the talent, resources and ability to innovate. Manufacturers now advertise the latest technology in anti-lock brakes, anti-lacerative windshields, improved steering columns, more convenient safety belt systems and a host of engineering improvements that are constantly being built into new cars. New technology is making a difference -- a lifesaving difference.

And that brings me to the third element in our highway safety campaign -- the behavior of the driver. Ten years ago people thought we couldn't rid our highways of drunk drivers. Today drunk driving has become a socially unacceptable behavior. All the vehicle improvements in the world won't save lives if people are driving drunk, or if our roads and bridges are in need of repair. The Reagan administration has recognized that these factors work hand in hand, and we're making progress on all three fronts. We are working to change the behavior of the driver through efforts in communities and towns across the nation. Americans today are no longer willing to tolerate lax laws and lenient judges when it comes to drunk driving offenses. And we are going to keep working until every last drunk driver is off the roads and highways of this country.

Last year, the President signed a bill encouraging states to set 21 as their legal minimum drinking age. Thirty-eight states have now done so. Although we normally defer to the states on traffic law issues, as the President said, a uniform drinking age will "blood borders," where teenagers have a positive incentive to drink and drive, to cross state lines to take advantage of lower drinking age laws and then make the return trip home "under the influence." New Jersey raised its drinking age in 1983 and in the first year experienced a 26 percent reduction in nighttime fatalities among 19 and 20 year olds.

Drunk driving is the number one killer of our young people and I am just glad to have this opportunity to meet with students who I am sure share my concern over teenage drinking and driving. Each year 8,000 young people between the ages of 15 and 24 are killed in auto crashes where alcohol is a factor. Unfortunately, these statistics can suddenly become very real. The toll that drunk driving takes on young people is a national tragedy. For the families involved, the heartbreak is beyond expression.

No one can address this problem more eloquently or persuasively than our young people themselves. I have great admiration for the students who have the courage to join together in an organization called SADD -- Students Against Drunk Drivers -- to reach their peers with the message that drinking and driving can be deadly. There are now more than 6,000 chapters of SADD nationwide -- and their impact is being felt all across this land. Another group -- my favorite -- is BADD -- Bartenders Against Drunk Drivers.

And the best defense against the drunk driver is the seat belt. Popular singing star Barbara Mandrell credits safety belts with saving her life and the lives of her children in a head-on crash -- at a combined speed of almost 100 miles an hour. She has become a leading advocate of safety belts. Michael Jackson joined us in the fight against drug and alcohol

abuse, and he donated the rights to his hit song, "beat it," for use in the most effective public service ad I've ever seen. The talented boxer Sugar Ray Leonard visited the Department of Transportation in Washington last year after he was involved in a serious car accident. Luckily, he was wearing his safety belt. Sugar Ray thinks the belt may well have saved his life. How many of you watch MTV? Well you might have seen a music video that Stevie Wonder made for us because he too cares so much about preventing drunk driving. It's called "don't drive drunk." This is the first public service music video ever to be produced and it is definitely dynamic and high-powered -- or should I say awesome? And we're working with race car drivers in Indianapolis on the safety belt issue because no one believes more in the use of safety belts than those experienced drivers.

An action that I took summer before last is reaping dramatic results. It calls for automatic seat belts or air bags to be phased-in 1987 model cars unless two-thirds of the people in this country are covered by a state safety belt law by 1989. We now have 19 states and the District of Columbia which have passed mandatory safety belt laws. And your belt law in Michigan has been in effect since last July. Surveys indicate about 40-50 percent of your fellow motorists are buckling up, a big increase from just a year ago. Many of you would have worn your seat belts anyway, and I hope this sensible law will convince the rest of you to use that lifesaving equipment.

The national climate is now firmly behind safety. For example, in another area -- railroad safety -- the government struggled for 12 years, trying to provide leadership on strong alcohol and drug requirements for the railroads. I can't tell you how important I feel this is -- a railroad accident involving the transportation of hazardous materials could have a tragic and disastrous impact on a community. I knew, without a moment's hesitation, that we should move forward on these requirements because this was the only area -- the only major domestic mode of transportation -- that had no federal alcohol and drug regulation. and, again, we're talking about saving precious lives.

Safety is paramount in our aviation programs as well. Last year, it is true, was one of the worst years for aviation fatalities worldwide. That's largely because 520 people lost their lives in the Japan Airlines crash and the Air India crash, where we suspect sabotage, took 329 lives. We have found no common thread in the causes of last year's unfortunate accidents. Each day in the U.S., some 14,000 scheduled flights carry an average of one million passengers, and 99.999 percent of these flights reach their destination without injury or accident. However, even one accident is one too many and I assure you that we will continually strive to make the safest system in the world ever safer.

The growth of our airspace system has led me to increase our air traffic controllers and our safety inspectors to continually review safety procedures.

Hand-in-hand with aviation safety is my concern for aviation security. Last year, unfortunate acts of terrorism focused national attention on the security of Americans traveling around the world. Three days ago, back in Washington, it was my privilege to present an award to Captain John Testrake, pilot of the TWA jetliner hijacked last June and forced to fly back and forth between Athens and Beirut. The courage and professionalism shown by Captain Testrake and the entire crew of that flight is truly an inspiration to all Americans. Six days into the hijacking, an extremely tired -- but still smiling -- Captain Testrake was asked if he had a message for his family. As a gunman held a pistol to his head, John Testrake said, "I would like for my wife and my family and all my friends to know that the Lord has taken good care of us so far. And he has seen us through many trying times and will see us through the end."

The courage shown by the Captain and crew of that plane, the qualities of inner strength and coolness under pressure are qualities we all look to achieve and are necessary to sustain us as we tackle the tough issues -- in our lives -- and in our chosen professional fields

Looking to the future, I look forward to working with each of you as we strive to ensure that no stone is left unturned in addressing security both at home and abroad. While I feel strongly that the United States has the best aviation security system in the world, we are always striving to improve it. We continue our monitoring of airports around the world.

My safety task force, FAA and the industry, will make certain that last summer's initiatives with regard to domestic security, are being properly implemented.

Five teams will address in-depth: the airport perimeter and airline operations area; security coordinators; screening of passengers; screening of checked baggage; and explosive detection.

I will work with Congress to get expeditious enactment of my legislation that would -- for the first time -- make it a federal crime to enter airport secured areas without authority. The bill would also provide the authority for criminal background investigations for employees having access to secure airport areas.

ICAO is responding to our call for tougher standards and international teams to verify that member states are complying with those standards. I welcome your advice and counsel on these and many other issues of mutual concern.

Let me now turn to one area of special concern to me, one of particular interest to the young women in this audience -- and the young men too because it really represents an enormous change in our society today. It is a change I like to refer to as the "quiet revolution," and it represents the tidal wave of qualified and talented women who have entered our workforce in the past 20 years. The impact of this change has been tremendous. More

than half of all american women now work, and 66 percent of the women have children between the ages of 6 and 17 are in the work force today

When I entered Harvard Law School in 1962, I was one of 25 women in a class of 550. I'll never forget being accosted on my very first day at Harvard by a male classmate who demanded to know what I was doing there. "Don't you realize," he said, "there are men who'd give their right arm to be in this 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 secretary of transportation.

There are now many two-career couples --something which I know about from first hand-experience.

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 the opportunity to choose the role she wishes. Perhaps the toughest career is that of homemaker and mother.

But the many responsibilities women shoulder can, at times, get out of hand. I think social critic Marya Mannes put it best 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."

But today, women throughout society are grappling with tough issues -- issues that were once considered men's work. For instance, a the department of the first woman to head a branch of the armed services -- the U.S. Coast Guard.

And how proud I am of the Coast Guard's drug interdiction efforts. Last Year, the Coast Guard seized 329 vessels, confiscated almost two million pounds of marijuana and almost six thousands pounds of cocaine -- three times as much as the year before -- and in total, prevented more than \$2.5 billion worth of illegal drugs from entering America's cities.

We handle a lot of crucial issues, and sometimes the challenges are enormous: the demands, heavy, so where does the power come from to see the race to its end? Eric Lyddle, Scotland's beloved Olympic runner, answered that question. The power, as portrayed so beautifully in the film Chariots of fire, comes from within.

The President recalls how first learned to deal with enormous challenge and stress as newly-elected governor of california. "Each morning began," he says, "with someone standing before my desk describing yet another disaster. The feeling of stress became unbearable. I had the urge to look over my shoulder for someone I could pass the problem to. One day it came to me

that I was looking in the wrong direction. I looked up instead of back. I'm still looking up. I couldn't face one day in this office if I didn't know I could ask God's help!" let us never forget the source of our strength and courage.

You stand today in the reflected light of a rising sun. Your day as the future leadership of this nation is just dawning. You have been given a great legacy and great preparation here at Seaholm. I urge you to guard that legacy, defend it and use it to leave the world a better place for the next generation.

Ours is neither the time nor is this the place for men or women with faint hearts, feeble courage, weak commitment or selfish motives. We will pursue the vision, and complete the task. Our country deserves it, history demands it, our children will reward it. And again, I hope that many of you will join me in public service as you make important decisions for your future.

Thank you and God bless you all.

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