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SIGNED BY ANNE V. HIGGINS

**Folder Title:** AVH-444 – 55 Mile Per Hour Speed Limit

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*Last Updated: 05/20/2024*

RE: 55-Mile-Per-Hour-Speed-Limit

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTONLOCAL-1  
(P/C)

May 15, 1987 (XXX444)

Dear Mr. Ortega:

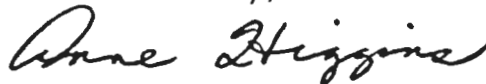
On behalf of President Reagan, thank you for your message regarding the 55-mile-per-hour speed limit.

As I'm sure you know, legislation permitting the States to raise the speed limit on rural interstates to 65 miles per hour was adopted over the President's veto on April 2. The President vetoed the bill on largely fiscal grounds, and he made clear that he favored the bill's speed limit provision, calling it "long past due." He has always believed that speed limits and other traffic regulations should be set by State and local governments in ways consistent with safety requirements. The President believes that State and local authorities are best able to determine appropriate traffic regulations within their jurisdictions. He is pleased that under this legislation, despite its other flaws, States will have the freedom to set higher speed limits in designated rural areas.

A number of States have already taken action in this area, and the appropriate course of action for citizens still concerned about this issue is to contact their State officials. I hope you find this information helpful.

With the President's best wishes,

Sincerely,



Anne Higgins  
Special Assistant to the President  
and Director of Correspondence

(5/15/87)

Mr. Michael A. Ortega  
Evening Supervisor  
Correspondence Analysis Section  
Room 60  
Old Executive Office Building  
Washington, DC 20500

AVH/CAD/AVH

OFFICE OF PRESIDENTIAL CORRESPONDENCE  
REQUEST FOR CLEARANCE - COMMENTS



TO: Judy Johnston/OPD

DATE DUE:  
May 13, 1987

TYPE OF RESPONSE: ☐ Multiple Mailing ☒ Form Reply ☐ One-Time Reply

SUBJECT:  
55-mile-per-hour speed limit

REQUESTED BY/ADDRESSED TO:  
General Public

BACKGROUND:  
Draft responds to individuals who write concerning the 55-mile-per-hour speed limit. White House response reiterates the President's reasons for vetoing the Highway bill as well as his beliefs that speed limits and local traffic regulations are best set by State and local governments.

SIGNATURE: *Robert Luebke*

DATE:  
May 8, 1987

Robert Luebke  
Presidential Messages  
Old Executive Office Building  
Room 94  
(202) 456-7610

Your Recommendation/Comments:

*See Warner for review*  
*No objection to wording JJ*  
*Jim Warner*  
*5/13/87*

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

CRD/AVM

pt

AVH444.870507

On behalf of President Reagan, thank you for your message regarding the 55-mile-per-hour speed limit.

As I'm sure you know, legislation permitting the States to raise the speed limit on rural interstates to 65 miles per hour was adopted over the President's veto on April 3<sup>2</sup>. The President vetoed the bill on largely fiscal grounds, and he made clear that he favored the bill's speed limit provision, calling it "long past due". He has always believed that speed limits and other traffic regulations should be set by State and local governments in ways consistent with safety requirements. The President believes that State and local authorities are best able to determine appropriate traffic regulations within their jurisdictions. He is pleased that under this legislation, despite its other flaws, States will have the freedom to set higher speed limits in designated rural areas.

A number of States have already taken action in this area, and the appropriate course of action for citizens still concerned about this issue is to contact their State officials. I hope you find this information helpful.

With the President's best wishes,

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

LOCAL-1  
(P/C)

March 12, 1987 (XXX444)

Dear Mr. Ortega:

On behalf of President Reagan, thank you for your message regarding the 55-mile-per-hour speed limit.

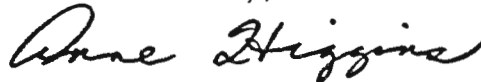
The President believes, as he has said in the past, that speed limits and other traffic regulations should be set by State and local governments in ways consistent with safety requirements. The President believes that State and local authorities are best able to determine appropriate traffic regulations within their jurisdictions.

On February 3, the U.S. Senate adopted an amendment to pending highway legislation that would permit the States to raise the speed limit on rural interstates to 65 miles per hour. This issue has not yet been addressed in the House of Representatives. Should the amendment reach the President's desk as part of an otherwise acceptable bill, he will not hesitate to sign it into law.

I hope you find this information helpful.

With the President's best wishes,

Sincerely,



Anne Higgins  
Special Assistant to the President  
and Director of Correspondence

(3/12/87)

Mr. Michael A. Ortega  
Evening Supervisor  
Correspondence Analysis Section  
Room 60  
Old Executive Office Building  
Washington, DC 20500

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

AVH/COR *[initials]*  
Clen 2 OPD ASAP

February 10, 1987

AVH444

On behalf of President Reagan, thank you for your message regarding the 55-mile-per-hour speed limit.

The President believes, as he has said in the past, that speed limits and other traffic regulations should be set by State and local governments in ways consistent with safety requirements. The President believes that State and local authorities are best able to determine appropriate traffic regulations within their jurisdictions.

On February 3, the U.S. Senate adopted an amendment to pending highway legislation that would permit the States to raise the speed limit on rural interstates to 65 miles per hour. This issue has not yet been addressed in the House of Representatives. Should the amendment reach the President's desk as part of an otherwise acceptable bill, he will not hesitate to sign it into law.

I hope you find this information helpful.

With the President's best wishes,



OFFICE OF PRESIDENTIAL CORRESPONDENCE  
REQUEST FOR CLEARANCE - COMMENTS

TO: Judith Johnston/ OPD

DATE DUE:  
ASAP

TYPE OF RESPONSE: ☐ Multiple Mailing ☒ Form Reply ☐ One-Time Reply

SUBJECT:  
55 mph speed limit

REQUESTED BY/ADDRESSED TO:  
General Public

BACKGROUND:

Draft responds to individuals who write the President concerning the 55 mph speed limit. The draft reiterates his preference for local control in these matters and states should Congress take appropriate action, he would not hesitate to sign acceptable legislation.

SIGNATURE:

*Robert Luebke*

DATE:

*2-12-87 3-5-87*

Robert Luebke

Presidential Messages  
Old Executive Office Building  
Room 94  
(202) 456-7610

Your Recommendation/Comments:

*JIM Warner for review  
OK 3/7*  
*This is a clear and accurate  
statement of Admin. position on 55 mph. I approve —*  
*Jim Warner*  
*3/9/87*

SIGNATURE:

DATE:



Pacific Rim nations are enrolled in universities here in the U.S.

Fortunately, the University of California has created its first new professional school in two decades to cope with this challenge—the School of Pacific Rim Studies at U.C. San Diego. It already has ten times more applicants than it can admit. This school and others like it must succeed if we are to avoid further isolation in the community of nations.

### III. EMPOWERING THE NATION

Ultimately, an educated citizenry strengthens the bonds of democracy, community and citizenship. A general education that develops critical thinking and an understanding of our history, values and institutions will raise the quality of all our lives.

These benefits and values are not self-generating. The late Senator Robert F. Kennedy said:

"Since the days of Greece and Rome, when the word 'citizens' was a title of honor, we have often seen more emphasis put on the rights of citizenship than on its responsibilities. And today, as never before in the free world, responsibility is the greatest of freedom's privileges."

### SPECIFIC CHALLENGES

To ensure a nation that is democratic, competitive and just, our commitment must be more than rhetorical—more, even, than financial. These goals will only be reached through a new sense of national unity and purpose—a true patriotism—resolving that:

No American will be denied education for lack of money. But every college student should participate in a national program of community service.

Parents will see meaningful reforms revitalize the system of learning in America's classrooms. But they must make their homes every bit as dedicated to successful learning—from turning off the television to helping with homework.

Training will be as available to every adult as public schools are available to his or her child. But those receiving trade adjustment assistance will be required to participate in a training or literacy program.

Business will see improvements in the skills and productivity of their workers. But firms must participate in training programs, provide notification and training referrals when plants close and work more closely with local schools and governments in planning curricula and providing instructional resources.

Teachers must receive the training, salary and community support they deserve. They must be esteemed by our society. But all teachers, old hands and new hires, must meet peer-created competency standards.

The instructors of our children will receive more control over their classrooms, with less paperwork and a greater role in shaping curricula. And they must stand ready to accept and encourage change and experimentation.

Every American will be given a chance to learn to read. But whether a welfare recipient, a prisoner or a student in the ghetto, participation in a literacy program must be expected.

These are the challenges that must be issued to create national unity and empower our people, our economy and our nation for the future.

### CONCLUSION

A nation that will educate its people is a nation bound for greatness. Our destiny today is—as it was in Jefferson's day—inseparable from education, the enlightenment of the human mind and spirit.

Then, education was the avenue to an informed electorate. Today, in addition, it is

the pathway to economic revitalization and opportunity for the future.

We cannot care for the weak in body and the poor in spirit without the resources provided by those who are strong. And we cannot make the strong resourceful without educating, training and preparing them for the new tasks of today and tomorrow.

We cannot harness the wonders of science to improve human well-being without the pursuit of knowledge. We cannot be truly strong without intelligent, skilled and informed defenders.

A nation's future is shaped in its schools and halls of learning. When we neglect investment in our youth, we neglect investment in our future.

Instead, let us recreate our nation as a citadel of information and of knowledge—a beacon to those at home and around the world who seek liberty through learning and justice through education.

Even as we maintain the strength of our arms in the defense of democracy, let us resolve to increase the strength of our minds in the pursuit of democracy's values—life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

For, as Jefferson so strongly believed, enlightenment and education are the strongest fortress around democratic liberties. Tyranny over the mind and spirit precedes tyranny over the person and property.

The test of our dedication to our country—to our most basic sense of patriotism—is not our willingness to sacrifice our lives, though if necessary we will do so in defense of our nation. The test of genuine patriotism today is our willingness to invest our personal and national treasure in the skills and talents of our young people, the future of our nation.

I believe America will meet this test. Not simply because we have no other choice, but because it has always been in our national character.

No greater tribute could be paid to the generation that founded this nation—or to the generations that will lead it into its third century—than the adoption of a new declaration of independence; a declaration of freedom from ignorance and economic domination, and a new dedication to the proposition that the flame of democracy burns brightest in a free and educated human mind.

### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further morning business? If not, morning business is closed.

### SURFACE TRANSPORTATION AND UNIFORM RELOCATION ASSISTANCE ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 11 a.m. having arrived, the Senate will now resume consideration of S. 387, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 387) to authorize appropriations for certain highways in accordance with Title 23, United States Code, and for other purposes.

The Senate resumed consideration of the bill.

Pending.

Symms amendment No. 11, to change the national maximum speed limit law.

Mr. HUMPHREY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. HUMPHREY. Mr. President, I see the author of the amendment is here so I shall not proceed.

Mr. SYMMS. Mr. President, are we under controlled time at this point?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct. Time on this amendment shall be limited to 1 hour, to be equally divided under the control of the Senator from Idaho [Mr. SYMMS] and the Senator from New York [Mr. MOYNIHAN], with the Senator from Missouri [Mr. DANFORTH] to have 10 minutes of the time of the Senator from New York.

Mr. SYMMS. I thank the distinguished Presiding Officer.

I yield at this time 5 minutes to the distinguished Senator from New Hampshire [Mr. HUMPHREY] who has been one of the strongest supporters of this amendment. I appreciate his support and look forward to what he has to say about the amendment.

### AMENDMENT NO. 11

Mr. HUMPHREY. Mr. President, let me ask my colleague from Idaho, by what vote did the Senate approve this amendment last year?

Mr. SYMMS. I say to my good friend, the distinguished Senator from New Hampshire, that it was, I believe, 58 to 38. It was a 20-vote margin.

Mr. HUMPHREY. Is this the identical wording?

Mr. SYMMS. This is the identical amendment. We hope to get a good vote this time.

Mr. HUMPHREY. Mr. President, 58 is a substantial number of votes on an issue that is as controversial as this and on which some powerful organizations have spoken and brought to bear pressures in the way of lobbying. 58 Senators cannot be wrong in every respect. I think that vote last year was and I hope the vote this year will be an expression of the sentiment that we ought to return to the States the power that we took from them in 1973, or thereabouts to set their own speed limits on interstate highways. Of course, in this amendment pending, States would be given the flexibility to raise that limit to as high as 65. So it is not as though we were giving them carte blanche.

Every time we try to tailor one suit here, in Washington, to fit all 50 States, inevitably, it fits poorly in many of those States, if not in a majority. That is certainly the case here. Probably there is no better example of this truth than the 55-mile-per-hour speed limit presently in place.

Does any Senator here really believe that it makes sense to restrict motorists—to restrict the State of Nevada, for example, and force it to keep the speed limit at 55? Does any Senator really believe that? Surely not.

It seems to me that what we are seeing here among some of the opponents is the mentality that Washington knows best, that we are going to



tell the State what to do, that all States should have the same standards, all States should have the same speed limits. That simply does not make sense. It is illogical. It is a sort of emotional thing, but it is not a logical thing. If the State of New York or the State of Ohio or Illinois—just to pick random samples—wishes to keep its speed limit at 55, fine, let them keep it at 55. But we should not require other States, where it does not make sense, to keep their speed limit at 55, to continue this nonsense.

So, Mr. President, I urge my colleagues, let us just loosen the grip a little bit. If ever there was a case for it, this is it. Let the States decide, based upon topography, based upon condition of roads, based upon traffic density, based upon good sense. Let the States decide. Let us, at least in this tiny way, return some of the power which is presently concentrated in Washington.

Mr. President, since 1974, the national speed limit has violated States rights, distorted highway law enforcement priorities and paved over common sense. It is an irrational policy that Americans can do without.

The pending amendment, which would allow States to increase speed limits to 65 miles per hour on rural interstate highways, is a move in the right direction. Though Americans generally profess support for the national speed limit, their behavior strongly indicates otherwise. According to a study by the Transportation Research Board, the average speed of motorists on rural interstates has increased from just over 57 miles per hour in 1974 to 59.1 miles per hour in 1983.

The Senate should act to end this highway hypocrisy. Briefly, let me suggest three important reasons:

First, common sense suggests that States should set the speed limits on their own roads, because the States know their roads the best. It is a matter of fact, as I said, that every time Washington tries to tailor one suit for all States, invariably it is too tight in some places. There is no better example than "55." It simply does not fit our vast expanses of lightly traveled interstates, whether they are in the desert Southwest or in rural New England.

Second, by freeing the States from this Federal leash, they will be better able to use their enforcement resources. Presently, States are forced to spend very limited public safety resources to enforce an unreasonable speed limit. The cost of such enforcement is more than \$200 million annually. States which do not achieve certain levels of compliance are subject to sanctions, including the withholding of Federal highway funds.

Mr. President, imagine if half of the police officers now committed to speed limit enforcement were instead deployed to catch drunk drivers. Further, disrespect for an unreasonable

speed limit leads to disrespect for other laws. As a State highway official said last year:

The growing noncompliance problem with the 55 mph speed limit is encouraging drivers to additionally ignore other traffic laws, many of which have a considerably more direct and larger impact on highway safety than does the 55 mph law.

The third reason to enact this legislation is common sense. Senators will recall the situation before 1974, when the speed limit was 70 miles per hour. Based on that experience, 65 miles per hour is a safe and reasonable speed for rural segments of interstate highways.

Higher speed limits on rural segments will not compromise highway safety. Over the past several years, highway speeds have been increasing while traffic fatalities have decreased. For example, in 1982, there was a 12.7-percent decrease in traffic deaths even though average highway speeds rose to 59 miles per hour from 57.8 miles per hour—or 2 percent—over the previous year.

In addition, permitting States to increase the speed limits on their rural interstates would save as much as 445 million man-hours annually. Those who travel our highways for a living, such as salesmen and truckers, attest to the enormous economic benefits of raising the speed limit.

In fact, these economic costs actually outweigh any fuel savings. According to the Transportation Research Board, increasing the speed limits on rural interstate highways would increase fuel consumption by about 0.18 percent of the national total. At \$13 per barrel, that amounts to a value of about \$200 million. Clearly, the value of the work hours gained—445 million man-hours—is far in excess of the value of fuel savings. If we were to assign the minimum wage, \$3.65, then the value of work hours that would be gained through increasing the speed limit is more than \$1.5 billion. So, economically the national speed limit just does not make sense.

Mr. President, the hypocrisy of the national speed limit paves over States rights, distorts enforcement priorities and violates common sense. Let us put this to an end. I urge support for the pending amendment.

Mr. SYMMS. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator from New Hampshire for his support. I might just say that the next Senator, Senator HECHT of Nevada, who is seeking recognition to speak on this amendment accompanied me when we went to the White House last summer to visit President Reagan on this subject. The Senator from Nevada was the original sponsor of a bill which would return the flexibility to go to 65 on all interstate highways. This amendment that we are discussing today is a modification of the Senator's amendment which says on all rural interstate highways, so my colleagues realize what we are talking about.

The Senator and I had a very interesting meeting with the President at the White House. I think his exact quote was, "Well, boys, I appreciate what you are trying to do, but I think you should go one step further and return the entire authority on speed limits back to the States." I think if we could accomplish that in the Senate, that is what we would like to do.

Needless to say, I appreciate the support the Senator from Nevada has given to this issue because of the constituency—he represents in Nevada. It is an important thing to these people. He has always been steadfast to make the case that in Nevada, there are endless miles of roads where you may drive as far as 20 miles—I have heard the good Senator say that "many times—without meeting another car, on a straight road. We hope that someday, Nevada will return to its rightful position to have the authority to set its own speed limits. For now, this will be a big step.

I thank the Senator from Nevada for his excellent work on this issue and I yield him now 6 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada [Mr. HECHT] is recognized for 6 minutes.

Mr. HECHT. I thank the Chair.

I understand the distinguished Senator from Wyoming [Mr. SIMPSON] would like to speak first.

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. President, I would appreciate that very much, if I could do that, for 5 minutes.

Mr. SYMMS. Mr. President, I yield to the distinguished minority whip 5 minutes and we shall resume with Senator HECHT following him.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SIMPSON. I thank the good Senator from Nevada. I appreciate his courtesy very much and I also thank Senator SYMMS.

Mr. President, this is a fascinating issue. It is a very complex one I think, for those of us who try to balance State and Federal interests in so many areas. This is one we grapple with constantly. This is one of the most emotional ones we get.

This is not always just a Western issue. This, indeed, is a U.S. issue although those stretches of 20 miles in Nevada are sometimes 40 miles in Wyoming.

I commend Senator HECHT and Senator SYMMS for what they are trying to do. They have really taken hold on this issue and made it into a very thoughtful amendment. We are talking about rural interstates. That is very different from what we see in the rest of the United States.

We have all heard the arguments: 55 saves lives, saves fuel consumption; all those things. There are valid arguments on both sides: States rights, sovereignty, those types of things, too.



Does it save fuel? Does it save lives? I think that it has, perhaps, been a valid argument certainly in fuel consumption and saving of lives. But where it does not fit at all is to recognize the diversity of the United States of America. I have a home State that is 6,010 miles of road posted at 55 miles an hour and a population of about 500,000 people. That is an area of nearly 100,000 square miles. Most other States have fewer miles of roadway and tremendously higher population. Massachusetts, for example, in this curious situation, has 789 miles of highway posted at 55 and a population of 5.8 million. So it is obviously going to cost Wyoming far more per capita to have the same effective level of traffic law enforcement as Massachusetts.

I think it was also heavy handed for the recent proposal to penalize Arizona when all you have to do is get on this beltway and see it out here. I have described it as a kind of a giant circulating suction pump. You get on there and the three trailers will get you or the two trailers, in and out; whether you are in the inner loop or the outer loop, you are in the loop-the-loop most of the time on the beltway.

No one seems to pay that much attention to speeding out here; then they direct their attention back to the West and Southwest.

Mr. SYMMS. If the Senator will yield, I would like to tell the Senator that this morning, 55 was not the problem. It was almost the reverse on the beltway. It took me over 2 hours to get here. That is about 3 miles an hour.

Mr. SIMPSON. Indeed that is true. The congestion of the after snows that paralyzed the Nation's capital.

I just want to say that you are making a thoughtful approach. This is a rural highway interstate amendment. The States will know where those are, which ones they will use—who would know that better?—which should be directed at 55 or 65. Keep the limits here, but at least we should not have this scoffing at the law. A child now sits in the back seat and watches his old man drive and put it at 62 miles per hour, because that is where you can "get by." They will not get you if you go 62. It happens to be that the speed limit is 55. That is a pretty poor law. We had one like that years ago with regard to booze, but if people just have the law and break it, what does that prove? This one is broken daily by everybody. In fact, I was fascinated by a little study—I thought it was a remarkable social study—of four young men at Michigan University who got in four cars and drove in a solid line filling all lanes at 55. People went goofy. They came around them. They tried to go through them. They hit them from behind. They said, "All we are doing is going 55, all of us in one phalanx." That was surely a social study. We certainly want to find out more about it.

It probably did not cost anything either. We should look at the results of it.

But, anyway, there it is. This is an appropriate response. It leaves it to the States. I think it is very important that we do that. These long stretches of highway are heavily traveled by all of the people in the United States. We have I-90, I-25, I-80 in my State, and those are for the people of the United States. So I think this is a very acceptable compromise, very well crafted, and this recognizes the unique characteristics of the various States. I commend all of those on both sides of the aisle who have been involved in this compromise, and I thank the Senator very much.

Mr. SYMMS. Mr. President, I yield 6 minutes to the distinguished Senator from Nevada.

Mr. HECHT. Thank you very much Mr. President. I thank the distinguished Senator from Wyoming for his kind remarks and the distinguished Senator from Idaho for his very complimentary remarks and reminding this body about our visit with the President of the United States last year. If you took our three States—Wyoming, Idaho, and Nevada—and combined the area—we would be one of the major countries of the world and yet we have a very, very sparse population. So I feel that the Senator understands the problem very much.

I rise in support of the Symms amendment to modify the 55-mile-per-hour speed limit law. Just last Fall, Mr. President, the Senate overwhelmingly approved this exact same amendment to the Highway Reauthorization bill, allowing our States the right to raise the speed limit up to 65-miles-per-hour on rural interstates. While I would have preferred to go one step further and allow the speed to be raised on all highways, as I attempted to do last year in an amendment I offered to this same bill and in legislation I have offered over the past few years, this is a good amendment and one I believe the Senate should once again approve.

Mr. President, when the 55-mile-per-hour law was passed, the United States was experiencing a period of national crisis. There is no question that upon enactment of 55, highway fatalities decreased 15 percent. But it is an equally established fact that over the life of 55, motorists have continually driven faster, and contrary to the speed kills argument, highway fatality rates have actually declined. In fact, for numerous reasons, America's fatality rate is lower today than the period immediately following enactment of 55.

The statistics are clear, Mr. President, but one other reason for changing the 55-mile-per-hour law, and I think the most important is the simple matter of States rights. With 55 on the books, the Federal Government is again meddling into the private lives of each and every one of us. Washing-

ton, is again telling us what we can, and cannot, do and, most distressing, Mr. President, the Federal Government threatens daily to take away highway funding if States fail to enforce 55. In an era of placing premier emphasis on returning Government back to the people, Congress continues to maintain a law that smacks of unneeded intrusion into our daily lives. This must be changed.

Mr. President, there has been much written and said about whether or not we should change the 55-mile-per-hour law. I think there is no question we should, and it is obvious that most Americans think so too. Why then should we not bring back some commonsense and reality to the issue? Why should we not return this job back to our States? And, why must the Federal Government remain in the business of telling Americans how they should or should not drive?

Mr. President, the Symms amendment merely allows our States the right to raise the speed limit up to 65-mile-per-hour on rural interstates. If the Governor of New Jersey or Ohio or even Nevada feels motorists in his or her State should drive 55, under this amendment, they would have the right to maintain the speed limit at 55. All we are asking is that if a State so choose it be given the right to raise speed limits up to 65 on interstates outside urban areas which are defined as 50,000 people or more. It's as simple as that.

Mr. President, compliance figures show that over 75 percent of all drivers today exceed the 55-mile-per-hour limit. Obviously, something must be changed to bring reality and common sense back to this issue. The time has come to change the 55-mile-per-hour speed limit law, Mr. President, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the Symms amendment.

Mr. SYMMS. Mr. President, how much time do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 14 minutes remaining.

Mr. SYMMS. I thank the distinguished Presiding Officer and I thank the distinguished Senator from Nevada. I thank him for his tireless support on this issue. Because of his efforts we could not have come as far as we have.

Mr. President, our next speaker in favor of this amendment is the distinguished Senator from Texas. He has long been an advocate of this proposal. He introduced legislation on it. He was a great deal of help. This cartoon by Trobr—and I do not know which newspaper this came from—has a picture, I would say to the distinguished Presiding Officer, of the devil and Oliver T. Boggle. As the devil is giving him his sentence, he says, "Oliver T. Boggle, you have sinned. You are condemned to drive between Amarillo and Barstow at the national speed limit." I think the Senator from Texas can really appreciate, with the wide expanses of

west Texas, how long it takes to get places. I know that is one of the reasons he is a strong advocate of this proposal.

Mr. President, in this country there has been no law since prohibition that has been broken and ridiculed more than the 55-mile-per-hour speed limit.

People west of the Mississippi absolutely think that the people east of the Mississippi, in particular inside the Washington beltway, who passed this law completely lost their senses if they expected them to drive at that speed.

At this time I yield 8 minutes to the distinguished Senator from Texas [Mr. GRAMM].

Mr. GRAMM. I thank the distinguished Senator from Idaho. I do not know the devil personally, but I would doubt that even he would be so cruel, unless the sin of the individual in that cartoon were great, to impose such a sentence.

Mr. President, in 1974, we were under price controls. We had a tremendous shortage of oil. People were waiting in lines at the service station to get gasoline. We faced national security problems, and under the age-old practice of extraordinary steps being taken to deal with extraordinarily difficult problems, the President signed into law, in 1974, a preemption of the traditional right of the State to set speed limits within its borders and set a maximum speed limit of 55 miles an hour.

I submit today that no one can stand on the floor of the Senate and argue that we face anything approaching the crisis that existed in 1974. In fact, the whole logic for this extraordinary step in preempting the rights of the States to set their speed limits has long ago passed.

Our filling stations are brimming with gasoline. Prices have declined dramatically in the last year. There is no basis whatsoever to claim that a national emergency exists, especially one of the magnitude that would induce us to trample on the rights of States to do something so basic and so fundamental as to set their own speed limits.

So the first point I would like to make today is that the logic of this has long ago passed.

Second there are still two issues that have to be addressed. One is the safety issue—55 miles an hour and the safety that results from it. The second is the fuel economy issue. We are still not indifferent to fuel consumption.

First of all, I would like my colleagues to note that this is a very limited bill. This bill allows States—does not mandate States—to set a maximum speed limit of 65 miles an hour on rural interstates.

What of safety on these rural interstates? I would like my colleagues to take note of the fact that while 20 percent of automobile travel occurs on rural interstates, only 4 percent of auto fatalities occur on rural interstates.

The point I am making is that this is not an area where investing our resources in law enforcement to try to prevent people from driving over 55 miles an hour makes sense. Investing law enforcement resources in congested areas to enforce the 55-mile-an-hour speed limit would do more good than investing those resources in rural areas where the fatality rate is much lower. It is also clearly true that if we spent the same resources trying to keep drunks off the roads in urban areas that we spend in trying to enforce an unrealistic speed limit in rural areas on interstates, a lot more lives would be saved.

This is especially true in view of the fact that most surveys indicate that 80 percent to 90 percent of those who are driving in rural areas are not abiding by the 55-mile-an-hour speed limit now.

What of fuel economy? It is estimated that even if people were complying with the 55 mile an hour limit—and 80 percent to 90 percent of them are not—and we raised the speed limit from 55 to 65, the increase in fuel consumption would be a modest 0.18 percent—less than one-fifth of 1 percent.

I submit to my colleagues, No. 1, that the logic of the 55-mile-an-hour Federal preemption has passed. No. 2, people are not abiding by the 55-mile-an-hour speed limit, and using our law enforcement resources to enforce the limit within our cities to keep the drunk drivers off the roads would save more lives. Finally, the fuel consumption that would be saved if people were to drive at 55, which they are not, and if it were raised to 65, is still 0.18 percent.

Finally, I ask our colleagues from the East to look at the problem we face in the Western part of the United States. Several people have talked about this, but this is a very real problem. If you set out to drive from Fort Worth, TX, to Lubbock at 55 miles an hour, one of two things is going to happen to you. No. 1, you are going to get discouraged and turn back or, No. 2, you are going to get run over by somebody going a lot faster than 55 miles an hour.

We should not have laws that breed contempt for the law. We need to have realistic laws that make common sense, that people will abide by.

This is a modest amendment. If people in any State do not want to drive 65 miles an hour on their rural interstates, they do not have to. This amendment would simply give those States that wish it, such as Texas, the modest ability to raise the speed limit on rural interstates to 65 miles an hour.

The fuel consumption differential is insignificant. There is no safety factor when one takes into account that 80 percent to 90 percent of the people are not now abiding by the law and, in fact, the fatality rate is lower on these roads than on others.

Finally, the logic of preempting the rights of the States to set the speed limit no longer exists.

So I urge my colleagues to adopt this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, I yield 10 minutes to the distinguished senior Senator from Missouri.

Mr. DANFORTH. I thank the Senator from New York.

Mr. President, basically, this is a question of weighing the scales, with time saved on one side of the scale and lives saved on the other side of the scale.

There can be no dispute that the 55-mile-an-hour speed limit has saved lives—a lot of them. There can be no dispute that raising the speed limit from 55 miles an hour will cost lives—a lot of them.

In 1974, when the speed limit was reduced to 55 miles an hour, in the first year, fatalities on the Nation's highways were reduced by 9,100. Ninety-one hundred people less died in 1974 than in 1973. The fatality rate on interstate highways in 1974 dropped 32 percent, and at the same time the fatality rate on roads that were not affected by the reduction in the speed limit to 55 miles an hour remained unchanged.

Therefore, in the first year of the 55-mile speed limit, there was a very, very substantial reduction in highway fatalities. Of course, there is something of a moderation of the dramatic effect of reducing the highway speeds in the first year. That is the case here, because the lives saved have been somewhat less in recent years, but still they are very dramatic.

Presently—right now—it is estimated that the 55-mile-an-hour speed limit is responsible for saving between 2,000 and 4,000 lives a year. Furthermore, the National Safety Council has estimated that the amendment before us, if acted on by the State legislatures, would cost about 600 to 1,000 lives a year.

So, Mr. President, that is what we are dealing with in human lives; that is the effect of this amendment—600 to 1,000 lives a year.

Fifty-five miles an hour saves lives. It also prevents injuries.

The Transportation Research Board, which is a part of the National Academy of Sciences, says that the 55-mile-an-hour speed limit prevents an estimated 65,500 injuries a year.

The American Medical Association estimates that, as a result of the 55-mile-an-hour speed limit, spinal column injuries have been reduced by 60 percent. These are not minor injuries, Mr. President. Spinal column injuries are injuries which usually paralyze the victim.

So we are dealing here with not only hundreds of lives each year, we are dealing with large numbers of very.



very serious crippling, paralyzing injuries.

It almost is an anticlimax to suggest that the 55-mile-an-hour speed limit saves fuel. It does. It saves about 167,000 barrels per day which would translate into the cost of about \$2 billion per year. But it seems to me that money saved and barrels of oil saved is really tiny compared to lives saved and injuries prevented.

But it is tiny compared to lives and injuries; it is very large compared to what is on the other side of this equation, and that is the fact that it has been estimated that if the speed limit were increased from 55 miles an hour to 65 miles an hour that would mean that the motorists of the United States would save on average 1 minute per driver per day.

Now it has been argued that this is a State's rights issue to raise the speed limit on interstate highways, underscore the word "interstate."

Mr. President, there is no constitutional right of the States to regulate interstate commerce. Clearly under the Constitution of the United States, it is the role of Congress to address matters of interstate commerce. Congress has regulated the speed limit. Congress has regulated the length and the weight of trucks on interstate highways. Congress does fund the Interstate Highway System.

The Federal Government provides all kinds of regulations with respect to the construction of automobiles, with respect to their ability to withstand crashes, padded dashboards, flexible steering wheels, and the like. So this is no constitutional question. This is no constitutional right of the States to burden or to regulate interstate commerce.

It is said by advocates of the increase in the speed limit that enforcement of the 55-mile-an-hour speed limit diverts attention of our enforcement personnel, that these people should be enforcing other laws.

In response to that argument, let me simply cite testimony by the assistant superintendent of the Ohio State Patrol before the Senate Commerce Committee in December of last year. The assistant superintendent of the Ohio State Patrol said that in his opinion the single most important thing that we could do in Congress to improve highway safety is to maintain the 55-mile-an-hour speed limit. He said leave it alone, leave it the way it is now and let law enforcement personnel do their jobs.

So that is the expert opinion of maintaining the 55-mile-an-hour speed limit.

Finally, it is said very casually that rural interstates are safer than other highways and than urban interstates. In a number of States, Mr. President, that simply is not true. It is not true in California. It is not true in Colorado. It is not true in Montana. It is not true in Nebraska. It is not true in Utah. In those States, the fatality rate on rural

interstates is two to three times the fatality rate on urban interstates.

Mr. SYMMS. Mr. President, will the Senator yield on this point?

Mr. DANFORTH. I only have 10 minutes. I am about to wrap up, and then I will yield the floor.

Mr. President, in summation, let me say this: Really, the question is balancing time saved versus lives saved and accidents and serious injuries prevented.

In my view that is a very clear choice for us to make. A minute a day really means nothing—600 to 1,000 lives means a great deal each year. Thousands of serious paralyzing injuries means a great deal.

To me, the argument is clear. The argument is strong in favor of maintaining the 55-mile-an-hour speed limit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. SYMMS. Mr. President, I just want to make the observation that the California Highway Patrol, which has done extensive research on the very question my distinguished friend and colleague from Missouri was talking about, has come to the conclusion that more lives could be saved by relaxing the 55-mile-an-hour speed limit on rural interstates than by keeping it. So there is a divided opinion of the experts.

I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished Senator from Oklahoma, Senator NICKLES, who is a primary cosponsor of this and has been a strong advocate on this bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, thank you.

I thank my distinguished colleague, Senator SYMMS from Idaho, for his leadership, and also Senator HECHT from Nevada, for his leadership.

We have been working on this for some time. I hope we will be successful today. I urge them when we go to conference with the House to maintain the Senate's position.

I think it is important that we stress time and time again that we are not talking about mandating or increasing the speed limit from 55 to 65 throughout the States. What we are talking about is giving the States the option at the States' discretion, the States' option, to decide at their level if they desire to increase the speed limit from 55 to 65. It would be their option.

So if the Highway Patrol in the State of Ohio, as indicated by our good friend and colleague from Missouri, feels very strongly that it will be a mistake and it will jeopardize lives, they should make that argument to the State and possibly they will prevail.

I really do not care if my State elects to keep it at 55 or if they elect to increase it to 65.

I think they should make that decision, not have that decision mandated from Washington, DC, with the man-

date clearly stating not only do we tell you you have to have it at 55, but if you exceed it by a certain percentage—and I will make the statement I think almost all States exceed it by that percentage on any given day—then some of the original funds that you have generated will be withheld from you up to 10 percent.

In my State almost \$20 million could be withheld if they happen to check on a particular day.

Again, those are State funds. That 9 cents per gallon comes from constituents or individuals in Oklahoma and from each individual State.

I think it is wrong for the Federal Government to superimpose and say that is our money, when it actually came from those States.

I also think the 55-mile-an-hour speed limit as a general rule creates a disrespect for the law, when we have a majority of the people who are not following it, who are not obeying it, our young people who are learning to drive—and I happen to have a couple of teenagers who are in that age—and they get on the highway and we tell them do not go over 55 miles an hour and they are almost run over. They say, everybody else is doing it.

Again, this is a real disrespect for law. Possibly if we had it at 65, the law would be enforced as it should be. I would hope so.

One final comment: We heard when this was imposed we saved thousands of lives, particularly between 1973 and 1974.

My guess is that you will find that gasoline prices increased substantially between 1973 and 1974, and a lot of people started conserving, started driving less, and that was probably responsible for saving the majority of lives.

Again, let us allow those individual States and those legislatures to make the decisions on what the speed limit should be in their State and not have it mandated by the Federal Government.

I thank the Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. SYMMS. Mr. President, how many minutes do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 37 seconds.

Mr. SYMMS. Mr. President, I have two requests for time.

Mr. BAUCUS. I will be very brief.

Mr. SYMMS. I yield my remaining time to the Senator from Montana, but the Senator from South Dakota asked for time. Will he be able to get time?

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, the national maximum speed law is a law without reason; without flexibility, and above all, without respect.

It is time to change the law.

#### 55 MPH WITHOUT REASON

The 55 mile-per-hour speed limit law was passed in March 1974 during the Arab oil embargo as a temporary fuel conservation measure.

It was then permanently established by Congress in January 1975 because it was perceived to save lives.

Those are good intentions.

But let's be honest about the results. The energy savings was minimal—at best 1 percent, about the same result from proper tire inflation.

And just how responsible has the speed limit been in reducing accidents? Traffic fatalities plummeted the first year by 15.3 percent, but a reduced speed limit was not the only factor:

Weekend and recreational driving, the times most fatal accidents occur, dropped 25 to 30 percent in response to rising fuel costs; 1974 saw a significant increase in seatbelt use for the first time, mostly because seatbelts were required in vehicles.

Saving lives is worthy of a national policy, if indeed it is an effective policy. But the truth of the matter is simply that drunk driving, seatbelts and speed variance affect lives more than a maximum speed limit of 55:

A study contained in the National Academy of Sciences report shows that accident rates are about the same whether the average speed is 55, 65, or even higher.

From one-third to one-half of all highway deaths are believed to be alcohol related.

Using a seatbelt is the single most effective individual action to prevent serious injury in the event of accidents, yet only half the States have a mandatory seatbelt law.

We would save more lives by concentrating on enforcement efforts and seatbelt promotion.

#### FLEXIBILITY

Mr. President, we have over 43,000 miles of interstate highway. About one-fourth of it is rural and three-fourths urban.

It is diverse highway. Variation is great from one State to the next.

New Jersey, for example, has 383 miles of some of the busiest interstate; over 102,000 average daily traffic count, daily vehicle miles per mile.

Montana, on the other hand, has three times the amount of interstate miles and only a tenth of the daily traffic.

I can drive 145 miles from Billings, MT, to Miles City and see fewer cars than driving from my house to the Capitol—that is no exaggeration.

Along that 145 miles are only 19 interchanges—all but one serve communities with less than 1,000 in population. There are very few interruptions in traffic flow along the way.

That stretch of highway was designed and engineered to accommodate a general speed of 70 miles per hour, as was most interstate. It is good interstate.

The point is, there is a lot of variation.

What might be an appropriate restriction in New Jersey may not necessarily make sense in Montana.

Mr. President, you only have to drive the 650 miles from one end of

Montana to the other to realize the sheer stupidity of imposing such an arbitrary speed limit as 55.

Montana is not unique either—there are a lot of highways in other States where 65 miles per hour would be a prudent, safe, and appropriate speed.

But I am not familiar enough with the highways in other States to know which of those interstate stretches are appropriate.

None of us is knowledgeable enough to do that.

So why are we doing it?

#### WITHOUT RESPECT

It's no wonder so few people are obeying the law.

Mr. President, according to one report, more than 70 percent of America's drivers exceed the 55-mile-per-hour speed limit.

Reports are also numerous of widespread manipulation of gathering and reporting compliance data by State jurisdictions fearful of losing their Federal funds. Keeping this law on the books is embarrassing and shameful.

The national maximum speed limit may well be the most widely violated law since prohibition.

#### CONCLUSION

Mr. President, I would personally prefer to simply repeal the national minimum speed limit law and leave the matter to States.

But I recognize if we are to ever change the law, it must be accomplished through bipartisan House and Senate cooperation and compromise.

The bill before us today limits the speed to 65 miles an hour and is only permitted on rural interstate highways.

More importantly, it leaves the question to the States of whether the speed limit should be raised under these conditions. That's a decision the States should be making.

States may decide not to raise the speed, or they may allow a higher speed on only certain stretches of rural interstate according to what is most appropriate in the State.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment and return this matter to the State—where it belongs.

I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, essentially our argument is, we need flexibility.

I can drive on the interstate highway from Billings, MT, to Miles City, MT, about 140 miles, and see fewer cars than I see driving from my home in Washington, DC, to the Capitol.

We need flexibility.

I can tell you, Mr. President, that this body will not regret agreeing to this amendment. It will find it will help our economy and the driving public.

I yield the floor.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, I yield myself at this moment such time as I may require of that time which remains available on this side.

Mr. President, I would like to make a general comment about our debate, and first to express my admiration for

the statements that have been made. They have been moderate, they have been thoughtful and, within the range of the normal technical competence that is available to Members of this body, they have been informed.

On the other hand, I would like to offer the thought that they have not been adequate, and therein lies one of the problems we are dealing with and which will come up later in this debate. The one where we ought to have been most competent has to do with the question of the right of the National Government to establish standards of this kind on the Interstate System.

I must express regret that I have had to learn that there had been Federal proscription here. I had even heard it said that there has been an invasion of States' rights by the imposition of safety standards with respect to speed on the system.

Mr. President, yesterday, as we began this debate, I gave a brief account of the origins of the Interstate Highway System which began in the Roosevelt administration. Robert Moses is the most likely person to have conceived the system. One of the basic and most compelling features was the physical design of the system intended to enhance the safety of vehicles traveling on it to minimize the number of crashes. The divided intersection, the divided lane, overpasses, dividing oncoming traffic, the whole mathematics of curves were devised by Bertram Tallamy of the New York State Department of Transportation with safety in mind, and speed limits is just one further feature. The interstates were designed to handle traffic at certain speed limits. And the Federal Government has put all this into its standards as an interstate and defense highway system.

Is there anyone in this Chamber who will say the United States Government does not have primacy with respect to national defense? And, might I further ask, is there anybody in this Chamber who remembers that this is the Interstate and Defense Highway System? It was proposed by President Eisenhower as a means of moving missiles from one part of the Nation to another. The bridge clearances, the curvatures, the whole design of the system was to accommodate defense requirements. And, please, no more arguments for States' rights, when States' rights is simply the ability to take from the Federal Government the highways and then insist on the rights to use or misuse them.

The second thing I would like to say, Mr. President, is I wish we would by now have learned to show some respect to the complexities and the in-varying multiple causality of highway safety phenomena.

I have heard a distinguished Member of this Senate say: "Consider," he addressed us, "that while 20



percent of the travel of the Interstate System takes place on a certain portion of the system, it has only 4 percent of the fatalities."

I am afraid about 30 years ago, Mr. President, if I may say, in Albany, in the Department of Health at that point, we began to look at statements like that and say, "Your mean to say that on a system that accounted for 20 percent of the mileage, you only had 4 percent of the fatalities?"

That could mean one of several things. It could mean you had many fewer fatalities than would be expected, or it could mean you had many more fatalities than could be expected. Or it could mean you had just the number that would have been predicted by the other things you know about, the relations between design and collisions that produced fatalities. In and of itself, it means nothing. This is a subject that has undergone an entry into scientific method, and statements require evidence.

Now that is the point I would like to come to now and with great seriousness.

Later in the day, the distinguished Senator from Missouri will be offering an amendment to reauthorize the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and require certain actions of it.

Mr. President, it is a scandal that we are here in the Senate debating a matter of genuine consequence, having to do with the regulations of the Federal Government concerning safety, and we have had no word from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

It happens that in the early years of the 1960's in this city, I was involved in an organization, a committee President Kennedy first established, and later in an informal network, in the effort to establish a Federal Traffic Safety Administration which succeeded in its time. And this is the one we are talking about.

It was first headed by William Hadden, Jr., a great physician, a great public health officer, and his associate, Robert Brenner, a superb and dedicated engineer. Had either of those men had this watch, there would be on our desks a valid and comprehensive and lucid record of the data, the research, pro and con. They would have served their purpose.

Instead, we have from this administration and this agency nothing. We have silence.

I have just spoken within the last few minutes to a distinguished Member of this body whose view is that the very considerable and serious mission of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in this administration has come to nothing. They are in contempt of the law.

I use the analogy of the early experience in the Committee on Environment and Public Works, of which I am present here as ranking member and managing this legislation. We also

handle environmental matters. The administration of the Environmental Protection Agency in the early days of the Reagan administration, which came to great grief, came to court actions.

That same kind of contempt continues in place under the administration of Diane Steed. It is shameful that a serious, lifesaving effort, for which many persons devoted their entire careers, finally saw culminate in a valuable Federal institution, has been lost by sheer disdain for the mission.

By golly, we have heard nothing on the Senate floor about the rights of States to let persons behave as they will regardless of the consequences on Federal properties as we have seen by implication by the silence of the administration—the shameless, shameful silence of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in the face of the U.S. Senate seeking to debate this matter. I wish it were not so, Mr. President. I will return to the matter later in the morning.

I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I observe my distinguished colleague has risen, a new Member of the body, and a very welcome Member. May I ask if he wishes to speak, and if so, for how long and on which side?

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I thank the Senator for yielding the floor. I would like to speak for approximately 5 minutes in favor of the Symms amendment.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, the only time remaining is in opposition to the amendment, but in view of the honorable Member's request, I would be happy to yield 5 minutes from our time.

Mr. DASCHLE. I am grateful to the Senator for his generosity. I commend him for the statements that he has just made. I commend the author of the amendment.

I certainly share the point of view of the Senator from New York that this is not a question of whether or not the Federal Government has the right to impose upon the States certain guidelines, and certain regulations. That is indeed a national prerogative with regard to Federal revenues. But I do believe as well that as a government which recognizes the great diversity between a State like New York and a State like South Dakota, between the West and the East, we must recognize that we cannot put a national template across the country expecting those in rural areas to adhere to the same regulatory framework as those in urban areas given an entirely different set of circumstances. I think that is what we face here. Certainly the question of safety is at stake, but clearly it is also a question of recognizing those vast differences as we do in so many other elements of law, whether it is in health care, whether it is in agriculture, or whether it is in a broad range of Federal policymaking responsibilities. There is a difference. And the

differences exists in transportation, too.

This issue tends to be one of rural versus urban and the perspectives that we both hold. Fundamentally as a rural versus urban question, it is largely one of practicality. The fact of the matter is that in vast Western areas, when air travel reaches speeds in excess of 600 miles an hour traversing Western lands as we do on a routine basis there is little practicality to a speed limit of 55. As a result, it is not being adhered to by the vast percentage of those people living in rural areas today.

There are many studies relating to the relative definition of a rural area. There are those who argue that the relative merits of varying speeds according to population density ought to be considered. And there are those who argue that in rural areas, speed is actually a negligible factor, especially on interstate highways. The argument often proposed is that should the speed limit be raised, as is now being proposed, it will not be 65 miles an hour but speeds will soon exceed 70 or 80. There is no evidence at all to suggest such a prediction.

Oftentimes in this country, people are urged to vote with their feet. I submit that when it comes to the speed laws in this country, people are voting not only with their feet, but with their automobiles, and with their trucks and their vans. They are voting that the speed limits should not be adhered to.

The law is not even being enforced across the board in equal fashion. And speed laws fail to recognize the disparity which exists among South Dakota, New York, or New Jersey. Nor do they recognize the need for greater sensitivity and greater practicality in applying laws as they now exist. As a result, American drivers are voting to change. They ask that we be practical. They are asking us to change.

These practical problems ought to be considered. Obedience to the laws and the credibility factor in Federal policymaking are long lost when we fail to recognize the differences which exist in this vast Nation, and the need to reflect those differences in this highway bill. For that reason, I certainly urge the support of this amendment recognizing fully our need to ensure national responsibility when it comes to overall guidelines and regulations with safety and with transportation.

I thank the Senator for yielding the floor as generously as he has this morning.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, may I express to our distinguished new colleague my appreciation for the thoughtfulness and the care with which his statement was drafted.

I would only like to point out as regards the general perception that



surely this is an Eastern-Western disparity—that levels of concern in the West are greater but not necessarily urban-rural. The State of New York has the sixth largest rural population in the Nation, considerably larger than most States that are rural, and our roads through rural areas are not necessarily flat, but they are nonetheless genuine countryside.

Mr. President, might I ask how much time remains in opposition?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Four minutes.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. I will not try the patience of our congenial Presiding Officer more than that. I would simply like to make two points, Mr. President, both relevant.

The first is that we do have research in this field. The Transportation Research Board of the National Research Council has published a report "55: A Decade Of Experience." A learned committee was established to carry out the study. The chairman was Prof. Alan Altshuler, professor of political science at New York University, and the findings are really quite persuasive. We have seen as a consequence of the 55-mile-an-hour limit that there is quite an unprecedented decline in motor vehicle fatalities. The only previous recorded experience came around World War II when there was great decline in motor vehicle transport.

But I say once again that we would not be in this situation were it not for a shameless and shameful dereliction of duty by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration which stands mute with respect to the discharge of its duties by this body. Had we only one piece of paper from the Administrator, Ms. Steed, we would be clearly able to legislate in a better manner. It was for such purposes that Congress by law established that administration. The persistent pattern by avoiding some responsibility, lack of interest, is to be deplored but at least on this occasion to be noted.

Mr. President, I have made my remarks. I perhaps have a minute remaining. I wonder if my distinguished friend from Idaho wishes to rebut and devastate these last remarks?

Mr. SYMMS. No. I thank my good friend from New York. I think the case has been made very well.

I think all Senators know where they stand. I would just say to my colleagues in closing that this amendment is a modest, moderate amendment to relax the speed limit on rural interstates only and only permissive; that is, if the States choose to do so. I think for my colleagues who have not caught up with it that is the main thing.

I thank the distinguished floor leader from New York, and return the time back to him. I thank the distinguished chairman.

Mr. KASTEN. Mr. President, I rise in support of the Symms amendment to raise the rural interstate speed to

65 miles per hour. The last time this matter was up for consideration I voted to maintain current law. Since that time I have heard from many people in Wisconsin. The cards, letters, phone calls and personal contacts have been overwhelmingly in support of raising the speed limit to 65 miles per hour.

Here is just an example of the letters I've received:

PAUL HOFF,  
Shorewood, WI, October 2, 1986.

Senator ROBERT KASTEN,  
Senate Office Building,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR SEN. KASTEN: It was disappointing to learn that you had voted against the amendment allowing states to raise the 55 mile per hour speed limit. This nation has the most efficient highway system in the world, traveled by cars that are the safest ever produced, yet we are hampered by an unrealistic speed limit.

Raising the limit will increase fuel consumption only slightly, it will allow enforcement resources to be more reasonably allocated and will allow for more efficient use of the highways.

If traffic fatalities are your concern, pass a seat belt law or get drunk drivers off the roads. Improved driver education courses would also be a wise investment.

Please endorse any action which would return control of speed limits to the states.

Sincerely,

PAUL HOFF.

DEAR SENATOR: I usually agree with your decisions but your vote to maintain the 55 mph speed limit disappointed me. I feel the speed limit should be a state's right issue. Each state has differing geography and should be considered when establishing the speed limit.

R.J. LUDVIK.

5725 CENTURY AVE.

Middleton WI, September 24, 1986.

Senator ROBERT KASTEN: How can you possibly not vote for approval of 65 mph on major highways?

What rationale do you see in authorizing 55 m.p.h. on county gravel roads and the same on interstate highways?

Ridiculous!!

You should reconsider and vote in favor of 65 m.p.h..

LEONARD E. LEWIS.

P.O. Box 654

Racine, WI, September 25, 1986.

Senator ROBT. KASTEN, JR.,  
Milwaukee, WI.

DEAR SENATOR KASTEN: I cannot believe you voted against this antiquated 55 m.p.h. bill, I have heard all the Arguments against it and still think we are living in the dark ages with this law. Even some law enforcement agencies are against it, our cars, trucks and highways are certainly built to drive 65 m.p.h. easily in interstates.

I travel a lot in business and do not speed, but I do not drive 55 m.p.h. either as most citizens do not, but the time lost at 55 is very costly and I do not believe it saves lives. all agencies Pro and Con have their figures of course, but I certainly am against this law.

I just want to let our law makers know how I feel.

Yours truly,

ROBERT LATZ.

SEPTEMBER 25, 1986.

Honorable Senator ROBERT W. KASTEN: I disagree with your vote against the 65 m.p.h. amendment. A law no one obeys is a bad law, and the 55 m.p.h. speed limit is a bad law.

I drive the I system everyday, the 55 speed limit wastes my time, and money. Besides the tax money your wasting trying to enforce it.

Thank you,

TOM GILLESPIE.

Mr. President, in the State of Wisconsin the rural interstates make up 82 percent of the interstate system. This amendment will simply give the State of Wisconsin the right to decide whether to increase the speed limit on these roads. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this amendment.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I understand the Senator's amendment would permit raising the speed limit up to 65 miles per hour for any rural portion of the Interstate System. I wish to ask whether it is the intent of the amendment's sponsor that this provision shall apply to all States with highways designated as part of the Interstate System, and that this would include those rural portions in Alaska designated as part of the Interstate System for the 4R allocation.

Mr. SYMMS. I thank the Senator for his question. He is correct about the meaning of this provision, including the portion pertaining to the effect on highway routes in Alaska.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, the issue involved in this vote is not whether the Federal Government should dictate to the States what their speed limit should be. The supporters of this amendment still want to dictate a speed limit to the States—but instead of saying, as we do now, "you have to have no higher than a 55-mile-per-hour speed limit or you will lose part of your Federal highway funding," they want to say, "you must have no higher than a 55-mile-per-hour speed limit on most of your roads and no higher than a 65-mile-per-hour limit on some of your roads, or you will lose part of your Federal highway funding." So let's be clear on that point: the supporters of this amendment still want to tell States what they are allowed to do with regard to speed limits.

The 55-mile-per-hour speed limit was enacted in 1973 as part of a national strategy for saving lives and for energy security. And no one denies that the new national speed limit has contributed to both. In reverse order of importance, a National Research Council study of 2 years ago found that the 55-mile-per-hour speed limit saves about 167,000 barrels of petroleum per day. The study pointed out that although this is less than 2 percent of the Nation's average highway fuel consumption, the savings could be extremely important in the event of another disruption in oil supply. For example, the amount of oil saved by the 55-mile-per-hour speed limit repre-



sents about 10 percent of the shortfall experienced during the Arab oil embargo.

While the imminent crisis that led to adoption of a national energy strategy may have passed, the need for such a strategy still exists. The recent oil price increases resulting from an OPEC decision to hold down production shows that the power of that cartel is not yet broken. It would be shortsighted, and in my view, extremely foolish, for Congress to weaken a very successful energy conservation measure, which would be the effect of this amendment.

There is also no doubt that the 55-mile-per-hour speed limit has had the other most positive effect. To quote from the Director of the Michigan State Police:

The 55-mph speed limit has resulted in an unprecedented decrease in highway injuries and fatalities. Studies of the national statistics, taking other safety improvements into consideration, reflect that the 55 mph speed limit continues to reduce 2,000 to 4,000 fatalities, 2,500 to 4,500 serious injuries, and 34,000 to 61,000 minor injuries per year.

Although this amendment would only allow States to raise the speed limit on rural interstates, these are not the only roads that are likely to become less safe as a result of higher speeds. The Michigan State Police director has pointed out to me that raising the limit on rural interstates is likely to have a "spillover" effect, resulting in motorists traveling faster on other roads—and all roads would be less safe as a result.

The transportation experts in Michigan tell me that they support retention of the 55-mile-per-hour limit, although they would like to see compliance by the States measured in a different way. A provision of the House-passed highway bill would institute a new system for measuring compliance which gives more weight to speed limit violations between, say, 65 and 70 miles-per-hour than to violations between 55 and 60 miles-per-hour. This would lessen the burden on States that stand to lose highway funds, and I think it is the approach we should be taking. We should not be backing away from our commitment to energy security and highway safety.

Mr. WALLOP. Mr. President, today I join my friends Senators BURDICK and SYMMS in asking our colleagues to approve legislation which will allow the individual States to regain control over their highways by permitting them to raise speed limits on their rural interstate highways to 65 miles per hour, a measure we approved last fall by a 20-vote margin.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower made the creation of the Interstate Highway System a priority in his administration after marveling at the ability of Germany's autobahns to quickly and efficiently transport massive reserves of war materials. He figured that the same system would greatly improve America's competi-

tiveness by increasing the efficiency of business transportation.

The system was to provide a uniform design to allow for safe travel at speeds of at least 70 miles per hour, even with high-load capacity. Today, the Federal Interstate System is nearing completion, the product of an investment of almost \$100 billion. As we consider a bill to authorize money for the completion of the system and the renovation of its aging parts, it is appropriate that we reconsider the speed limit issue.

Rural interstate highways represent only 6 percent of all roads currently posted at 55 miles per hour, and account for 19 percent of all traffic on those roads. In my home State of Wyoming, the 179 miles along Interstate 25 between our most important business centers, Cheyenne and Casper, could be traveled in 2 hours, 45 minutes with a speed limit of 65 miles per hour a saving of one-half hour. From Cheyenne to Rock Springs, along Interstate 80, the 4-hour trip would be 45 minutes shorter at 65. When planning travel, those times become significant.

Opponents of our plan say that the lower national limit conserves fuel. A 1984 National Academy of Sciences study, commissioned by the Congress, found a 2-percent annual fuel saving. The same year, the Transportation Research Board estimated the savings at only 1 percent.

Savings of lives are also cited, and a great reduction in highway fatalities did result after the speed limit was dropped to 55. We all know, however, that the 1973 Arab oil embargo, which prompted the drop, caused a marked decrease in the number of cars on the roads of our Nation. Also, safety innovations in automobiles and highway design, mandatory safety belt laws, and an increased safety consciousness among Americans must have helped to bring about the lower fatality count. If we are to argue the logic that lowering the speed limit lowers highway traffic deaths, lowering the limit to zero would totally eliminate the problem.

Mr. President, we can talk all day about the benefits of a lower or higher speed limit, but that would be skirting the point of this amendment. Our State governments and legislatures are perfectly qualified to weigh the factors both pro and con in this debate, and to make choices appropriate for the people whom they represent. As we vote today to continue improving the world's largest and most complex transportation system, I urge my colleagues to go one step further, and return to the citizens of each State their right to determine a speed limit for their own safety needs.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Finally, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Mr. Jim Gould, Mr. Randy Hardock, staff members of the Finance Committee, be allowed the privilege of the floor during the consideration of S. 387.

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

The Senator has 6 seconds remaining.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, I yield back the remainder of my time.

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed for 3 minutes.

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

#### VOTE ON VETO OVERRIDE ON H.R. 1 ON WEDNESDAY

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I pro-  
pound a request that has been cleared with the distinguished Republican leader [Mr. DOLE]. I understand that Mr. SYMMS, who will respond as acting Republican leader at this time, is on the floor and prepared to do so.

I ask unanimous consent that on tomorrow, at 2 p.m., the Senate proceed to the consideration of the veto message on H.R. 1, the clean water bill; provided further that there be 1 hour of debate on that message, the time to be equally divided between Senators BURDICK and STAFFORD or their designees; provided further that no motions to commit or postpone be in order; and that the Senate vote on the override at the hour of 3 p.m. tomorrow.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. SYMMS. Reserving the right to object, Mr. President, and I shall not object, I confirm what the majority leader has said. The minority leader has notified me that he has approved this and it has been cleared through the Republican hotline.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I thank the able acting Republican leader.

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

#### RECESS UNTIL 2 P.M.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time for debate having expired and the hour of 12 noon having arrived, under the previous order, the Senate will now stand in recess until the hour of 2 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:02 p.m., recessed until 2 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. BURDICK).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, in his capacity as the Senator from North Dakota, suggests the absence of a quorum.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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



# **SURFACE TRANSPORTATION AND UNIFORM RELOCATION ASSISTANCE ACT**

Mr. KASTEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that privileges of the floor be granted to David Meeker of my staff during the pendency of the highway bill each day the measure is pending and for rollcall votes thereon.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SIMON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, may I inquire, I believe under the order, we are to vote at 2 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York is correct.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. The hour of 2 p.m. having arrived, I suggest to our distinguished Presiding Officer that we proceed to vote on the amendment of Mr. SYMMS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to vote on the Symms amendment, amendment No. 11. The yeas and nays have been ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. SIMPSON announced that the Senator from Oregon [Mr. HATFIELD] and the Senator from Oregon [Mr. Packwood] are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 65, nays 33, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 14 Leg.]

## **YEAS—65**

Armstrong	Garn	Murkowski
Baucus	Graham	Nickles
Bentsen	Gramm	Nunn
Biden	Grassley	Pressler
Bingaman	Harkin	Pryor
Bond	Hatch	Quayle
Boren	Hecht	Reid
Breaux	Heflin	Riegle
Bumpers	Helms	Rudman
Burdick	Humphrey	Sanford
Chiles	Johnston	Sasser
Cochran	Kassebaum	Shelby
Conrad	Kasten	Simpson
Crainston	Kennedy	Stennis
Daschle	Kerry	Stevens
DeConcini	Leahy	Symms
Dodd	Lugar	Thurmond
Dole	McCain	Wallop
Domenici	McClure	Wilson
Durenberger	McConnell	Wirth
Ford	Matsunaga	Zorinsky
Fowler	Melcher	

## **NAYS—33**

Adams	Glenn	Pell
Boschwitz	Gore	Proxmire
Bradley	Heinz	Rockefeller
Byrd	Hollings	Roth
Chafee	Inouye	Sarbanes
Cohen	Lautenberg	Simon
D'Amato	Levin	Specter
Danforth	Metzenbaum	Stafford
Dixon	Mikulski	Trible
Evans	Mitchell	Warner
Exon	Moynihan	Weicker

## **NOT VOTING—2**

Hatfield Packwood

So the amendment (No. 11) was agreed to.

Mr. BURDICK. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote by which the amendment was agreed to.

Mr. DOLE. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. President, will the Senator from New York yield for a question?

Mr. MOYNIHAN. I yield.

Mr. BENTSEN. I say to the distinguished Senator from New York, the manager of the bill, that I would like to bring up the Finance Committee's amendment at this time, if I may; and I would be prepared to accept a limitation on debate as short as 5 minutes to a side, if it would be agreeable, in order that we might expedite passage of the bill.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. If the distinguished chairman will allow me, I would like to make that request now of the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator suspend for a moment?

The Senate will come to order.

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

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, will the distinguished Senator withhold that for a moment?

Mr. MOYNIHAN. I am happy to do so.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, we are in the process right now of trying to clear this time agreement. I do not think there will be any problem, but we do have to protect our colleagues.

I want to be sure that there are no amendments to the amendment; because, if we agree to 10 minutes on that amendment and do not have other amendments locked out, someone can come in with a controversial amendment to that amendment, and there is not 1 minute of debate.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. I say to the distinguished majority leader that that was my purpose, to get a time agreement.

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

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

The Senator from Texas.

## **AMENDMENT NO. 12**

(Purpose: To provide for a 4-year extension of the Highway Trust Fund taxes, and for other purposes)

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. President, on behalf of the Committee on Finance, I offer an amendment to S. 387. It is one that would provide funding for the authorization on the highway legislation we are talking about. I send my amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The amendment will be stated.

The bill read as follows:

The Senator from Texas [Mr. BENTSEN] proposes an amendment numbered 12.

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill, insert the following new title:

## **TITLE II—HIGHWAY REVENUE ACT OF 1987**

### **SEC. 201. SHORT TITLE.**

This title may be cited as the "Highway Revenue Act of 1987".

### **SEC. 202. 4-YEAR EXTENSION OF HIGHWAY TRUST FUND TAXES AND RELATED EXEMPTIONS.**

(a) EXTENSIONS OF TAXES.—The following provisions of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 are each amended by striking out "1988" each place it appears and inserting in lieu thereof "1992":

(1) Section 4041(a)(3) (relating to special fuels tax).

(2) Section 4051(c) (relating to tax on heavy trucks and trailers sold at retail).

(3) Section 4071(d) (relating to tax on tires and tread rubber).

(4) Section 4081(e)(1) (relating to gasoline tax) (as amended by the Tax Reform Act of 1986 and section 521(a)(1)(B) of the Superfund Revenue Act of 1986).

(5) Section 4481(e), 4482(c)(4), and 4482(d) (relating to highway use tax).

(b) EXTENSION OF EXEMPTIONS, ETC.—The following provisions of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 are each amended by striking out "1988" each place it appears and inserting in lieu thereof "1992":

(1) Section 4041(b)(2)(C) (relating to qualified methanol and ethanol fuel).

(2) Section 4041(f)(3) (relating to exemption for farm use).

(3) Section 4041(g) (relating to other exemptions).

(4) Section 4221(a) (relating to certain tax-free sales).

(5) Section 4483(f) (relating to exemption for highway use tax).

(6) Section 6420(h) (relating to gasoline used on farms).

(7) Section 6421(h) (relating to tax on gasoline used for certain nonhighway purposes or by local transit systems) (as in effect before its redesignation by section 1703(c) of the Tax Reform Act of 1986).

(8) Section 6427(g)(5) (relating to advance repayment of increased diesel fuel tax).

(9) Section 6427(m) (relating to fuels not used for taxable purposes) (as in effect before its redesignation by section 1703(e)(1) of the Tax Reform Act of 1986).

### **(c) OTHER PROVISIONS.—**

(1) FLOOR STOCKS REFUNDS.—Paragraph (1) of section 6412(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to floor stocks refunds) is amended—

(A) by striking out "1988" each place it appears and inserting in lieu thereof "1992", and

(B) by striking out "1989" each place it appears and inserting in lieu thereof "1993".

(2) INSTALLMENT PAYMENTS OF HIGHWAY USE TAX.—Paragraph (2) of section 6156(e) of such Code (relating to installment payments of tax on use of highway motor vehicles) is amended by striking out "1988" and inserting in lieu thereof "1992".

### **SEC. 203. 4-YEAR EXTENSION OF HIGHWAY TRUST FUND.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsections (b), (c), and (e) of section 9503 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to Highway Trust Fund) are each amended—



AVH-444

RE: 55-Mile-Per-Hour-Speed Limit

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

LEGIS-1

August 27, 1986 (XXX444)

Dear Mr. Ortega:

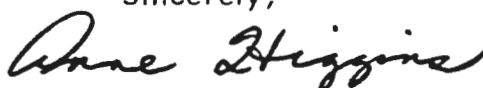
On behalf of President Reagan, thank you for your message regarding the 55-mile-per-hour speed limit.

The President believes, as he has said in the past, that speed limits and other traffic regulations should be set by State and local governments in ways consistent with safety requirements. The President believes that State and local authorities are best able to determine appropriate traffic regulations within their jurisdictions.

Because any changes in Federal law concerning the speed limit would require action by the Congress, you may also wish to contact those who represent you in that body to inform them of your views.

With the President's best wishes,

Sincerely,



Anne Higgins  
Special Assistant to the President  
and Director of Correspondence

(8/27/86)

Mr. Michael Ortega  
Evening Supervisor  
Correspondence Analysis Section  
Room 60  
Old Executive Office Building  
Washington, DC 20500

AVH/JWF/DE/CAD/AVH

Judy =

This comment  
is ok

Ralph

*Legis - 1*

OFFICE OF PRESIDENTIAL CORRESPONDENCE  
REQUEST FOR CLEARANCE - COMMENTS

TO:

Judy Johnston/OPD

DATE DUE:

TYPE OF RESPONSE:

☐ Multiple Mailing

☒ Form Reply

☐ One-Time Reply

SUBJECT:

8-20-86

55 mile-per-hour speed limit

REQUESTED BY/ADDRESSED TO:

General Public

BACKGROUND:

Draft prepared by the White House Office of Correspondence responding to an inquiry on the 55 m.p.h. speed limit. Draft reiterates presidential view that state and local governments can best address these problems (see Mr. Speakes' enclosed remarks for 8-14-86). Correspondence also notes the necessity of Congressional action to alter existing federal law.

SIGNATURE:

*Robert V. Loebe*

DATE:

8-18-86

Presidential Messages  
Old Executive Office Building  
Room 94  
(202) 456-7610

Your Recommendation/Comments:

*OK*  
*Jim Warner for action*  
*Ralph Bledsoe for action*  
*js S/pc*

SIGNATURE:

DATE:



AVH-

RE: 55-mile-per-hour speed limit

Clan = opD

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

AVH/JWF/DE pro /m

August 15, 1986

SPEEDLIMIT

On behalf of President Reagan, thank you for your message regarding the 55-mile-per-hour speed limit.

The President believes, as he has said in the past, that speed limits and other traffic regulations should be set by State and local governments in ways consistent with safety requirements. The President believes that State and local authorities are best able to determine appropriate traffic regulations within their jurisdictions.

Because any changes in Federal law concerning the speed limit would require action by the Congress, you may also wish to contact those who represent you in that body to inform them of your views.

With the President's best wishes,

Q Did sugar and grain come up at that time?

MR. SPEAKES: No, you'd have to ask his friends at the State Department.

Q Well, what do you think of the Australians' comment today that they question the strength of the military alliance given these sorts of actions that the United States has taken?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think there's any doubt of the strength of the military alliance between the United States and Australia.

Q Are you not -- you're not disturbed, then, in any manner by the Australians themselves raising that question?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, I think I would like to see the Prime Minister's statement in a little more detail before I comment on it because I'm not quite sure that it was said or meant in that context. Okay. Charles?

Q Larry, isn't the President --

Q I just -- I don't -- I just don't understand why we didn't send them a message to reassure them, since we knew that it might cause a --

MR. SPEAKES: Check with the State Department as to whether they did.

Q You don't know?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know.

Q Do you have any words --

Q What would the President have said had he been asked about the 55-mile speed limit?

MR. SPEAKES: The President would have said that he has, as always, favored that speed limits and traffic regulations should be set by state and local governments consistent with safety requirements.

Q Would he support legislation to that effect? Does the Symms --

MR. SPEAKES: We have talked with Symms and Hecht, as you know, on the 55-mile. He did not specifically endorse the bill. The bills are not completely fleshed out as to how they would apply -- what they would apply to. So the President has not endorsed those bills, but he does endorse the principle -- letting state and local governments decide what the speed limit should be.

Q Well, when the two Senators came out Monday, their statements were not all that strong. But yesterday they were making much stronger assertions that they had the President's support of this and that they got more than enough.

MR. SPEAKES: I just made the same assertion.

Q I'm sorry.

MR. SPEAKES: I just made the same assertion. I don't -- I'll have to ask them why they said what they said when they were here last week.

Q Do you have any words for the Senate before --

Q Will --



Q I'm sorry, go ahead.

Q Will Secretary Dole take any action to pursue lifting the 55-mile limit?

MR. SPEAKES: No, I think that the legislation is pending on the Hill. We'd have to look at that legislation before we endorsed it. We've specifically, as the President said and as the 1980 platform said, it's a decision that should be made by state and local officials. As a great man said, driving at -- from Cheyenne to Salt Lake with not any cars on the road is a little bit -- at 55-miles an hour -- might go a little bit faster -- not cause any problems.

Q Do you have any words for the --

Q Well, he's not endorsing it just for those western states. He's endorsing it as -- or supportive of the state right in any combat?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, that's right.

Colonel?

Q Yes -- what is the coverage of the barbequing of Congress tomorrow?

MR. SPEAKES: Oh, I'm sorry. The Congressional Barbeque coverage is, a photo pool for the serving line, open coverage for the entertainment and the President's closing remarks.

Q About what time do you expect that to be?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, Bill, I think probably about 7:30 p.m. or something. Let's see, I should have a scenario here.

Q Is the President going to speak?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, very briefly at the end to thank the entertainers is -- 8:00 p.m. -- 7:50 p.m. is what it looks like, Bill, if everything is on schedule.

AVH 444 (2nd Rev.)

RE: 55-Mile-Per-Hour-Speed Limit

LOCAL-1

(P/C)

## THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

November 28, 1986 (XXX444)

Dear Mr. Ortega:

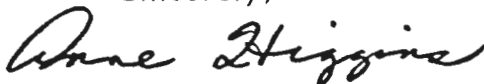
On behalf of President Reagan, thank you for your message regarding the 55-mile-per-hour speed limit.

The President believes, as he has said in the past, that speed limits and other traffic regulations should be set by State and local governments in ways consistent with safety requirements. The President believes that State and local authorities are best able to determine appropriate traffic regulations within their jurisdictions.

Although legislation affecting this issue was adopted by the U.S. Senate earlier this year, the 99th Congress adjourned with no final action being taken to alter existing law. New action on the 55-mile-per-hour speed limit is possible when the 100th Congress convenes in January. You may therefore wish to contact those who represent you in the new Congress to inform them of your views.

With the President's best wishes,

Sincerely,



Anne Higgins  
Special Assistant to the President  
and Director of Correspondence

(11/28/86)

Mr. Michael A. Ortega  
Evening Supervisor  
Correspondence Analysis Section  
Room 60  
Old Executive Office Building  
Washington, DC 20500

AVH/JWF/CAD/AVH  
OPD

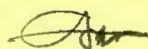


BY HAND

Betty -

Could you make  
the correction &  
OK?

Tx.



*Ed - approved - a*

OFFICE OF PRESIDENTIAL CORRESPONDENCE  
REQUEST FOR CLEARANCE - COMMENTS

TO:

*Ed Judy Johnston*

DATE DUE:

*asap*

TYPE OF RESPONSE:

☐ Multiple Mailing

☐ Form Reply

☐ One-Time Reply

SUBJECT:

*55 mph / speed limit*

REQUESTED BY/ADDRESSED TO:

BACKGROUND:

*OK on this*

SIGNATURE:

*Anne Higgins*

DATE:

*11-24-86*

Presidential Messages  
Old Executive Office Building  
Room 94  
(202) 456-7610

Your Recommendation/Comments:

*Jim Warner: Pls review  
jo 11/25*


*OK Jim Warner  
11/25*

SIGNATURE:

DATE:



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON


AUB/jwf/cad/   
Chen = OPD

November 21, 1986

AVH444

On behalf of President Reagan, thank you for your message regarding the 55-mile-per-hour speed limit.

The President believes, as he has said in the past, that speed limits and other traffic regulations should be set by State and local governments in ways consistent with safety requirements. The President believes that State and local authorities are best able to determine appropriate traffic regulations within their jurisdictions.

 Although legislation affecting this issue was adopted by the U.S. Senate earlier this year, the 99th Congress adjourned with no final action being taken to alter existing law. New action on the 55-mile-per-hour speed limit is possible when the 100th Congress convenes in January. You may therefore wish to contact those who represent you in the new Congress to inform them of your views.

With the President's best wishes,

RE: 55-Mile-Per-Hour-Speed Limit

LOCAL-1

(P/C)

## THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 14, 1986 (XXX444)

Dear Mr. Ortega:

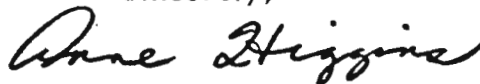
On behalf of President Reagan, thank you for your message regarding the 55-mile-per-hour speed limit.

The President believes, as he has said in the past, that speed limits and other traffic regulations should be set by State and local governments in ways consistent with safety requirements. The President believes that State and local authorities are best able to determine appropriate traffic regulations within their jurisdictions.

The Senate has passed legislation to repeal the 55-mile-per-hour limit and to give State authorities the flexibility to set higher limits under certain conditions. Action on this issue is pending in the House of Representatives. Because any changes in Federal law concerning the speed limit would require further action by the Congress, you may wish to contact those who represent you in that body to inform them of your views.

With the President's best wishes,

Sincerely,



Anne Higgins  
Special Assistant to the President  
and Director of Correspondence

(10/14/86)

Mr. Michael A. Ortega  
Evening Supervisor  
Correspondence Analysis Section  
Room 60  
Old Executive Office Building  
Washington, DC 20500

AVH/NWF/DE/CAD/AVH



AVH-444 (Rev.)  
re: 55-Mile-Per-Hour Speed Limit

Clean 7 GPD

AVH/JWF/DE/000 / *[Signature]*

AVH444.861006

On behalf of President Reagan, thank you for your message regarding the 55-mile-per-hour speed limit.

The President believes, as he has said in the past, that speed limits and other traffic regulations should be set by State and local governments in ways consistent with safety requirements. The President believes that State and local authorities are best able to determine appropriate traffic regulations within their jurisdictions.

Senate has passed legislation to <sup>speed</sup> ~~change~~ the <sup>55-mile-per-hour</sup> speed limit <sup>on this issue</sup> ~~and~~ action is pending in the House of Representatives. Because any changes in Federal law concerning the speed limit would require further action by the Congress, you may wish to contact those who represent you in that body to inform them of your views.

With the President's best wishes,

*and to give State authorities the flexibility to set higher limits under certain conditions.*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

10/6/89

Revised

Just 444 filed  
to ReDorew review

John

cc to CAD

10/8

Chuck - these came to  
us in the mail  
this morning -

~~doesn't look as if~~  
↓  
(AVH) ~~has approved~~  
~~them yet.~~

Maureen H.



**OFFICE OF PRESIDENTIAL CORRESPONDENCE**  
**REQUEST FOR CLEARANCE - COMMENTS**

TO: Judith Johnston/OPD

DATE DUE: Oct. 14, 1986

TYPE OF RESPONSE: ☐ Multiple Mailing ☒ Form Reply ☐ One-Time Reply

SUBJECT: 55 mph. Speed Limit

REQUESTED BY/ADDRESSED TO:

General Public

BACKGROUND:

Draft responds to individuals who write the President regarding the 55 mph speed limit. The President's views are stated as well as proposed legislation that would impact the current law.

SIGNATURE:



DATE:

October 10, 1986

Robert Luebke

Presidential Messages  
Executive Office  
Room 94  
(202) 456-7610

Your Recommendation/Comments:

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

To: Betty Dunn

BY HAND

8n OLC on the

Prime.

Card

Jim  
pls approve & |  
return to me

July OK Stacy