

conscience. His death marks the passing of a great public servant, and it reminds us that America could use many more like him today.

NEW MEXICO'S CUARTO-CENTENARIO CELEBRATION

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to speak briefly about a very special anniversary this year in New Mexico, and to share a message from President Clinton to everyone celebrating the state's Cuartocentenario.

The date July 1, 1998, marks 400 years since a small group of Spanish pioneers ventured north from Mexico, up the Rio Grande Valley and settled in what is now North-Central New Mexico. The settlers, led by Don Juan de Onate, established a small mission at the confluence of the Rio Chama and the Rio Grande and next to an Indian Pueblo the inhabitants called "Ohke". The Spanish settlers named their mission San Gabriel de los Espanoles.

This year is not just about recognizing these early Spanish settlements, but about celebrating the Hispanic people themselves and the many contributions they have made to the history of this continent and this country over the last 400 years. Indeed, we can point to all aspects of American culture, from literature to sports, and identify many Hispanic individuals who have made significant contributions.

I look forward to celebrating this anniversary and the Hispanic culture throughout this year in New Mexico. I ask that a copy of President Clinton's message to all who are celebrating this historic occasion be printed in the RECORD.

The message follows:

THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, February 24, 1998.

Warm greetings to everyone celebrating New Mexico's Cuartocentenario.

In 1598, when Juan de Onate led a band of soldiers and Franciscan priests to the land we now know as New Mexico, few could have foreseen the impact of their expedition. The chain of events that would ultimately lead to statehood for New Mexico in 1912 had begun and would change our country forever.

This year's celebration of the 400th anniversary of New Mexico reminds us all of the long and rich history of this beautiful place. Today's New Mexicans live with that history. The state's original peoples, who are represented by 21 pueblos and tribes ranging from Apache to Zuni, would consider four centuries a blink in time, for their ancestors arrived more than 10,000 years ago. And the remains of earlier civilizations can still be seen in New Mexico.

Our 47th state is a fascinating mixture of old and new, deserts and forests, mountains and valleys, small towns and urban centers, cattle ranches and microprocessor plants, scientists, artists, and farmers. While taking pride in their colorful past, New Mexicans also look to the future with vision and confidence. With a strong dedication to quality education and a clean environment, with thriving agriculture, expanding industry, and a growing, ethnically diverse population, New Mexico is approaching the 21st century with energy and enthusiasm. This milestone anniversary offers a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the extraordinary achievements

of New Mexico's people, remembering their accomplishments in the past and celebrating the promise of the future.

Best wishes to all for a memorable celebration.

BILL CLINTON.

INTERMODAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY ACT OF 1997

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of S. 1173.

The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1173) to authorize funds for the construction of highways, for highway safety programs, and for mass transit programs, and for other purposes.

The Senate resumed consideration of the bill with a modified committee amendment in the nature of a substitute (Amendment No. 1676).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, this as you know is the so-called surface transportation legislation, sometimes called the highway bill, sometimes called ISTEA II. We are ready to do business here. Anybody who has amendments I hope will come over and present them. We are ready to take them up. There is no waiting. There is plenty of opportunity. So I hope those within listening distance will heed this very kind invitation to please report for duty.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that further proceedings under the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. GRAMM. Let me ask Senator CHAFEE a question. Did Senator CHAFEE want to outline the agreement we have reached?

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I wanted to come to the floor this afternoon to talk about an agreement that has been reached with regard to the highway bill, to talk about where we are and what the highway bill is going to look like, and, obviously as each of us will do, I want to talk about the impact on my own State of this very important agreement.

Let me give people a little history to sort of define how we came to the moment of reaching this agreement. First of all, last year in the tax bill I offered

an amendment to take the 4.3-cent-per-gallon tax on gasoline that had, under the 1991 budget agreement, gone into general revenue and been spent. It was the first tax on gasoline since we had the Highway Trust Fund that went to general Government. What my amendment in the tax bill last year did was it took that 4.3-cent-per-gallon tax on gasoline and took the money away from general revenue and put it back into the trust fund where it belonged.

All over America, when Americans go to the gas pump and put that nozzle into their tank and pump gas, right on the gasoline pump it says there is bad news and there is good news. The bad news is that roughly a third of the price of a gallon of gasoline is taxes; the good news is that the money goes to build roads. The only problem is, prior to today the good news was not true. Between 25 cents and 30 cents out of every dollar of gasoline taxes was being siphoned off to spend on things other than roads. We have reached an agreement today that will, over the next 6 years, end that process. We have reached an agreement today that will guarantee that over the next 6 years every penny collected in the 4.3-cent-per-gallon tax on gasoline will go to build roads and only to build roads. What that will mean is that we will raise the total level of spending in the bill that is before the Senate, in terms of committed obligations, by \$26 billion.

For people who are trying to figure out what that means to them and their State, let me give you a couple of numbers. That will mean that over this 6-year highway bill, we will spend on roads roughly 45 percent more than we spent in ISTEA, our previous highway bill. For my State, because of the leadership of the chairman of this committee, Senator CHAFEE, in trying to eliminate the unfairness to donor States, when you combine the new funds that are available with the fact that under the CHAFEE bill donor States will receive a minimum of 91 cents out of every dollar they send to Washington in gasoline tax back to their States, what it will mean is that my State will, under the new bill, receive 54 percent more funding than it received under the last bill.

That, in Texas, will mean an opportunity to rebuild our crumbling highway system. We have 31,000 miles of substandard highways. We have tens of thousands of substandard bridges. That 54 percent increase in funding for Texas will mean our ability to improve our highways. It will mean that thousands of people who are dying because of poor roads won't die. It will mean an improved infrastructure that will mean more jobs, more growth, more opportunity all over the country. It will mean that people will spend less time in traffic and, obviously, have the opportunity to spend more time at work or more time with their families or more time doing what they choose to do.