U.S. Department of Transportation

News:

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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTAITON RODNEY E. SLATER
THE 15TH ANNUAL TRAVEL AND
TOURISM INDUSTRY UNITY DINNER
MARCH 5, 1997
WASHINGTON, D.C.

I'm familiar with what it feels like to be on that side of the podium, having heard the late, great Ron Brown and so many other advocates of tourism over the years. For someone who's been in office all of two-and-a-half weeks, it is clearly humbling to be on this side. So, thank you for inviting me to join you.

But I must say, I'm already used to following Daleys! My very first speech as Secretary was before the Conference of Mayors, where I followed Mayor Daley. Now, I follow Secretary Daley -- and it is a delight.

Like all of you, I look forward to Bill Daley's leadership at Commerce. I want you to know that you'll see a Commerce and a Transportation Departments working together, more than ever, to keep our nation the world's premier travel destination.

Ever since I took this job, I've been camped out on Capitol Hill, testifying on my budget, explaining why I need to invest almost $40 billion in our transportation system next year.

I'm a history buff, and if I may, I want to explain the reason in historical terms. On Sunday, I will be in Alabama, on Route 80, to commemorate Dr. Martin Luther King's march from Selma to Montgomery, that led to the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965.

We designated this segment of U.S. 80 an All-American Road this past year under our National Scenic Byways Program. We did it not because it is beautiful, for many would argue that it is not; not because it is scenic, for others would argue that it is not -- but because this road, these lanes, symbolize the most beautiful idea of all: the American dream.

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More than connecting two cities; more than connecting today's generation and those still unborn with our history, our values, the soul of our nation; more than all that, this road will connect people with economic opportunity.

By bringing thousands more visitors from around the world, it expands the chance for those who own restaurants, hotels, and bus tour companies to provide jobs for Alabama residents.

It will help young men and women, who may be poor, but who have dignity, get off welfare, and into the ranks of those holding jobs in the travel industry.

That is the essence of transportation. Yes, the interstate spurred tourism, making it a $467 billion industry. Yes, aviation will open global markets in the 21st century, as highways opened national markets in this century. But, as important, transportation brings our people together as a nation.

My mission is to help the American public understand transportation is more than landing the plane and making the trains run on time. It's more than concrete, asphalt, and steel.

It's about people. Just as tourism is about people, transportation is about people. It's about building roads to a more prosperous future. Transportation is our ticket, I believe, for giving all Americans a better life. It makes our enjoyment of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness possible.

And I hope, with that as our guide, we work together in the next four years, to invest in our transportation system, so that it is the safest and most efficient, as it is the most traveled in the world.

I'm blessed to come into this position, when our industries are strong. We have half a million more transportation workers than four years ago.

The Coast Guard, as your partner, is helping the 110 cruise ships operating from U.S. ports improve safety and security for millions of passengers.

We will, before the end of the century, bring high-speed rail to America, so travellers in the northeast will have, finally, what Europeans and Asians have had for years.

And I'm proud to release a report tonight that shows last year a record 600 million passengers flew in our skies -- 30 million more than the year before.

Of the 600 million, a record 50 million flew to and from international destinations, thanks in part to the efforts of President Clinton and Secretary Peña to open markets to our airlines.

And those efforts are continuing. Just last week, in Asia, we reached open skies agreements with Taiwan; and with Singapore and Brunei earlier this year. We are also working with seven countries in Latin America to achieve open skies -- one of the areas the President expressed a particular interest in opening up.

And last year, we introduced one-level of safety in our skies, requiring small commuter airlines to have the same standards as large airlines. Some people thought the costs would slow the expansion of the industry -- but it did not, proving we can have safety and growth.

But 1996 was also a year we will long remember for the two devastating accidents involving ValuJet and TWA. Yet in their aftermath, the President created the Gore Commission, and worked with Congress to pass one of the most important aviation laws -- ever.

So, today, we have tighter security at airports. We have new policies on inspection, more oversight of fast-growing airlines, and bans on carrying hazardous materials. We need it all. Why? Because in a dozen years, more than a billion passengers will fly our skies every year, and we must have the safest skies on earth.

By the way, I want to mention the President's work on the American Airlines strike, because that situation worried so many of you. It happened the day I was sworn in -- what a welcome!

We are now monitoring the work of the Presidential Emergency Board. Hopefully, the parties will come together and resolve this matter. That is clearly what the President wants.

Now, as 1996 was dominated by aviation debates, and many of those issues will continue to be discussed, this will be the year of the major highway and transit debate.

I don't know if you watch the news talk shows, but on "This Week" on Sunday, Cokie Roberts said the reason campaign finance is dominating the news is because little else is before Congress.

Very soon, my friends, I will send Congress something very big and very important to every American -- but especially to you -- the bill that will dictate how we invest in our highways and transit for the next six years.

It is ISTEA's replacement -- NEXTEA.

We've decided to seek an 11 percent increase in funding over the old program. That's almost $175 billion over the next six years, compared to the current $157 billion. In these times of budget cutting, when you're doing well if you hold your own, we're doing very well.

And we will up-date the formulas, making sure states receive a fair share of the money. But we will do it by making sure we keep a strong national transportation system. This is an initiative to rebuild America, to assure that in the 21st century, we have the best system in the world.

If we fail, America will slip behind in the world economy. If we fail, the flexibility that has given state and local officials the opportunity to build projects they need, not that Washington dictates, could be gone.

If we fail, the tools that have let us build highways two and three years sooner, at no cost to the taxpayers -- roads like a better access way to Myrtle Beach or border crossing around Niagara Falls -- could be gone.

If we fail, we could go back to the old days, when we'd be lucky to start a new transit project every year, instead of the wonderful model we've built in the last four years, when we completed almost 20 agreements for transit projects from coast-to-coast.

But if we succeed, and I know we will, America's best is yet to come.

The scenic byways, America's post cards as I call them, will continue to attract tourism and open the kaleidoscope of colors that defines the country to all Americans.

Our investments to build bike paths, pedestrian paths, and recreational facilities in our great outdoors, will keep attracting tourists across the land.

I remember, when I was six years old, I followed my mother into the cotton fields of Arkansas, to earn money to buy a $29.95 Schwinn bike. I'm very proud as the highway administrator for the past four years, we invested 40 times more on bike and pedestrian facilities for all Americans, than was spent prior to ISTEA.

It took courage, in 1991, for what was then a Democratic Congress and a Republican President to shake up the system, to start afresh, to turn from proven paths. ISTEA was not about business as usual. It was about rocking the boat.

My most significant challenge this year is to work with Congress to pass NEXTEA. There will be much debate -- loud and long.

But when we make our case, when we show how it helps the travel industry of this country, and creates jobs, and protects the environment, NEXTEA will be the law of the land.

I know you're with me on this. Tonight, we'll leave the unity dinner, unified. And I thank you. I'll need your support.

I said at my swearing in, and I want to end on this tonight -- with the help of our many partners -- transportation is about giving people opportunity. I want to make that happen.

Thank you very much.

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STATEMENT OF RODNEY E. SLATER

SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION

BEFORE THE
HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

March 6, 1997

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the FY 1998 budget proposals for the Department of Transportation.

Overview

President Clinton said in his State of the Union address: "Over the last four years we have brought new economic growth by investing in our people, expanding our exports, cutting our deficits, creating over 11 million jobs, a four-year record. Now we must keep our economy the strongest in the world." Under President Clinton, we have made good on the promise of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 -- ISTEA, the landmark legislation that Congress will be reauthorizing this year. Working with Congress, we have increased transportation infrastructure investment to record levels. These investments have paid off in substantial improvements to the condition and performance of our highways and mass transit systems.

Four weeks ago, President Clinton presented the details of the Administration's FY 1998 budget. Included in that budget is proposed funding of $38.4 billion for our Nation's transportation system and key national transportation priorities, which both invest in *our people* and in *our economy*. First and foremost among these priorities is to maintain the safety of the nation's transportation system and to make that system even safer for the American public, whether they travel by land, water or air.

Transportation is critical to economic growth and for providing our citizens with the mobility on which they have come to rely to sustain their quality of life.

This is as true today as it was at the beginning of our nation, when George Washington saw that the mountain barrier separating the seaboard cities of the new United States from the settlements along the Ohio River must be overcome or the settlements would be pulled into economic alliances with the British in Canada and the Spanish along the Mississippi River. The solution that was in the young nation's clearest interests was to: "open a wide door, and make a smooth way for the produce of that Country to pass to our Markets before the trade may get into another channel."

Today, just think of the wide doors that have been opened, the new businesses and innovations in the last twenty years that have arisen because of our effective intermodal transportation systems -- express packages, just-in-time delivery -- where items move almost seamlessly from land, whether by highway or rail, to water or air and then back to land. These innovations are not just transportation change -- they support whole new ways of doing business.

Former Transportation Secretary John Volpe discussed the objectives of the Department almost thirty years ago and his remarks are quite remarkably pertinent today, as we near celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Department. "Our objectives range over improvements in the overall efficiency of transportation, ensuring that the unemployed have access to employment...that there be joint planning of transport corridors in the hearts of our cities, that we upgrade the safety of all modes, and most important for those who will come after us -- that we safeguard our priceless heritage of natural wonders, historic sites and places of recreation."

Even though transportation improvements over the last 30 years have been astounding -- for example, the ability of businesses to minimize inventories because of the reliability and efficiency of the nation's transportation system -- the challenge that we face today sounds

remarkably similar to John Volpe's assessment. Today we must improve our transportation system to meet the needs of the 21st century. We must continue to invest in improving the safety of our people. We must maintain critical infrastructure investment to meet the needs of our economy. And we must do that in a way that protects our environment, our neighborhoods and our national heritage.

Investing in Our People

The Department's budget proposes many critical investments in the quality of life of the American people. I would like to highlight three of these.

1) Improving the safety of the transportation system, to save even more lives so that the heartbreak that we see everyday due to transportation is reduced. As you may know, in the past few weeks the Department of Transportation experienced this heartbreak directly within its family -- two Maritime Administration employees were killed when coming back to the office from lunch and three Coast Guardsmen's lives were lost as they were trying to save others in rough seas.

2) Ensuring that those going from welfare to work are not stymied by lack of transportation. Transportation is one of the three major challenges faced by welfare recipients, along with day care and skills training.

3) Interdicting illegal drugs, which continue to threaten the well-being, safety and security of all American citizens, including the children in our schools.

Safety

Our most important investment in the quality of life of the American people and our highest priority -- as always -- is improving our transportation system's safety and security.

Although it's already the safest in the world, much of what we do is aimed at making it safer, as travel continues to grow. That's why the President's FY 1998 budget proposes to raise Department of Transportation direct safety spending by $200 million -- to $2.9 billion, a record 7½ percent of our total budget.

A major focus in our safety effort will be highway crashes, which account for more than nine out of every ten transportation fatalities. About 41,500 travelers died in highway crashes last year, a slight reduction from 1995. That's notable because it turned around a three-year trend of increasing highway deaths. But, unless we also begin again to lower the fatality *rate*, the growth in travel created by our expanding economy will begin increasing the number of deaths once again.

To cut the fatality rate, we have to focus not only on safer cars and safer roads, but also on affecting the human factor. To do that, we need measures such as increased education and law enforcement, and so we propose raising NHTSA's safety spending by 11 percent -- to $333 million. That includes:

- $9 million for a new occupant protection grant program to promote safety belt use, the best way to protect travelers;

- a $9 million increase to support states in passing tough drunk driving laws;

- $8 million for a new research and education program to reduce air bag risks for children and small adults, while still preserving the benefits of air bags for all motorists; and,

- $2 million for a pre-license drug-testing pilot program, the first step in launching the President's new initiative to combat drug-impaired driving.

We're also increasing funding for important safety programs in aviation, rail and maritime safety.

- Aviation safety spending would increase 12 percent to $839 million, enabling the FAA to hire 273 safety inspectors and certification staffers. It also funds the work of the new National Certification Team, which inspects start-up airlines.

- Railroad safety spending would increase by 12 percent, to $57 million, with funds going to speed up new safety rules and to buy an automated track inspection vehicle.

- Finally, we're proposing to increase maritime safety funding to $797 million -- including Coast Guard programs to improve vessel and recreational boating safety.

Access to Jobs

Transportation empowers our neighborhoods by providing access to jobs, to markets, to education and to health care for all Americans, whether they live in rural, urban or suburban areas. But this budget, in addition to working for all Americans, is directing resources to one group that needs special assistance: we are proposing the creation of a new $100 million program to provide access to jobs and training, administered by the Federal Transit Administration and cooperatively supported by the Federal Highway Administration. This new initiative will elevate the transportation contribution to welfare reform. We hope this program will act as a catalyst, uniting local governments, mass transportation providers, and social service providers in working toward a common goal of helping people who do not own cars improve their lives not only by finding a job, but by being able to get regularly to that job.

As President Clinton said in his State of the Union address: " Over the last four years we moved a record 2¼ million people off the welfare rolls. Then last year Congress enacted landmark legislation demanding that all able-bodied recipients assume the responsibilities of

moving from welfare to work. Now each and every one of us has to fulfill our responsibility, indeed our moral obligation, to make sure that people who now must work can work." One part of the President's three-part plan to accomplish this goal is to provide training, transportation and child care to help people go to work.

Our proposed new $100 million program would offer welfare recipients the access to jobs, training, and support services that they need to make the transition to the working world. This program would promote flexible, innovative transportation alternatives -- such as vanpools -- that get people to where the jobs are. It also would promote family-friendly transportation, such as day care centers at bus and rail stations.

In addition, DOT's ISTEA reauthorization proposal contains several provisions designed to strengthen existing programs allowing states to utilize Federal-aid funds for training.

Drug Interdiction

And third, the work of the Coast Guard not only directly supports the safety and security of our people, but also is a direct investment in the future of our country through its role in interdicting illegal drugs before they get to America's streets and young people. We're proposing to increase the Coast Guard's drug law enforcement budget -- by 15 percent -- to $389 million. That includes $53 million in additional funding for surveillance technology, improved intelligence capabilities and increased operations as part of the President's effort to stop illegal drugs from entering our country.

Investing in Our Economy

In the 21st century Americans will compete in a truly global marketplace. This marketplace will be fiercely competitive and our success as a nation will be determined on how safely, reliably and cost-effectively we can move people, goods and information. Transportation

expenses now account for eleven percent of the United States gross domestic product -- a greater share of the economy than health care or defense -- and will affect our country's global competitiveness in the future.

As he again made clear when he met with the nation's governors last month, President Clinton recognizes the contribution of sound infrastructure to increasing America's prosperity and its international competitiveness. That's why he's worked on increasing infrastructure spending even as he's reduced the budget deficit.

Infrastructure Investment

Working with this Subcommittee and the entire Congress, over the past four years (FY 1994-97) we've increased Federal investment in highways, transit systems, and other infrastructure to an average of $25.5 billion, more than 20 percent higher than the previous four years. The Department is committed to a long-term infrastructure investment program and seeks the highest levels of investment within the balanced budget context.

Our investment is producing results, even with many of these projects still under construction. For example, the latest data on the National Highway System shows us that the condition of bridges and pavement has improved significantly. System performance -- as measured by peak hour congestion, which had been deteriorating -- has now stabilized.

This success extends to transit. In the last four years we've financed nearly 26,000 buses and almost 600 rail cars for state and local transit agencies. With 19 new full-funding grant agreements, we've also financed more than 100 miles of new transit lines, serving more than a 100 stations. Meanwhile since 1993, Amtrak has either taken delivery of or placed orders for 236 new rail passenger cars, 191 new locomotives and 18 high speed train sets, making dramatic improvements in the age and condition of its fleet and enabling 150 mph service in the Northeast Corridor by the turn of the century.

The FY 1998 proposal of $25.6 billion for infrastructure -- actually *above* the average of the past four years -- would sustain the investment that's produced these results. And I want to emphasize that -- by proposing even higher ISTEA reauthorization levels -- we're leaving room for additional investment in the future as economic conditions and our deficit reduction efforts warrant.

For next year's federal-aid highway program, we're proposing an $18.17 billion obligation limit, just a shade below this year's $18.19 billion.

We also propose a supplemental request for 1997 to increase the obligation limit by $318 million. This would be distributed to states that received lower-than-expected obligation authority this year because of the Treasury Department's correction of an accounting problem in crediting prior-year tax receipts to the Highway Trust Fund.

We're proposing $4.2 billion for transit capital this year, a $390 million increase. Transit operating assistance for communities with more than 200,000 people would no longer be available. But increased capital funding would be made available to them, and, as an added measure of support for them and for communities of all sizes, we're proposing to broaden the definition of "capital" to include preventive maintenance of capital investment. Smaller communities -- which are the ones most dependent on federal aid -- could use transit formula grants for either capital or operating expenses.

Our efforts in the coming months will be largely devoted to ensuring that an ISTEA reauthorization bill gets passed in a manner that does not result in increases in the budget deficit, but also provides states and localities with much needed flexibility and funding in a timely manner. I know that you share that same goal. For the past year, Congress and the Department have been engaged in reaching out to groups and individuals across the country to gather ideas for reauthorization of ISTEA. What has emerged is a consensus that ISTEA works. The goal upon which our ISTEA reauthorization proposal is based is to build on ISTEA, not abandon it.

Maritime

While not under this Committee's jurisdiction, I would also like to mention that the Department's maritime programs have at their center the strengthening of our national and economic security. They accomplish this through genuine partnership with other government agencies and absolute reliance on the private sector to accomplish two goals: making our maritime transportation system the most modern, competitive and efficient in the world and providing strategically critical sea-lift capacity to support our national security needs.

Aviation Operations

Just at the Interstate highway system expanded the potential of our national economy in this century, so aviation is tying us to an expanded global economy as we enter the 21st century. Aviation has not only brought Americans closer to each other, it has brought us closer to the rest of the world. Our aviation system is vital to our domestic economy and to our nation's global economic competitiveness. I can assure you that I will use the leverage provided by access to the vast United States market to urge our aviation partners to adopt more open markets -- and to ensure expanded access to their markets for United States carriers.

The FAA's air traffic control system enables the safe travel of 1½ million passengers every day, and its inspections ensure that aircraft, pilots, and aircraft operations meet the highest safety standards. We're requesting an 8.7 percent increase, a notable amount in an era of budget freezes, to the FAA's operating budget, up to a record $5.4 billion. In addition to more safety inspectors, that will let the FAA add 500 air traffic controllers and 173 security personnel to carry out the Gore Commission's recommendations. The personnel and procurement reform authority provided in our FY 1996 Appropriations Act will enable FAA to hire the best people possible in the most effective way, as well as to accelerate modernization of critical equipment.

One area in which tough budget choices resulted in our proposing lower investment is airport grants, for which we're proposing $1 billion. We've chosen this course because large airports can obtain funding more easily than can other types of infrastructure; in fact, most already use other sources -- such as aircraft landing fees, concession revenue, and passenger facility charges -- for most of their capital financing. We plan to mitigate the impact on small airports -- which are especially dependent on federal aid -- by proposing that their formula grants continue at current levels.

Financing all of our aviation system's needs -- airports, airway facilities, security, and FAA operations -- is a critical priority for us. I want to commend the Congress for its prompt action in renewing expired aviation taxes and crediting receipts to the Trust Fund. We are grateful for this quick action, which will avoid a serious, short-term financing crisis.

We also want to work with Congress to establish a reliable, *long-term* funding base so that the FAA can provide the services our aviation system needs. As an interim measure until comprehensive financial reform is achieved, we're proposing $300 million in new user fees. We're looking forward to appointing the new National Civil Aviation Review Commission -- which will analyze aviation budget requirements and ways to fund them -- and help us to reach a consensus on what course to take. I would like to recognize your leadership, Chairman Wolf, for including funding for the Commission in the FY 1997 DOT Appropriations bill -- you called for the establishment of such a Commission before many in the aviation community recognized the need.

Proactive Leadership

As I said in my confirmation hearing, I will continue to bring common sense government to the Department of Transportation in order to provide the people we serve with a Department that works better and costs less. I will encourage more flexible, innovative funding to leverage federal dollars for infrastructure investment, technology use to improve the performance of our transportation system, and transportation policies that are sensitive to environmental concerns.

Innovative Financing

The FY 1998 budget expands the efforts the Department has made in innovative financing by providing another $150 million in seed money for State Infrastructure Banks (SIBs) and $100 million for a new Federal Credit Program, both to be included in our proposal for ISTEA's reauthorization.

The Federal Credit Program will be similar to the SIBs in its support of innovative financing, but it will fill a different need -- the support of projects which, by virtue of their size or their multistate benefits, are nationally significant but which might not fit into the programs of individual states. That will enable us to make loans and apply other financing arrangements for these vital investments, much as we did with California's Alameda Corridor project.

Technology

Technology is particularly essential to the health of our transportation system. Innovations in transportation technology contribute to America's global competitiveness and national security, enhance the capacity of our infrastructure, our environment and local communities, and perhaps most importantly, save lives and reduce the risk of accidents and injuries. That's why we propose to increase investment in technology research and development by nine percent, to $1 billion.

This total includes $250 million for Intelligent Transportation Systems, which apply advanced computer and communications technologies to travel. This will help improve information to drivers in order to increase transportation efficiency. About $150 million will fund ITS research and technology development, and $100 million is to encourage state and local governments to invest in electronic infrastructure such as travel information programs and automated traffic signals to enhance infrastructure performance.

The budget also requests funding to complete all six prototypes and conduct testing of the Advanced Technology Transit Bus. This bus was developed using proven, advanced technologies from the aerospace industry and is a lightweight, low-floor, low-emission alternative to current buses.

Other efforts in the technology area are geared at helping the Department target its resources to address critical problems. For example, the FAA's technology budget includes funding for an aviation safety risk analysis program. This program is designed to improve FAA and industry measurement of and accountability for safety performance. The analytical techniques to be developed will focus on more effectively and efficiently using information contained in FAA and industry databases.

Protecting the Environment

Transportation, like all human activity, affects the environment, and we have an obligation to mitigate its impacts. That's why we're proposing a five percent increase in environmental funding -- to $1.53 billion.

Much of this would be for the successful Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program, which state and local governments use to cut pollution through transit projects, traffic flow improvements and alternatives such as ridesharing. CMAQ funds would be authorized at $1.3 billion a year, up 30 percent from their level under ISTEA.

The Coast Guard's marine environmental protection program, which promotes and enforces an aggressive approach to pollution prevention, preparedness, and response, along with oil spill cleanup programs, would increase seven percent, to $326 million.

Conclusion

As the President has said, when times change, so government must change. And so, as I look to the next four years, I believe we in the Department of Transportation must set high goals and must be architects of change, but also build a new balance in our relations with state and local governments. We must ensure our success in the 21st century by recognizing the crossroads we are at today -- recognizing the need not only to invest in our current infrastructure, but to take full advantage of technology and leave a more efficient, safer transportation system and environment than we have today. I hope that I can help us reach not just for the easy and the quick, but for the solutions that will make a difference in the long run, for the solutions that appear, but are not really, just beyond our reach.

As President Clinton said in *Putting People First*, "Just as interstate highway construction in the 1950s ushered in two decades of unparalleled growth, investing in the pathways of the future will put Americans back to work and spur economic growth." The Department's FY 1998 budget proposes strategic investments in two important pathways: people and infrastructure. It also does its part to balance the federal budget by 2002. I stand ready to be your partner as you develop a DOT appropriations bill that is consistent with our national commitment to reach a balanced budget by 2002 and with our commitment to ensure that critical national transportation needs are met so that Americans can maintain their mobility and our economy can continue to prosper. I also stand ready to work with the Congress as it develops a long-term ISTEA reauthorization bill that address the issues of this fiscal year and the 21st century.

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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION RODNEY E. SLATER
NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURE
MARCH 7, 1997
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Intro --

- Thank you, it's a pleasure to be here today. Being here is like being back home. You may know I come from a long line of state lawmakers: my mother-in-law ... her brother ... my cousin ... all are in the Arkansas Legislature. So while the President may have banned human clones, I've got the next best thing: state lawmaking in the genes.

Partnerships --

- This is the first time I've addressed state lawmakers as Secretary, so I want to make a commitment. When I'm on the road, traveling to your communities to visit transportation projects, I want to visit your state houses. I want to listen and learn, and respond to your concerns.

- When you visit Washington, come and see me. My door will always be open. I believe, as President Clinton does, in strong state and local partnerships so we can develop common ground and policies that you and I can embrace, and put into action.

- This we do every day, and in every way. We're doing it by creating new State Infrastructure Banks, which one day I hope every state will have.

- We're doing it in transit by investing $340 million in the Metrolink rail system to connect East St. Louis (Illinois) with St. Louis (Missouri) on the other side of the Mississippi River.

- And we're doing it with Interstate 75 by allowing a truck loaded with products for export to move from Florida to Canada, without stopping to be weighed in every state along the way.

Mission --

- I have three goals:

  1) Safety is our North Star. That is why we believe states should have primary seat belt laws that allow police officers to stop vehicles for seat belt violations. (States with such laws have seen fatalities drop by as much as 20 percent in a year.)

2) Our transportation system must meet the needs and desires of the American people in the 21st century. That is why we have increased spending on America's infrastructure by 20 percent to record levels.

3) We must take common-sense approach to running government. That is why we are cutting red tape and financing projects more innovatively ... and completing them several years sooner.

- My mission: Help the American public understand that transportation is more than landing the plane and making the trains run on time. It's more than concrete, asphalt, and steel.

- It's about people. It's about building roads to a more prosperous future. Transportation is our ticket for giving all Americans a better life. "It makes our enjoyment of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness possible."

- So with that as our guide, we can work as a team in the next four years, investing in our transportation system, making it the safest and most efficient.

ISTEA & NEXTEA --

- Very soon, my friends, our partnership and our goals will be put to the test. I'm talking about renewing our highway and transit programs. This is very big and very important to every American, but especially to every one of you.

- The current program -- ISTEA, as we call it -- will be replaced by NEXTEA. We're seeking an 11 percent increase in funding over the old program. That's $175 billion over the next six years, compared to the current $157 billion.

- In these times of budget cutting, when you're doing well if you hold your own, we're doing <u>very</u> well. Why? Because President Clinton understands the value of these investments.

- For example: If it hadn't been for the new interstate running through Forest City (Arkansas), my mother never would have been able to have the good-paying factory job she had. In fact, she was able to make as much as my step-father did as a mechanic ... and that was quite a feat back in those days.

- And because the interstate left out so many rural areas, last year we won approval of the National Highway System, which will link virtually every part of the nation to the interstate.

- Renewing these programs is essential. NEXTEA is an initiative to rebuild America, to assure that in the 21st century, we have the best national system in the world. Because if we don't, America will slip behind in the world economy, unable to compete against our fast-paced trading partners.

- And we'll do it in a way that is fair to all. Our proposal will up-date the state spending formulas to make sure of that.

Welfare Reform --

- Let me close with a word about one of today's hottest domestic issues facing every state: welfare reform. We're working overtime to fix this program, and to move people off welfare and into jobs.

- But we've discovered you cannot expect to give people who may be poor, but are proud, their dignity and make it possible to hold a job, unless first they have a ride to a job. Many of you here today are in the front lines of welfare reform, so you know what I'm talking about.

- Our Access to Jobs program will go a long way to filling this gap. Only 6 percent of those on welfare can afford a car payment, so most must rely on public transportation.

- Our new transit budget includes $100 million for the new program, which offers welfare recipients access to jobs, training, and support services for the first time.

Close --

- Working with Congress to renew ISTEA will be my biggest challenge this year. The debate will be long and loud. But with the help of our many partners, including all our state and local officials, I know we'll be successful. Why? Because transportation is all about giving people opportunity ... opportunity so they can succeed in life. And this is at the core of our jobs as public servants.

- Thank you.

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U.S. Department of Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION RODNEY E. SLATER
VOTING RIGHTS MARCH JUBILEE CELEBRATION
MARCH 9, 1997
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

I am honored to join all of you to recall an event that transformed America.

As I drove from Montgomery to Selma this morning, I saw a road much like any road in the country. The traffic was the usual mix of automobiles, trucks, and minivans. The people were going about their daily business.

They may not have been aware of the events that took place 32 years ago; and those who knew may not have been thinking about them.

And yet, it is important that we remember. That we remember how hard was the struggle to get here. How far we had to come. But that is not all: That we remember how much farther we have to go!

I was a 10-year-old boy, a son of Marianna, Arkansas, on Bloody Sunday and on the day, two weeks later, when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., led the march from these steps to Montgomery.

Today, that 10-year old boy serves in the President's Cabinet as the Secretary of Transportation, but I can't help wonder: where would I be, but for those who, unlike me, shed blood and suffered broken bones? But for those who, unlike me, felt the pounding of the clubs, and the weight of the horses that blocked their way? And but for those who saw their mission to completion?

I came here today to talk with participants. To hear them tell what it was like. To learn from their experience. And to thank them for having faith that they could make a difference in a society that in their time was divided by race.

They could not know what we know: that the journey they began would make a difference. That their suffering, their pain, and yes their sore and tired feet would not be in vain.

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Through their efforts, you and I have one of the most precious rights we possess -- the right to vote. The vote that empowers each of us to open wide the door of opportunity.

The right that transformed Selma and Montgomery, indeed all of Alabama. The right that transformed the South. The right that transformed the nation.

And through your use of that right, America re-elected a President, a fellow son from the South, who believes, as he said in the State of the Union: diversity is our greatest strength.

And, on a personal level, that right has transformed Rodney Slater, giving this man who once picked cotton to raise money for a bicycle, the chance to serve the people of my nation. The chance as Transportation Secretary, to remove the roadblocks on America's road to opportunity.

As Secretary of Transportation, I believe the work I do is more than about concrete, asphalt, and steel. It's about people. It's about empowering them to fulfill their dreams, and to attain life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

I am very proud of what my Department did last September. We designated this road one of the very first All-American Roads under our new National Scenic Byways Program.

We selected this byway not because it is beautiful, for many would argue that it is not; not because it is scenic, for others would argue that it is not -- but because this road symbolizes the most beautiful idea of all: the American Dream.

Coupled with President Clinton designating this a National Historic Trail, we have assured that for generations to come, the path from Brown Chapel Church to the State Capital will be remembered as a highway where despair and determination turned into hope. The hope that will bring jobs to Alabama residents, as tourists from around America come to look, listen, and learn.

Now, millions of Americans will follow the path, and once again hear Dr. King's words that still ring true: "we have walked on meandering highways and rested our bodies on rocky byways ... and we can say that our feet are tired, but our souls are rested."

Dr. King laid out the goal of this "mighty walk": We must come to see that the end we seek is a society at peace with itself, a society that can live with its conscience. That will be a day not of the white man, not of the black man. That will be a day of man as man.

That is, truly, what this All-American Road symbolizes. What a perfect name for it. Wherever we come from, whatever our race, our color, our creed, when we come here we can come together in friendship and understanding:

Riding along the highway this morning, I did not see concrete, or asphalt, or steel. I saw the men and women who took their very lives in their hands. I saw the sweat of their brow, the blisters on their feet, the hope in their eyes. And I saw that at the end of that march, they had truly lifted up America.

I thought of a poem, written nearly 100 years ago by James Weldon Johnson:

Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chastening rod
Felt in the days
When hope unborn had died.
Yet with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place
For which our fathers sighed?

Surely, stony was the road they trod. Surely, too, the steady beat of their weary feet gave birth to a hope that has blossomed throughout this land.

I thank those of you, here today, who took that mighty walk. To Dr. King and to so many others who could not be here today, I say a heartfelt thank you.

And I end I with a promise: I will remember how much farther we have to go. Our best is yet to come.

God bless you. God bless America.

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U.S. Department of Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, March 7, 1997

Contact: Kara Gerhardt
202-366-4570

MEDIA ADVISORY

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater will speak at the National League of Cities Congressional Conference at 8:00 a.m. and to the American Public Transit Annual Legislature Conference on Monday, March 10, 1997 in Washington, D.C.

Secretary Slater's Schedule:

8:00 a.m. **National League of Cities Legislature Conference**
Washington Hilton International Ballroom
1919 Connecticut Avenue

2:00 p.m. **American Public Transit Annual Legislature Conference**
J.W. Mariott Hotel, Salons 3&4
14th and Pennsylvania Ave.

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U.S. Department of Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, March 7, 1997

Contact: Kara Gerhardt
202-366-4570

MEDIA ADVISORY

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater will travel to Selma, Alabama on Sunday, March 9, 1997, to speak at the First Baptist Church and participate in the Voting Rights March Jubilee Celebration marking the 32nd Anniversary of the march led by Martin Luther King Jr. from Selma to Montgomery. Following the celebration, Secretary Slater will be inducted into the Voting Rights Hall of Fame.

WHO: **Rodney Slater, U.S. Secretary of Transportation**

WHAT: **National Celebration of the Right to Vote and Bridge Crossing Jubilee**

Secretary Slater's Schedule:
All events open to the press

11:00am Remarks at worship service of the First Baptist Church immediately followed by a reception.
709 Martin Luther King, Jr., St.

1:30pm **Media Availability of Secretary Slater, Secretary Babbitt, and several original March participants.**
Brown Chapel AME Church, 410 Martin Luther King Jr. St.

1:45pm Pre-March Rally
Brown Chapel AME Church, 410 Martin Luther King Jr., St.

2:30pm March Reenactment - 8 block walk along US 80 to Pettus Bridge.
Begins at Brown Chapel AME Church

3:00pm Induction Ceremony into the National Voting Rights Hall of Fame
Foot of Edmund Pettus Bridge, US 80

3:30pm Secretary Slater will give remarks regarding the historical civil rights trail.
Participants will cross over Pettus Bridge to the designated Civil Rights Memorial Park

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U.S. Department of Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION RODNEY E. SLATER
NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES
MARCH 10, 1997
WASHINGTON, D.C.

The day after I was sworn in, my very first activity was to meet 50 local officials. I scheduled that on purpose -- as a symbol of the partnership I hope to build with our cities. I told them whenever I appoint a national transportation commission, a local official would sit at the table so we can listen and learn the local perspective.

So, I'm very pleased to announce that this week, when I appoint a commission to work on financing the FAA and our country's airports, one of my appointees will be one of your own -- a mayor.

Unlike all of you, Transportation Secretaries aren't voted into office to bring jobs to communities and clean the air. But I say to you, every day, in every way, you can use transportation to help solve your cities' problems, and this Transportation Secretary wants to help you.

Transportation is more than concrete, asphalt, and steel. It's about people -- giving them an opportunity to build a better life. It makes our enjoyment of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness possible. I learned that as a little boy. When the interstate came to Marianna, Arkansas, (the interstate Vice President Gore's father put into law) my mother got a job 17 miles away in a factory, where she earned more than my father, who was working five jobs.

This week, I will send to Congress, the bill that will dictate how we invest in our highways and transit for the next six years. It is ISTEA's replacement -- NEXTEA.

- more -

I know our city leaders will have two questions.

One, how much money is there? We've decided to seek an 11 percent increase in funding over the old program. That's almost $175 billion over the next six years. In these times of budget cutting, when you do well if you hold your own, we're doing very well.

Let me add, I know ISTEA is second only to deficit reduction on the National League of Cities' priority list, so I'm pleased we agree on the importance of both balancing the budget and investing in infrastructure.

And your second question (for as Tip O'Neill said all politics is local): how much is there for my city or state? When you see our bill, you'll see we've updated the formulas, making sure states receive a fair share of the money.

We've kept the flexibility that has given you the opportunity to build projects you need.

We've kept the innovative tools that let us build highways two and three years sooner. Projects like a new interchange now under construction on I-94 in Romulus outside Detroit. A project that will bring jobs, but never would have happened, if we hadn't changed the rules and allowed a private developer to help pay for it. Or projects like the Chouteau Bridge in Kansas City, that after 100 years, now will be replaced.

In the old days, we'd be lucky to start a new transit project every year. This afternoon I meet with transit operators to tell them we'll keep the wonderful model that allowed us to sign almost 20 agreements in four years for new transit projects.

We'll preserve programs that may be small, but have a big impact on cities, because they allow you to build bike trails or improve air quality.

And we'll provide $100 million per year, to provide transportation so welfare recipients can get to their jobs. If welfare reform is going to work, we must provide those who can't afford cars, access to public transportation.

In the last few years, I went beyond the beltway, as they say, to tour our interstate in a motor home. I stopped in 60 cities, from Buffalo to Laredo, visiting civic leaders, talking to truck drivers, listening to ordinary Americans. And

I remember in 1995, I went to Brian O'Neill's Philadelphia, after a massive tire fire closed I-95, smack in the city, and how quickly we acted to rebuild it.

What always struck me is that we built more than roads and bridges. Transportation built a nation. And with NEXTEA we must build a nation for the 21st century.

The debate on NEXTEA won't be about rocking the boat, as it was in 1991, when a Democratic Congress and a Republican President passed ISTEA. As Mark Schwartz said, I hope it's not about donors and donees, either.

The President, a bi-partisan Congress, and I hope it's about how communities across the country can join together to build a nation that helps all Americans compete in the 21st century.

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U.S. Department of Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION RODNEY E. SLATER
THE AMERICAN PUBLIC TRANSIT ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL LEGISLATURE CONFERENCE
MARCH 10, 1997
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Now, I know you're in Washington to talk about pending legislation, and probably to do a lot more than just talk about it among yourselves! But before I get to the details, I want to make a commitment to you, since this is my very first time addressing the transit community as Secretary.

First, when you're in town, come and see me. My door will always be open. I believe, as President Clinton does, in developing strong state and local partnerships so we can find common ground and policies that you and I can embrace, and put into action.

And when I'm on the road, traveling to your communities, I want to visit with you. And I want to ride your transit systems. And I promise to listen and learn, and to respond to your concerns.

That is my commitment to you. It's iron-clad, just like our commitment to public transportation.

And I ask that you work with me in achieving my priorities of making our transportation system as safe as it can be, improving America's infrastructure, and using a common-sense approach to running government.

On a special note on safety, let me thank all the commuter rail authorities who are working with Administrator Jolene Molitoris and her people on developing system safety plans. We must improve rail safety in every way we can, especially in the wake of last year's tragic accident in Silver Spring, Maryland.

I may be the former head of the highway administration, but I am very big on transit. Not since Woodrow Wilson sat in the Oval Office has as much been spent on new transit construction, and I'm very proud of that.

- more -

I'm sure many of you can remember the days when Congress okayed a rail transit project. And then, for years, you heard about what a bad investment it was, from the FTA.

Well, you haven't heard that kind of talk since Gordon Linton started running the place back in 1993!

Since then, we've signed full funding grant agreements to build 19 new systems -- worth some $12 billion -- from Puerto Rico to the West Coast. But the real story is what these projects mean to people and businesses.

A new rail system, long term, means: new jobs, economic development, improved mobility, less air pollution and reduced traffic congestion. Now, that is a good investment in America.

And this is what transportation is all about: people. It's about the tens of millions of people you serve. It's about getting workers to their jobs. It's about family members and friends visiting one another across town. It's about business people getting to the airport from downtown. It's about getting medical attention for the sick and elderly.

Every person in this room can take pride in knowing that mass transit probably does more good for more people than just about any public service.

Much of what has been achieved these past few years is the direct result of the way we've implemented federal highway and transit programs since the landmark ISTEA law was passed six years ago.

In the last four years, we've spent on average almost a billion dollars more a year than during the prior four years. This money today is being invested in your communities, for new buses, for new facilities, for expanding old lines and for improving access to mass transit.

And we've aggressively put into full effect all the flexibility aspects of ISTEA. This has put the power in the hands of state and local officials like yourselves to decide how to spend your federal transportation dollars. Why? Because you know your needs better than we do in Washington.

In a few days, my friends, President Clinton will send Congress our plan to renew the programs under ISTEA. We're calling it NEXTEA. And I'm very pleased to report that we'll be seeking an 11 percent increase in funding over the old

program. That's $175 billion over the next six years, compared to the current $157 billion.

In these times of budget cutting, you're doing well if you hold your own. So we're doing very well!

And our proposal will build on the strides made under ISTEA. Renewing these programs is essential. NEXTEA is an initiative to rebuild America, to assure that in the 21st century, we have the best national system in the world. Because if we don't, America will slip behind in the world economy, unable to compete against our fast-paced trading partners.

And I can tell you today, we'll renew these programs in a way that is fair to all. Our proposal will up-date the state spending formulas to make sure of that.

Two elements of next year's transit budget I want to highlight, are, first, a $100 million program that offers welfare recipients access to jobs, training, and support services. If you want to help make welfare reform work, we must provide those who can't afford a car payment, access to public transportation.

I know you discussed our Access to Jobs Program this morning -- and many of you can't wait. Ask the people of Chicago, where it's happening already. Ask the thousands of commuters who are using a new shuttle bus service to help get them from the inner city to their jobs in the northern suburbs how necessary and important this is.

Now, that is access to jobs. And our program will support this kind of effort, and provide many more new opportunities.

The second thing I wanted to highlight is that we have an almost $400 million increase in transit capital.

Operating assistance for communities with more than 200,000 people will no longer be funded separately. But as an added measure of support for them and for communities of all sizes, we will broaden the definition of capital. We made the transit definition of capital consistent with our highways program. So, we will give you more flexibility to decide how to use funds best.

And our plan will help the small and the mighty. For a city like Bridgeport, Connecticut, which spent just $1.6 million on operating assistance last year, the amount eligible under the President's proposal is $2.5 million -- a 150 percent

increase. Or for Chicago, which spent $37 million on maintenance, the amount now available is $259 million.

So, I think, the changes will work to your benefit.

The President has almost a billion dollars, up from $800 million, for CMAQ funds that allow you to cut pollution in your communities through transit projects, traffic flow improvements, and ride-sharing alternatives. The money is not only to achieve environmental standards, it is to maintain good air quality in your communities, and that is good.

So, as we proceed on renewing our vital transit and highway programs -- and I'll end on this -- let's never forget why we're doing it: to help people.

Transportation has always played a key role in peoples' lives and in our history. I was reminded of that again only yesterday when I was in Selma, Alabama. We were celebrating the 32nd anniversary of Martin Luther King's famous voting rights march from Selma to Montgomery.

How can we forget that those who walked that lonely strip of highway turned despair and determination into hope for millions of black Americans? How can we forget Rosa Parks, whom you'll be honoring on Wednesday,. how can we forget how she turned the front seat of a bus into a symbol of freedom and respect for human rights?

Yes, transportation is at the core of our daily lives. And with your support and dedication, we can assure that our best is yet to come.

Thank you.

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U.S. Department of Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, March 11, 1997

Contact: Bill Adams
Tel.: (202) 366-5580

MEDIA ADVISORY

Secretary Rodney Slater and Deputy Secretary Mort Downey will brief reporters on President Clinton's National Economic Crossroads Transportation Efficiency Act (NEXTEA) at 2:00 p.m., Wednesday, March 12, in room 2201, the Marx Media Room, U.S. Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street SW. **The briefing had previously been scheduled for 1:30 p.m.**

The briefing by Secretary Slater at DOT follows and is in addition to the morning unveiling of NEXTEA at the Old Executive Office Building.

WHO: Secretary Rodney Slater
Deputy Secretary Mortimer Downey

WHAT: Briefing on the National Economic Crossroads Transportation Efficiency Act.

WHEN: 2:00 p.m., Wednesday, March 12.

WHERE: Room 220, Marx Media Room, U.S. Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW.

This is for credentialed media only. Please use the Southwest Entrance.

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U.S. Department of Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION RODNEY E. SLATER
BRIEFING ON THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC CROSSROADS
TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY ACT
MARCH 12, 1997
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Less than a month ago when I was sworn in, I said that I had three goals. 1)Safety will be the number one priority of the DOT; 2) that we will invest in our infrastructure to ensure that America's transportation system meets the needs and desires of the American people in the 21st century; 3) that we will use a common-sense approach to running a department so that it works better and costs less.

Today, as the President proposes how our country will invest in highways, transit, and surface transportation safety programs into the next century, I set all three goals in motion.

Yes, this bill will lower the toll in lives and health care costs from motor vehicle crashes; enhance America's environment; and support mobility and economic prosperity. NEXTEA increases surface transportation funding by $17 billion, or 11 percent over the $157 billion authorized by ISTEA. It increases safety programs by 25 percent, and clean air programs by 30 percent.

Yes, it will cut red tape to give states the flexibility to build projects they want, not which Washington dictates, and to build them sooner, every day and in every way, as we have done under the President's leadership in the past four years.

Yes, we will continue to build transit systems. Not since Woodrow Wilson sat in the Oval Office has as much been spent on new transit construction, and I'm very proud of that.

I want the nation to know that the almost $175 billion we will invest will support almost one million jobs, across the country, in the next six years, as we build our roads and transit systems.

- more -

Clearly these investments will make it possible to help all Americans -- whether they live in urban, rural, or suburban America. But clearly there are special people that we must help -- those who are trying to get off welfare and onto jobs. We are the to in welfare to work, and our $600 million access to jobs program will make a difference.

I'd also like to point out that as we meet the President's goal to make sure every 8-year-old must be able to read; every 12-year-old must be able to log on to the Internet; and every 18-year-old must be able to go to college -- we will go into the schools to ensure that we have the transportation professionals of the 21st century. If students take the responsibility when they're in high school, we can provide the opportunity to go further with the Garrett A. Morgan scholarship.

We developed NEXTEA by going around the country, by asking people what was good and bad about ISTEA, the previous law, and keeping the good.
I see Mayor Daley here. I remember when we went to Chicago, to hear what those in the heartland had to say. He stressed the need to continue mass transit funding. He said these systems must be considered national -- not just local -- assets. We listened, and learned from him. And we listened and learned from Mark Schwartz, from Oklahoma City, who said preserving our investments in cleaning the air and solving the congestion problems were his priorities, and NEXTEA supports those efforts.

In NEXTEA, we've tried to be fair to all states. Forty-nine states will receive more dollars than they did under ISTEA. The formulas used to appropriate funds have been up-dated and make use of current data.

Soon, we plan to send up additional legislation on Amtrak and safety. And I plan to visit our friends on Capitol Hill, to make this a bi-partisan bill. In 1991, when a Democratic Congress and a Republican President passed ISTEA, they rocked the boat.

The debate on NEXTEA will be different. I hope it's not solely about donors and donees, because NEXTEA builds more than roads and bridges.
I hope the debate is whether this is the transportation bill that will build a nation, a nation for the 21st century that can compete in a global economy.

From George Washington, to Jefferson, to Lincoln, to Wilson, to Roosevelt, to Eisenhower -- our nation has always recognized that transportation is about the unity of a diverse nation and a diverse people. I look forward to helping President Clinton and this Congress carry that tradition into the 21st century.

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U.S. Department of Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION RODNEY E. SLATER
BRIEFING ON THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC
CROSSROADS TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY ACT
MARCH 12, 1997
WASHINGTON, D.C.

It's most appropriate that my first press conference is on the legislation that will determine transportation's future into the 21st century.

Less than a month ago when I was sworn in, I said I had three goals. 1) Safety will be the number one priority of the DOT; 2) that we will invest in our infrastructure to ensure that America's transportation system meets the needs and desires of the American people in the 21st century; 3) that we will use a common-sense approach to running a department so that it works better and costs less.

This morning, as the President proposed NEXTEA, I set the pursuit of all three goals in motion.

The overall legislation will provide for almost $175 billion -- an 11 percent increase over ISTEA, with 49 states receiving more dollars than under ISTEA. In these times of working toward a balanced budget, when you do well if you hold your own, we're doing very well.

The bill will save lives by investing 25 percent more on safety; and it will enhance America's environment by investing 30 percent more on clean air programs.

Yes, it will cut red tape to give states the flexibility to build projects they want, not which Washington dictates, and to build them sooner, every day and in every way.

Yes, we will continue to build transit systems. Not since Woodrow Wilson sat in the Oval Office has as much been spent on new transit construction as under President Clinton.

- more -

And NEXTEA will support almost one million jobs, nationwide, in the next six years, as we build our roads and transit systems.

Clearly these investments will make it possible to help all Americans -- whether they live in urban, rural, or suburban America. But clearly, as the President pointed out this morning, there are special people we must help -- those who are trying to get off welfare and onto jobs. We are the to in welfare to work, and our $600 million access to jobs program will make a difference.

I'd also like to point out that as we work to meet the President's goal to make sure every 8-year-old must read; every 12-year-old must log on to the Internet; and every 18-year-old must be able to go to college -- we will go into the schools to ensure that we have the transportation professionals we need in the 21st century. If students take the responsibility when they're in high school, we can provide the opportunity to go further with the Garrett A. Morgan scholarship.

I plan to visit my colleagues on Capitol Hill, to make this a bi-partisan bill. I hope the debate on NEXTEA is not solely about donors and donees, because NEXTEA builds more than roads and bridges.

I hope the debate is whether this is the transportation bill that will ensure a solid foundation for our nation, a nation for the 21st century that can compete and win in a global economy.

Thank you.

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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION RODNEY E. SLATER
NEXTEA CEREMONY WHITE HOUSE
MARCH 11, 1997
WASHINGTON, D.C.

AFTER VP/ INTRO OF PRESIDENT

Thank you, Mr. Vice President. In 1956, the act that created the interstate system was called the Federal Aid Highway Act.

We are calling our act NEXTEA -- the National Economic Crossroads Transportation Efficiency Act. Why crossroads? Because the interstate system that the Vice President's father and President Eisenhower put in place helped us to build a national economy.

But today, we are at a crossroads and we have to continue to find stability as we Americans compete to win on an international stage. This legislative proposal will help us do that. It is to speak as much about the next six years, as it is the next 60 years.

Ten years ago this month, then-Governor Clinton appointed me to the Arkansas Highway Commission. For the past decade President Clinton and I have worked together guided by the belief that transportation is about more than concrete, asphalt, and steel. It's about people and providing them access to opportunity, whether they live in rural, suburban or urban America.

It is my high honor to introduce the person who will invest in transportation to provide opportunity for all Americans in the 21st century ... and who is working to ensure that our best days are yet ahead of us ... President Clinton.

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U.S. Department of Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, March 11, 1997

Contact: Bill Adams
Tel.: (202) 366-5580

MEDIA ADVISORY

Secretary Rodney Slater will join President Clinton and Vice President Gore in announcing the National Economic Crossroads Transportation Efficiency Act (NEXTEA) at 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, March 12, in room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building.

WHO: President Clinton
Vice President Gore
Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater

WHAT: Briefing on the National Economic Crossroads Transportation Efficiency Act.

WHEN: 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, March 12.

WHERE: Room 450, Old Executive Office Building.

NOTE: Reporters without White House press credentials wishing to cover this event must call the Department of Transportation at 366-5580 by 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, March 11, with their full name, organization, date of birth and social security number. For access to this event, please enter the White House via the Northwest gate at 8:30 a.m. and you will be escorted from the White House briefing room.

Secretary Rodney Slater and Deputy Secretary Mort Downey will brief reporters at the Department of Transportation in the afternoon. The briefing on the President's NEXTEA proposal will be held at 1:30 p.m. in room 2201, the Marx Media Room, at the Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh St., S.W.

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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION RODNEY E. SLATER
THE NEW ENGLAND COUNCIL
MARCH 12, 1997
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Thank you, Maria (Echaveste), and good afternoon.

When I came into office, I set three goals for my Department. First, that safety is our number one priority, that it must be and will be the North Star, by which we are guided; second, that we will invest in our infrastructure to ensure that America's transportation system meets the needs of the American people; and third, that we will use a common-sense approach to running a department.

This morning, we had a press conference with the President when he set all three goals in motion. He unveiled our legislation that will dictate how much will be invested in highways and transit in the next six years.

You've heard of ISTEA, which has been the law for the last six years; we're calling this update of it, NEXTEA -- the National Economic Crossroads Transportation Efficiency Act.

Why crossroads? Because the interstate system that President Eisenhower put in place helped us to build a national economy. But today, we are at a crossroads and we have to find security and some stability as our businesses compete on an international stage.

This is designed to help us in that regard. It is to speak as much about the next six years, as it is the next 60 years.

So I'm pleased to report the President is asking for an 11 percent increase, about $175 billion over the next six years, compared to $157 billion in the previous six. This will support almost a million jobs nationwide.

We're very much aware of the needs of New England, and

excluding the construction funds for the Artery, which have been a massive investment in the last six years, all New England states will receive more money.

There are many ways to look at what we've proposed.

Will we invest more to improve my number one priority safety on our roads? Yes.

Will we increase the flexibility states have to determine their projects, rather than having Washington dictate? Yes.

Will we continue to be innovative in financing and contracting projects and cutting red tape, so highways can be built sooner? Yes.

Will we preserve programs that may be small, but have a big impact on communities, because they allow bike trails to be built or they improve air quality. Yes.

Does this answer our country's newest challenge -- getting former welfare recipients who can't afford cars the public transportation they need to get to work? And hopefully work at some of your companies. We are the <u>to</u> in welfare <u>to</u> work. So, I'm very proud that we'll provide $100 million per year, over six years in a new access to jobs program.

I know your bottom line question: will this improve productivity? Will truck drivers be stuck in traffic less? Will we have a transportation network that goes from New England where your plants may be, to California where your customers may be that is as good as the infrastructure being built in Asia?

The answer is yes ... yes, <u>but</u>.

But there's a tendency for Congressional members to vote up or down bills like this based on how much is in the pot for their state.

The debate on NEXTEA won't be about rocking the boat, as it was in 1991, when a Democratic Congress and a Republican President passed ISTEA. I hope it's not about donors and donees, either, because NEXTEA builds more than roads and bridges.

I hope the debate is whether this is the transportation bill that will build a nation, a nation for the 21st century that can compete in a global economy.

I learned what transportation means as a little boy. When the interstate came to Marianna, Arkansas, my mother was able to get a job 17 miles away in a factory, where she earned more than my father, who was working five jobs.

As I always say transportation is more than concrete, asphalt, and steel. It's about people -- giving them an opportunity to build a better life. And the debate needs to be whether NEXTEA is the policy to make that happen.

Beyond highways, no area of the country understands the importance of a <u>balanced</u> transportation system as much as New England.

So let me just mention two other areas that Secretary Peña worked hard on, and which you can count on this Transportation Secretary to continue.

First, high-speed rail. It is coming to New England -- finally. The Europeans have it; the Japanese have it; and we've wanted it for 20 years, and before the end of the century the American Flyer will be here, running from Boston to New York to Washington.

The ride from Boston to New York will be 3 hours, vs. the 4 1/2 hour ride of today. It will be the safest train ever built, and three million more people will ride Amtrak up and down the east coast, which will help relieve congestion at Logan Airport. So we're all looking forward to that.

The second area, is aviation. I believe, very strongly, that just as the interstate united us as a nation in the last half of the century, our aviation system will unite us with the world in the 21st century.

I am aware that under Secretary Peña, the New England Council and FAA conducted a study. You found 5 million passengers who use Logan, actually live closer to another airport, but use Logan, because of better service.

I know you're working at attracting airlines to the other airports -- and you've had some success. USAir is now serving Manchester. Southwest has moved a significant operation into Providence. And I hope that all the states pull together, and recognize the common need that improving service at one airport can help the entire area.

For our part, we've been modernizing many of the region's airports. Providence just opened a new terminal ... at Bradley in Hartford, we're constructing a new control tower and radar facility ... in Bangor, Maine, we opened a new tower in October ... and Logan will be the first airport in the country to receive STARS, which is a nationwide project to replace the computers and displays that controllers use to help guide planes to and from our largest airport.

In fact, the FAA has contracted with Raytheon to develop the STARS system, and I understand we have some people from Raytheon here with us. Where are you? **(Note: Bob Mc-Aide and Charlie Fox are the Raytheon people who should be there)**

Let me end on this, being that we're at the White House on a day the President announced NEXTEA. From George Washington, to Lincoln, to Wilson, to Roosevelt, to Eisenhower, our nation has always recognized that transportation is

about the unity of a diverse nation and a diverse people. I work for a pro-transportation President, who looks forward to carrying that tradition into the 21st century.

Thank you, very much.

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U.S. Department of Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION RODNEY E. SLATER
THE AMERICAN PUBLIC TRANSIT ASSOCIATION
"LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD" FOR ROSA PARKS
MARCH 12, 1997
WASHINGTON, D.C.

First, let me say it is a great pleasure to be with you to honor a great lady, a great leader, and a great friend. Thank you for the opportunity to share in recognizing all that Rosa Parks has achieved over four decades. And let me commend the American Public Transit Association for making this award today.

It's also a great honor to be introduced by Gordon Linton, the Federal Transit Administrator who, working closely with many of you here today, has done so much to improve public transportation for millions of people, over the last four years. Doctor Lowery, Bill Molar, Les White, Ron Barnes, it's an honor to be up here with all of you.

I don't believe I exaggerate when I say that had it not been for Rosa Parks, and other people like her who have struggled and sacrificed and spoken out for what was right, that many of us would not be here today.

I was in Montgomery, Alabama, on Sunday. We were there to remember another event that transformed America: Dr. King's voting rights march from Selma to Montgomery. And there was much reflection and story-telling about that "mighty walk" and what it meant not just for African-Americans, but all Americans.

And we remembered the other great events that shaped our democracy's battle over civil rights. We remembered back a dozen years to 1955, when the battle was just beginning.

I know the year well. It was the year of my birth. And a lot happened in that year that would make a difference in this man's life.

- more -

On a bridge in my state of birth that involved a young man named Emmett Till, on a bridge in my home state, that could have been the course of the nation.

But something more powerful occurred that year -- the December first Montgomery bus boycott. A lot more happened when a woman decided to sit so that our nation might stand taller , and might come to realize the true meaning of its creed. That we hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal and endowed, not by government, but by their creator that life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness -- these are inalienable rights.

And as you look back through the history of the civil rights movement, so many times transportation has been the scene of watershed events. Why? Because transportation is the most public of public services. It is a great equalizer because it involves people.

Whether it's school buses in Boston, or the highway from Selma to Montgomery, or Rosa Park's Cleveland Avenue bus ... transportation touches peoples' lives.

But it's not just about concrete, asphalt, and steel ... or even assuring human rights or moving people. It's also about creating opportunity. It's about empowering them to fulfill their dreams and to attain life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

I leaned this as a little boy growing up in Marianna, Arkansas. When the interstate came through our area, my mother, who had been a domestic, was able to get a job 17 miles away in a factory. And there she earned a salary that paid more than my father, who at the time was working five jobs.

Now, I don't mean to get political, I know that's not why we're here. But we're so fortunate to have a President at the helm like Bill Clinton.

He understands the role transportation plays in providing economic opportunity. Earlier this morning, just before I came here, we unveiled his plan to invest $175 billion over the next six years in our nation's transportation system. That's an 11 percent increase.

But more importantly, it'll support nearly 1 million jobs, as we construct new highways and transit systems.

And let me tell you what else he understands: race relations in America. He has been an unflinching advocate of civil rights, willing to risk votes in his bid for governor by refusing to attend segregated campaign events.

I believe throughout our nation's history, and I'll end on this, that people come along at critical times to challenge us. And I think the President views us as being in that kind of a time worthy of being challenged in that kind of way, in regard to race relations in America. And I know this President is that kind of leader, who can help take us to a better place, in every way.

But the President can't do it alone. We need our Rosa Parks. We need people to stand up for what is right. We need people to pull together. America's greatest strength has always been her diversity. You can see it from George Washington, to Lincoln, to Wilson, to Roosevelt, to Eisenhower, who all believed that transportation was the key to building a unified nation.

And I challenge each of you here today to join me in carrying that tradition into the 21st century. For our best is yet to come.

Thank you.

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TALKING POINTS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION RODNEY E. SLATER
COAST GUARD FLAG-SES SPRING CONFERENCE
MACH 18, 1997
ANDREWS AIR FORCE BASE

(you should speak for 10 minutes; 45 people in the room))

Thanks, Admiral Kramek. I won't make a long speech, I'd rather listen and learn and leave plenty of time for dialogue.

"feeding minister breakfast story"

Let me say at the outset how proud I am to be your Service Secretary. As Federal Highway Administrator, I visited Coast Guard district offices and learned to appreciate your work. A very sobering moment, and one where I came to grips with the full magnitude of the job you do, was the terrible accident in Washington State right before I became Secretary.

I met Admiral Spade, who is here today, at that very powerful, very moving memorial service, which really impressed on me the commitment of all members of the Coast Guard to serve our country.

A little over a month ago when I was sworn in, I said I had three goals. 1) Safety will be the number one priority of the DOT; 2)that we will invest in our infrastructure to ensure that America's transportation system meets the needs and desires of the American people in the 21st century; 3) that we will use a common-sense approach to running the department so that it works better and costs less.

For the past 30 days I've been doing my part in pursuit of these goals. Last week, for example, the President unveiled our plan to invest $175 billion in highways and transit over the next six years. In the next six months I will be camping out on the Hill trying to get bi-partisan support for the bill.

Also in my first 30 days, we brought out some new and important regulations to depower air bags; we appointed two aviation commissions -- one looking at how to finance the FAA, the other at how we can better provide assistance to families after aviation disasters; and we established a second civil frequency for GPS.

I know what an important role you play in safety -- working every day in every way to save lives.

And there is no better example of bringing common-sense to the government than your streamlining plan. To save nearly $1 billion by 2005 is an incredible accomplishment, and one the President is very aware of, and proud of.

When I testified before the Senate Appropriations Committee seeking next year's budget, one of the senators asked "Are you sure this is enough money for the Coast Guard?" Then the senator realized your streamlining efforts would be kicking in and everyone in the room smiled at seeing common-sense government actually making a difference on the bottom line.

As for your budget next year, the President proposed a 3 percent (or $140 million) increase in the overall Coast Guard budget. I'm sure the Commandant would have liked more, but in these balanced budget times, when holding your own is doing well, you're doing well.

By the way, I'm aware of the Commandant's long-term concerns about replacing obsolete ships in the 21st century, and we will be working together in that regard.

Let me just mention one program, where you did very well in -- and that's drug interdiction. This is very important to the President. In the State of the Union, he said his budget includes "the largest anti-drug effort ever: to stop drugs at their source..."

He proposed a 15 percent increase -- adding $53 million -- to support your drug interdiction activities. That is a significant increase to fight a terrible problem and I look forward to working on that with you.

So that is what I've been up to, those are the priorities that will guide us, and now I'd like to engage in some dialogue.

# # # # #

1. Minister Story

2. Relationship with CG (State of Washington)

3. 3 Department Goals (CG: safety ...streamlining -- Senate story)

4. 1st 30 days (NEXTEA ... air bag deployment ... aviation commissions ... 2nd Civil Aviation Frequency for GPS)

5. '98 CG Budget:

overall: up 3% ($140 million)

drug interdiction: up 15% ($53 million)

long term: replace fleet

U.S. Department of Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, March 19, 1997

Contact: **Kara Gerhardt - USDOT**
202-366-4570
Norida Torriente -
SAFE KIDS, 202-662-0600

MEDIA ADVISORY

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater will join the D.C. SAFE KIDS Coalition, and teachers, parents and students at St Joseph's Day Care Center at Taft Junior High School, on Thursday, March 20, at 8:30 a.m. to distribute safety seats to families in need and to promote awareness of child passenger safety in the District of Columbia.

WHO: Rodney Slater, U.S. Secretary of Transportation
Dr. Ricardo Martinez, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Administrator
D.C. SAFE KIDS Coalition
Students, parents, teachers and local officials

WHAT: Distribute safety seats to families in need and promote awareness of child passenger safety awareness in the District of Columbia

WHEN: Thursday, March 20, 1997
8:30 a.m.

WHERE: St. Joseph's Day Care Center
at Taft Junior High School
Corner of South Dakota and Perry Streets, NE
Washington, D.C.

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U.S. Department of Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION RODNEY E. SLATER
THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC CROSSROADS TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY ACT
ROLL-OUT PRESS CONFERENCE
MARCH 14, 1997
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Two days ago, President Clinton sent to Congress our plan dictating how much this country will invest in highways and transit systems for the next six years.

From now through September 30th, when the legislation must be voted up or down, I will go around the country to speak -- loudly and clearly -- of its importance to the American people.

I picked Chicago as the starting point. Why Chicago? Because just as the claim was made 70 years ago that all airplanes lead to Chicago, today all roads, all transit, all trucks, and all rail leads to this great hub of transportation.

Also, I'm here because you have a mayor who speaks not only for Chicago, but for all mayors around the country who know that transportation is more than concrete, asphalt, and steel. It's about people. It's about providing economic opportunity to all Americans.

The legislation will provide for $175 billion nationally in the next six years -- an 11 percent increase over the previous six years. Virtually all states will receive more dollars -- including Illinois.

I'm proud to tell you that under the President's plan more than $4.5 billion will be available for Illinois to build highways in the next six years -- that's a 23 percent increase.

And, not only are your dollars up, but your share of the total funds is also up. So, Illinois gets a bigger piece of a bigger pie.

- more -

Let me talk about transit for a minute. Not since this line was built have we seen so much construction around the country of new transit. Next year, we propose an 8 1/2 percent increase in funds available to maintain and improve the transit system of Chicago and Northwestern Indiana -- from $235 million to $255 million.

I never met a mayor, or a county executive, or a governor, or member of Congress who didn't want more money. But in these times of working toward a balanced budget, when you do well if you hold your own, Illinois is doing very well.

As we build our roads and transit system, almost 1 million jobs will be supported around the country, 34,000 here in Illinois.

This bill will also help cities like Chicago improve air quality, and save lives by improving the safety of our roads. It will cut red tape to give states the flexibility to build projects they want, not which Washington dictates, and to build them sooner, every day and in every way.

Clearly these investments will make it possible to help all Americans -- whether they live in urban, rural, or suburban America. But clearly, as the President pointed out, there are special people we must help -- those who are trying to get off welfare and onto jobs. So, we'll start a $600 million access to jobs program making sure those who cannot afford car payments have public transportation. For transportation is the to in welfare to work.

I will close on this. When I was in the seventh grade, I had the biggest debate I ever had with my family when I asked permission to play football. It was granted, only when I said it was for a greater cause, to win a scholarship to college. That led me to attending college here in the Midwest.

The debate over this bill will be a big one, no doubt. But I believe we'll see bi-partisan support. I believe the debate will be about more than building roads and bridges. It will be for a greater cause. It will be about building a nation. It will be about whether this is the transportation bill that will ensure a solid foundation for our nation, a nation for the 21st century that can compete and win in a global economy.

Thank you.

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U.S. Department of Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
SECRETARY OF TRASPORTATION RODNEY E. SLATER
THE AMERICAN ROAD TRANSPORTATION
BUILDERS ASSOCIATION
MARCH 13, 1997
WASHINGTON, D.C.

As highway administrator, I not only admired, but very much appreciated, ARTBA. You've always been there for the President. You were there for his economic stimulus package, even before I reported to work. You were the first construction association to endorse NAFTA. You've been the strongest voice for the full funding of ISTEA.

And I commit to you today, that as you have been there for us, as Secretary of Transportation, I will be there for ARTBA.

As you know, five years ago, when the President campaigned for office, he promised to rebuild America. It has been a promise kept.

In his first term, as he cut the budget deficit by more than 60 percent, he did the remarkable: he increased transportation investment 20 percent -- to the highest levels ever in American history. After four years, we have nearly 12 million more jobs in this country, 1.1 million of them new construction jobs.

Yesterday, Jay Taylor, Max Sproles, my friend Pete Ruane, and I had the high honor of being with both the President and Vice President to unveil our NEXTEA proposal. The President sent to Congress a plan to invest almost $175 billion over the next six years, an 11 percent increase over ISTEA levels. A plan that will provide more money for virtually every state in the union. A plan that in the core highways programs -- in the concrete, asphalt and steel of the NHS, interstate maintenance, surface transportation program, and bridges -- will see a 30 percent increase.

My friends, in these times of balanced budgets, when holding your own is considered doing well, we are doing very well for America.

- more -

I want you to know that the almost $175 billion we will invest in NEXTEA will support almost one million jobs, across the country, in the next six years, as you build our roads and transit systems.

NEXTEA is a plan that sets in motion my goals as Secretary that 1) safety will be the number one priority of the DOT (and safety funding will be up 25 percent); 2) that we will invest in our infrastructure to ensure that America's transportation system meets the needs and desires of the American people in the 21st century; 3) that we will use a common-sense approach to running a department so that it works better and costs less.

Yes, it will give states the flexibility to build projects they want, not which Washington dictates.

Yes, it will keep the good programs I know you like so well.

Programs like innovative finance that have cut red tape, so we can build projects sooner, every day and in every way. Projects like the George Bush Turnpike, north of Dallas, where our $135 million investment has made possible a $500 million tollway that Texas had wanted since Lyndon Johnson was President.

Or the interchange, now under construction on I-94 in Romulus, Michigan, outside Detroit, that never would have happened, if we hadn't allowed a private developer to participate in the funding. I hope innovative finance becomes no longer innovative, but standard across the land.

Yes, NEXTEA will preserve incentive contracting, that you like so well. I can still remember, after the earthquake in Los Angeles, in under a day we were able to contract for the restoration of the Santa Monica freeway. In 86 days, it was up and operating and letting the traffic of LA move again.

Yes, it will preserve design build contracting. Just yesterday, Deputy Secretary Downey met with the Mayor of Salt Lake City, Dee Dee Corradini, to discus the transportation projects needed for the Winter Olympics to be held there in 2002. That includes the reconstruction of Interstate 15.

I visited Salt Lake City last summer to see the Olympic sites. I know, if we had contracted the old-fashioned way, it would be maybe 20 years after the Olympics were over,before the systems would be built! But now the work will be done on time for the opening ceremonies.

Clearly, NEXTEA will make it possible to help all Americans -- whether they live in urban, rural, or suburban America. But clearly there are special people whom we must help -- those who are trying to get off welfare and onto jobs. We are the to in welfare to work, and so we are proposing investing $600 million in an access to jobs program that will make a difference.

I'd also like to point out that as we meet the President's goal to make sure every 8-year-old is able to read; every 12-year-old able to log on to the Internet; and every 18-year-old able to go to college -- we will go into the schools to ensure that we have the transportation professionals of the 21st century.

If students take the responsibility when they're in high school, we can provide the opportunity for them to go further with their education with the Garrett A. Morgan scholarship.

At a press conference yesterday, I was asked -- if our proposal is a starting point, or is it non-negotiable? I have never seen legislation sent to Congress that lawmakers didn't want to tinker with.

There may be disagreements. But we've tried to be fair to every state. The formulas used to apportion funds have been improved and make use of up-dated data. And I plan to visit our friends on Capitol Hill, just as I visit you today, to make this a bi-partisan bill.

In 1991, when a Democratic Congress and a Republican President passed ISTEA, they rocked the boat. The debate on NEXTEA will be different. We're not asking to toss out ISTEA. We just want to fine tune it.

I hope the debate is not about partisan politics. I know ARTBA does not want that. I hope it's not solely about donors and donees, because NEXTEA builds more than roads and bridges.

I hope the debate is whether this is the transportation bill that will build a nation, a nation for the 21st century that can compete in a global economy.

We call our act NEXTEA -- the National Economic Crossroads Transportation Efficiency Act. Why crossroads? Because the interstate system that President Eisenhower put in place helped us to build a national economy.

But today, we are at a crossroads and we have to continue to find an edge as we Americans compete to win on an international stage. This legislative proposal will help us do that. It is to speak as much about the next six years, as it is the next 60 years.

One other point I want to make -- it is actually a commitment to all of you. You are the world's best in design, in construction management, in making construction equipment. You are the cutting edge in transportation technology.

One of the things Secretary Peña did so well, through his trade advocacy trips around the world, was to help open doors for you to compete around the world.

I know it's important to you. You worked with Bill Daley on NAFTA, and I can assure you that Secretary Daley, and Ambassador Barshefsky will continue the President's goal of opening doors.

There's a trillion dollar market in Asia for infrastructure, and opportunities in Latin America, and Africa, and other parts of the world. After I get better situated in my new position and visiting Capitol Hill on NEXTEA, I look forward to advocating trade on your behalf.

Let me end by saying, from George Washington, to Jefferson, to Lincoln, to Wilson, to Roosevelt, to Eisenhower -- our nation has always recognized that transportation is about the unity of a diverse nation and a diverse people. It's more than your wonderful concrete, asphalt, and steel. It's also about building opportunity.

I look forward to helping President Clinton and this Congress carry that tradition into the 21st century. For our best days are yet to come.

Thank you very much.

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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION RODNEY E. SLATER
USO-METRO ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER
MARCH 24, 1995
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Thank you, Miss America. Secretary Cohen ... Senator McCain ... Secretary West ... Secretary Dalton ... Secretary Widnall, General Shalikashvili ... Admiral Kramek ... Willie Nelson ... and distinguished guests.

I have the honor to introduce the recipient of this year's C. Haskell Small Award for Volunteerism. He is one of the Coast Guard's very finest ... a powerful example of how Americans share their hearts and souls ... Petty Officer Second Class Mervin Gerard Charles.

Born in Houston, Petty Officer Charles joined the Coast Guard in 1986. For the past year and a half, he's been a top performer in his official duties as a purchasing agent here in Washington.

But his dedication goes well beyond that. He volunteers to help military members overcome alcohol and drug problems -- work that requires many days away from the office.

He also coordinates a Coast Guard mentoring program at Anthony Bowen Elementary School in Southwest D.C. He increased participation by 220 percent, by showing his colleagues they'll get more out of mentoring than they put in. He knows from experience. He spends countless hours and his personal funds to expose fifth graders to the majesty of Washington, because you help a child -- one at a time.

On the weekends, Petty Officer Charles visits the Carrol House Food Kitchen, where he cooks, cleans dishes, and serves needy homeless families.

He's a single parent. And often by his side at the soup kitchen is his seven-year-old daughter, Mia. He involves her, because as he says: "She needs to know how fortunate <u>we are</u>."

We want Petty Officer Charles to know how fortunate <u>our community</u> has been to have him. He will soon be heading to Alaska for duty there, but no matter where he lives, he is a shining example of Mrs. Clinton's idea that it takes a village to raise a child.

And he is the kind of person President Clinton will hold up next month in Philadelphia, when the President asks business, religious, and community leaders to support citizen service at our country's first ever Summit of Service.

It is my honor to present -- Petty Officer Second Class Mervin Gerard Charles.

# # # #

U.S. Department of Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION RODNEY E. SLATER
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA INITIATIVE WITH SECRETARY BRUCE BABBITT
MARCH 21, 1997
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Thank you Secretary Babbitt for our rich partnerships to make today possible.

As Transportation Secretary, I am very proud that all four Presidents who reside on the mall -- Washington, Lincoln, Jefferson and Clinton share a love of transportation.

President Washington opened the western settlements. President Jefferson made the national road possible, that's when people used horses to get around. President Lincoln made it possible to have the railroad stretch across the whole country.

And President Clinton knows the importance of building roads, airports, and transit systems that link the District, and link our nation. No President in all American history has invested more in America's infrastructure than President Clinton.

I'm here today, at the foot of the majestic monument, in the middle of the mall, because President Clinton asked all of the members of the Cabinet to work hard to make our home city the finest place.

We wanted to improve the infrastructure around the mall, to make it world class. To make the roads worthy of the great Presidents who reside here.

So, we've invested $44 million to complete road projects around the mall. And this road, I'm proud to say, was completed five months early.

This is a place where residents and visitors can come to enjoy, and feel the ambience of the monuments. Now, whether on bike, foot, or car -- the walkways and roadways make getting around easier and safer. This approach to the Washington Monument is not the hodge-podge it used to be. The road is now four lanes, not three. And it's beautiful.

- more -

With this road complete, we're about 60 percent toward our vision of re-doing all the streets around the mall. We've competed 14th and 17th Streets, and Ohio Drive. We have projects underway at Madison and on West Basin Drive. And next we'll start work on Jefferson, East Basin, Drive and parts of Constitution.

Beyond the mall, the President has invested on average almost $90 million every year in District of Columbia streets. And he just proposed that Congress increase that to almost $100 million every year, for the next six years.

In addition, as part of the President's special package for the District, the President wants in 1998 to make a one-time investment of $125 million in needed infrastructure projects.

Everyone knows Washington is a wonderful place to visit. And with the President's help, we're making it a wonderful place to live.

Thank you.

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U.S. Department of Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION RODNEY E. SLATER
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SAFETY SEAT EVENT
MARCH 20, 1997
WASHINGTON, D.C.

I have a four-year old, who is very strong-willed and stiffens her body in such a way it's very hard for me to get her in her car seat. In fact, she thinks she should be the driver!

My little girl is in child care, too. So I know the scene every weekday morning in America. Parents are rushing to get to their jobs, running late, and the toddler wants to play more, and it's easy to think: well, the child care center is just a few blocks away, I won't worry about buckling up the little one.

I have the good fortune to work for a President who wants to change that thinking -- in Washington and across America.

I'm here today, at this place of learning, because President Clinton asked all of the members of the Cabinet to work hard to make our home city the finest place to learn, to work, to live.

All of us in the Cabinet have another obligation. We must help the President make sure that every 8-year-old in the country can read a book; every 12-year-old can log on to the Internet; every 18-year-old can go to college. And today, I want to add that every child is properly buckled up in the back of the automobile.

The real beauty of Washington isn't the majesty of the monuments. It's in the hearts of our children, these two year olds, who need to grow up healthy and safe. To make it happen, we need safe schools, safe streets, and safe cars.

Not just as the Transportation Secretary, but also as a dad, it frustrates me to know that only half the children in the District are buckled up. Let me repeat that: only half our children are buckled up, even though it's the law of the land.

- more -

When the child is the age of these kids, it's not the child's responsibility. Buckling is the responsibility of you, and me, and every mom and dad in our city, and every parent who visits our city.

I come from a very poor part of Arkansas, and I know many parents who may be young and may not have the resources to buy car seats, but who desperately want to do a good job of raising their children.

And I know many parents who have the resources, and who also want to do a good job, but for one reason or another when they buckle their kids in the car seats, they aren't doing it correctly.

Did you know that four out of five times the child is not buckled properly? Maybe the seat is not anchored tight enough, or the child isn't strapped into the seat tight enough. We can do better.

So, I'm proud to say that the Transportation Department is providing almost $675,000 to the District for traffic safety programs this year. And the District will loan more than 800 seats.

I'm proud to be here with our partners in safety -- the D.C. Safe Kids, the D.C. Department of Public Works, the D.C. Metropolitan Police -- and all of you.

I know if we all mobilize our efforts, every day in every way, we can do better for our children, and make our city a model of safety for our nation.

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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION RODNEY E. SLATER
THE EXTRAORDINARY WOMEN OF DOT
MARCH 24, 1997
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Thank you, Nancy (McFadden). And good morning, ladies ... ladies ... and more ladies.

I've learned in the last five weeks that there are many enjoyable duties that come with being Secretary. This morning is clearly one of them as we honor two dozen of our finest.

We have found the good -- the very good -- in every corner of the DOT, and we're here to praise you.

As many of you know, April 1st is the 30th anniversary of our Department. It's a time to look back. And it's a time to look forward.

When men think of transportation pioneers -- men usually think of Henry Ford, or the Wright Brothers, or Garrett Morgan, the inventer of the traffic signal.

But it is women who paved the road to make America not just a place where transportation is fast, but where society is fair.

Had it not been for Rosa Parks, who sat on a bus so America could stand.

Had it not been for the brave Harriet Tubman, whose underground railroad "never went off track," as she says, "and never lost a passenger on the way to liberty."

Had it not been for Alice Ramsey, who, when there were no paved roads, drove a car cross country to show women can be behind the wheel, too.

Had it not been for Alma Rittenberry, an independent southern lady who wanted to build the Jackson highway, was ousted by men off the project, so started another highway project. (By the way, I know a little about independent southern ladies -- my mother is one!).

Had it not been for Sally Ride ... or Amelia Earhart, whose flight is being retraced by Linda Finch, as we speak ... or Lady Bird Johnson, whose husband started this Department, and on her own beautified our highways.

Had it not been for all these extraordinary women -- America would not be what it is today. These are women who accomplished firsts. They are the first ladies of transportation.

I know, from my own experience, it is difficult being first.

When Shirley Chisholm became the first African-American elected to Congress what surprised her was that her sex was the bigger barrier than her color. Think about that. She was bombarded -- by both men and women -- to return to teaching and to leave politics to the men.

I ask all of you to remember, yes, these women of history are wise, but it's wisdom born of pain. And yes they paid the price, but look how much they've gained. If they have to, they can do anything. They are strong, they are invincible, they are women!

Today, Nancy McFadden is not the first female General Counsel of the Transportation Department. Women have done that. And when Nancy becomes Attorney General of the United States, she will not be first. Janet Reno has done that.

I suspect one of our students who have joined us today will want my job -- Secretary of Transportation. But you will not be the first female. Elizabeth Dole has paved that path. And her time here is remembered not only for making cars safer, but for moving women up the chain.

And if any of our students aspire to become Secretary of State, she will not be first. Madeleine Albright has paid that price.

We are beyond firsts, and two people we ought to thank for that, and I can tell you this from personal experience -- are President and Mrs. Clinton.

Many people when they integrate, they integrate with one. When they diversify, they diversify with one. Many years ago, when I first decided to go to work for then-Attorney General Clinton, he was already clearly beyond that at that time. And that is what impressed me about him.

Today, when I walk into the Cabinet meetings, representing all of you, I walk into a room filled with talented women, whom he has appointed, to represent all of us.

We are clearly beyond leaving politics and every facet of our lives to men. Today, women-owned businesses contribute more than $1 trillion in sales to our economy. And they create one out of every four jobs.

But I say to you, what made all of our first ladies great -- their biggest victory -- was not transportation. It was leadership. They are women of character, and intelligence, who opened the door wide so all of you can have more opportunities.

You have heard me say, transportation is more than concrete, asphalt, and steel. It's about providing opportunity.

And I ask all of you -- that in my time as Secretary -- you show me your leadership by opening that door even wider.

Help me create programs, like the one the President announced two weeks ago, that will provide $600 million so women who want to get off welfare, but have no car, can have public transportation to get to their jobs. Transportation is the to in welfare to work.

And help me go into the schools to ensure that we have transportation professionals of the 21st century. The President's goal is to make sure every 8-year-old can read; every 12-year-old can log on to the Internet; and every 18-year-old can go to college. If students take the responsibility when they're in high school, we can provide the opportunity -- for young girls and boys -- to go further with the Garrett A. Morgan scholarship.

Yes, we have come far. Look around and see the women of DOT, representing 16,000 strong. I hear your roar, in numbers too big too ignore.

But yes, we have so much more to go -- and together, we will. Our best days are yet to come.

Thank you.

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Now, it is my pleasure to introduce the Deputy Secretary, who will introduce the extraordinary women of DOT, who are being honored. Mort Downey. Mort.

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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION RODNEY E. SLATER
MEETING WITH FAA EMPLOYEES
MARCH 27, 1997
HAWTHORNE, CALIFORNIA

Thanks, Bill Withycombe (With a comb) for the kind comparison to Secretary Volpe, and good morning to all of you.

You know, it was just 12 hours after I was sworn in that American Airlines pilots went on strike. So I had quite a welcome to aviation! But, with all of your help, this highway guy hopes to do as well as Secretary Volpe!

I won't make a long speech, I'd rather listen and learn, and leave time for dialogue. But in anticipation of your first question -- when will you have new a boss in Washington? -- let me answer it forthrightly.

I'm assisting the President in the selection of the FAA Administrator and Deputy Administrator. My priority is to find a team that will carry out the personnel and procurement reform you've successfully begun. A team that will make long-term budget reforms that are so needed for the FAA. And a team that will implement the recommendations of the Gore Commission.

Clearly, there is no one who wants the right team in place sooner than I, so, we're working in every way to find that team. And I suggest you stay tuned.

Six weeks ago, when I was sworn in, I said I had three goals. 1) Safety will be the number one priority of the DOT; 2)that we will invest in our infrastructure to ensure that America's transportation system meets the needs and desires of the American people in the 21st century; 3) that we will use a common-sense approach to running the department so that it works better and costs less.

For the past six weeks, I've set these goals in motion. We've gotten off to a very good start throughout the Department.

Two weeks ago, for example, the President unveiled our plan to invest $175 billion in highway and transit systems over the next six years. California will do well -- about $15 billion of that total. In fact, you'll be getting a bigger share of a bigger pie.

A few weeks ago, we also made a major safety announcement on air bags, allowing manufacturers leeway to produce less aggressive air bags. So, air bags will continue to save lives, while producing less of the bad results we've seen.

And, in the last six weeks, we've taken some concrete steps in aviation.

We appointed an aviation commission, to be headed by California's Norman Mineta, to look at how to finance the FAA, in the long-term.

Last Friday, we announced the industry had successfully completed implementing the commuter rule, bringing one level of safety to all scheduled carriers.

The FAA debuted its new safety site on the Internet, which I know will become very popular ... and I understand that two weeks ago in Oakland you brought on line equipment that will make flying over the Pacific safer.

And, most significantly, I announced the President's proposed 1998 budget for the FAA.

I want to put this in context. In an era of smaller government ... at a time when the President submitted a balanced budget ... at a time when, overall, the Transportation Department's budget was cut by 1 percent ... the President proposed increasing the FAA's operating budget by 8 1/2 percent.

Pending Congressional approval, this will allow us to hire 500 new controllers nationwide (that's on top of the two dozen controllers you're hiring in this region right now). It means more flight standards and certification personnel ... more maintenance technicians ... and more security staff.

It demonstrates the importance the President and I place on what you do in the FAA every day, in every way. I also know that those of you in the regional office may take what I say and think: here he is increasing some very important safety areas, but you are the important people who have to provide support to these others. You're doing more with less -- and maybe some of you are asking: what will be in your future?

My position is this. We need to ask that in the broader question of: how should the entire FAA be doing business in the future? And I know the new Administrator will want to start with a clean page, take a fresh look at the whole picture. I hope that you offer the new Administrator your ideas.

We have to stop asking: how was it done in the past? We need to ask: "What is the right thing to do, and the right way to do it in the future?"

Let me say this. I am blessed to come into an FAA that has made tremendous progress in what I have chosen as my three goals: safety ... investing in our system, particularly in modernizing air traffic control ... and in bringing common sense to government.

One year ago, it took the FAA 7 months to hire an outsider. Today it takes 6 weeks. We're cutting in half the time it takes to buy equipment -- and we'll reduce costs by 20 percent. That is tremendously important when you buy -- as the FAA did last year -- 5,600 pieces of major equipment.

I'm proud of how we are strengthening our airport security. I'm proud of how you're cutting red tape ... and eliminating thousands of pages of internal directives ... and preparing yourself as an agency for the 21st century.

Let me end on this. I am about to present some 30 year service pins to some of our younger employees! They take special significance because next week is the 30th anniversary of the Transportation Department -- when FAA, FHWA, and the Coast Guard came together to make as Lyndon Johnson said: "a transportation system worthy of America."

Thirty years ago, if you had told anyone that today aviation would be a form of mass transit. That 600 million passengers would fly a year. That you could buy a plane ticket, sitting at a computer at home -- no one would know what you were talking about. But that is what 20th century transportation professionals -- that is what you -- have brought us.

Next week, as we celebrate our 30th anniversary, help me ask: how can we be transportation professionals in the 21st century? Thank you very much. (NOTE: after your speech, Elly Brekke will call recipients up for pins. Then you'll take questions.)

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U.S. Department of Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION RODNEY E. SLATER
GREATER LOS ANGELES AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
MARCH 27, 1997
LOS ANGLES, CALIFORNIA

The achievements that this Chamber has made -- in just five years -- and the values that you are advancing are values President Clinton and I deeply share: opportunity, responsibility, and inclusion.

Here in this "City of Angels," I have seen that progress with my own eyes. And I can feel it in my bones.

Five years ago, during the 1992 campaign President Clinton and I made a visit here at a very different, very troubling time for California.

Your economy was sinking. Much worse, there was an outbreak of violence and division following the Rodney King verdict.

With the ashes of South Central still smoldering, then-Governor Clinton was the first presidential candidate to come -- and come privately -- far away from the cameras -- to visit with Reverend Cecil Murray of the First AME Church.

And we came away from that visit with a deeper sense of something that the President has always believed: Yes, law and order must be the first rule for any society.

But order under the law will always be vulnerable until it is rooted in equal treatment by the law. And until it is supported by a credible promise that every American enjoys equal opportunity -- as a birthright.

In the half decade since, I believe we've made great strides towards equal justice and equal opportunity. And that's the right thing to do. Because as the President likes to say: "We are all in this together."

Today, America's economy is strong and growing. Much of the credit for that must go to businessmen and women like those of you here tonight. But government has the responsibility for creating the economic environment for your success.

Four years ago, for example, in the face of some very tough opposition, President Clinton passed his first budget -- ***by one vote***. He promised his budget would cut the national deficit in half -- and create eight million new jobs.

Since then, we've seen America's economy create 11 million jobs -- three million more than he promised -- 800,000 of them right here in California. The budget deficit has dropped by nearly two-thirds -- again, ***more*** than the President promised.

And right from the start, President Clinton launched a special effort in California. He appointed a great friend -- now sorely missed -- Ron Brown -- to focus federal resources to meet this state's most urgent needs.

That strategy is working. Construction is ***up***. Bank lending is ***up***. New business formations are ***up***.

What's ***down*** in California? The business failure rate.

This is a great achievement for all Americans. But I don't have to remind this audience that a strong and growing economy is even more vital for African-Americans.

When President Clinton took office, the African-American unemployment rate was 12.5 percent. Today, it's fallen by more than one-third -- to one of the lowest rates in 20 years.

African-American incomes began to rise as well. So the rate of home ownership among African-Americans has outpaced the national average.

More than 100,000 African-American businesses have started. I hope some of these new entrepreneurs are with us here tonight -- and I congratulate you.

Please understand -- for our economy as a whole and for African-Americans in particular -- we have much more work to do. And ***we mean to do it.***

But I submit that this economy is -- clearly -- moving in the right direction. What's more, we have a President who is more deeply committed to advancing the cause of African-Americans than any President since Lyndon Johnson.

This is a man whose commitment to better race relations in America made an indelible impression on me fifteen years ago.

Back then, I saw Bill Clinton do something very few politicians ***ever*** do: ***risk losing***. He simply refused to attend segregated events during his campaign for Governor in Arkansas.

We had to hold the first integrated event in one part of the state in an aircraft hangar. We didn't have a beautiful room like this one tonight.

But we did hold one of the most beautiful political rallies I've ever seen -- black and white together -- because Bill Clinton wouldn't have it any other way.

He hasn't flinched since.

President Clinton promised to appoint an Administration that "looks like America." It's what he's done -- from his cabinet on down. For the first time ever, a majority of judicial appointees are women and minorities -- just like America.

What there has been is a persistent search for excellence and a challenge from this President to find excellence among all of America's communities.

In the President's view -- and mine -- that's what affirmative action is all about. It's ***a positive search for excellence,*** a way to give all Americans the chance to realize the promise of their talents.

Like the President, I believe affirmative action efforts must avoid rigid quotas or reverse discrimination. We must ***"mend"*** these flaws, not ***"end"*** these programs.

But until we achieve equal opportunity for all, we must continue to act affirmatively. We must keep open those opportunities, which opened up so recently -- after being closed so long.

Let me share with you how these goals of economic growth and opportunity affect the way we view transportation -- and the way I see my job as Secretary.

On the most basic level, of course, we see investment in America's infrastructure as the key to sustaining our economy's strength and competitiveness in a tough, global economy.

The Transportation Department's $25 billion a year investments directly support 1 million jobs. They have built us the best transportation system on earth. And we mean to make it even better.

So the President introduced this month a bill calling for investing $175 billion over the next six years in highways and transit systems. You could say that when President Clinton talked about "Building a Bridge to the 21st Century" -- ***he really meant it.***

But I have always seen transportation as something more than concrete, asphalt and steel -- it's about people. Our mobility, our lifestyles, our safety and the quality of our communities.

It's about justice and social progress, too. Good transportation is what inner-city and rural people need to make connections to jobs that can help them escape the trap of poverty.

I learned that myself as a little boy in Marianna, Arkansas, when the new Interstate was built and my mother was able to get a factory job 17 miles away. She earned more than my father could -- even though he was holding down ***five jobs*** at the time, God bless him!

For African-Americans, transportation has long had a special significance. It has often been the catalyst for change -- from the Underground Railway of slave times, to the organizing drives of the Pullman Porters' Union, to the freedom riders of the civil rights movement, to Dr. Martin Luther King's march into history down the road from Selma to Montgomery.

I was reminded of all that a few weeks ago, when I presented an award to Rosa Parks. One day in 1955, the very year Rodney Slater was born, Rosa Parks sat. But as she sat, African-Americans -- by the millions -- began to ***stand***. A lot of people stood with us. And this country, *our country*, began to live up to its own ideals.

Today, transportation still has a special role to play in making this country better. For example, the President is committing $600 million in the next six years so former welfare recipients will have public transportation to get to their new jobs. For transportation is the "to" in the phrase welfare to work.

What's more, we'll do everything we can to train and ***to hire*** people who want to graduate from welfare to work in the Department of Transportation itself. I hope everyone here tonight will find your own ways to do the same.

We will be stepping up our efforts in every area -- contracting, short-term lending, and bonding assistance.

As many of you know, minority and women businesses did a substantial share -- about 40 percent -- of the extraordinarily rapid repair work on the freeways damaged by the Northridge earthquake.

They were so successful politicians who criticize affirmative action eagerly showed up for the ribbon-cutting!

But we believe in you. You've proven yourselves. We stand ready to be your partner -- in many ways.

And it is my hope that of the $175 billion the President wants to invest in building highways and transit for the 21st century -- as much as $20 billion will go to minority and women contractors.

My friends, I believe you can make a tremendous contribution to supporting hundreds of thousands of good, high-paying transportation jobs.

I remember back in 1992, when the President accepted his party's nomination, he said: "The best social program ... the best family program ... the best economic program -- is a job."

It is you who create most of the jobs in this country -- one job at a time -- until they count up into the *tens of millions.*

For the future of African-Americans, I can't think of anyone more important than entrepreneurs and business people. Yes, we can all love and celebrate our great African-American politicians and civil rights leaders, sports stars and musicians.

Jackie Robinson, who broke into the big leagues 50 years ago was more than just a great athlete -- he was a genuine hero.

But I believe African-American business men and women are our heroes, too -- role models for our youth -- the vanguard of our economic and social advancement in America.

Because ***every time*** you win a contract or make a sale, ***every time*** you create a new job, ***every time*** you mentor a young child, you not only triumph over prejudice. But you gain the knowledge and the contacts and, yes, the profits and the capital and the credit that will make your own success and those of generations to come more surely grounded.

Some time back, and I want to end on this, I visited the home of Alex Haley, the wonderful author of ***Roots***.

And I read the great epitaph that Mr. Haley has carved on his gravestone: ***Find the Good and Praise It.***

Thank you for letting me find so much good here tonight -- and for giving me the chance to praise it.

It's been my honor to be with you.

Thank you very much.

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U.S. Department of Transportation

News:

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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION RODNEY E. SLATER
THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
COMMUNITY BUILD
MARCH 27, 1997
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

In 1995, when President Clinton came to this wonderful place of learning on Martin Luther King's birthday, he said he liked being here because all of you have proved that you can change your lives. And if you can do it, we can change America.

I'm here, to ask all of you to help me change something that many parents are not doing as well as we ought to in America. We need every child properly buckled up in the back of the automobile.

Because of California's tough laws and enforcement efforts, parents pay better attention to this here than anywhere. Almost 90 percent of your kids are buckled up -- that's one of the best rates in the country.

But -- here's the problem -- almost 90 percent are buckled wrong.

Maybe the seat is not anchored tight enough, or the child isn't strapped into the seat tight enough.

Maybe you're in a rush to get here in the morning, and your child is like mine -- not cooperating; or maybe you share cars and the seat is in the other car; and you think I'll just be driving a short distance and I'll buckle the little one up, without the booster.

That is not safe enough. We can do better.

When the child is the age of these kids, it's not the child's responsibility. Buckling is the responsibility of you, and me, and every mom and dad in this country.

- more -

Help me educate young parents across Los Angeles to use child safety seats correctly, to take a class like you just took, and to always buckle our children in the back of automobiles.

I know if we all mobilize our efforts, every day in every way, we can do better for our children, and make California a model of safety for our nation.

Thank you.

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