

Member Spotlight Series: Champions of the Future Interstate

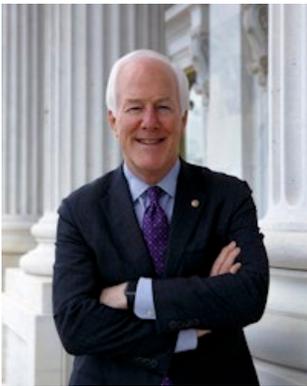
The advancement of the **Future Interstate I-27** depends on sustained, bipartisan leadership in Congress. This series highlights senators and representatives whose support has helped move the corridor from designation toward implementation, funding, and delivery.

Ted Cruz — Champion of I-27



Senator Cruz championed inclusion of the **Ports-to-Plains Highway Act of 2021**, which officially assigned **Future Interstate designation** and unlocked federal support for corridor development through the **Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023**. He also played a pivotal role in advancing the **I-27 Numbering Act of 2023**, converting designation into **official Interstate numbering** and enabling full federal eligibility and long-term implementation tools. Beyond designation and numbering, Senator Cruz's leadership supports **bridge permitting reforms along the Texas-Mexico border** and promotes **economic growth, safety, and job creation** tied to improved freight mobility—strengthening federal recognition of I-27 as critical to **trade, energy, agriculture, and rural connectivity**.

John Cornyn — Champion of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor



Senator Cornyn played a key role in advancing the **Ports-to-Plains Corridor** by supporting both the **2022 Future Interstate designation** and subsequent efforts to secure **I-27 route numbering** through the **I-27 Numbering Act of 2023**. His co-sponsorship reinforced unified Texas leadership behind the corridor, signaling strong congressional intent to **USDOT and FHWA**. Senator Cornyn's support has helped protect the corridor for long-term federal investment, strengthen eligibility for funding programs, and advance I-27 as a nationally significant route critical to **freight mobility, agriculture, energy production, border trade, and rural economic growth** across Texas and the central United States.

Martin Heinrich — Champion of I-27 in New Mexico



Senator Martin Heinrich's bipartisan advocacy has emphasized the **safety, economic development, and regional mobility benefits** of extending I-27 into **New Mexico**. He played a **key role in securing the Ports-to-Plains Future Interstate designation** through the **Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023**, formally protecting the corridor for long-term federal recognition and funding. Senator Heinrich also supported efforts advancing **interstate route numbering** tied to the **I-27 Numbering Act of 2023**, ensuring New Mexico's inclusion in the national Interstate framework. Working with Senator Ben Ray Luján, he helped secure **\$4.8 million in Congressionally Directed Spending** for corridor planning and

improvements, strengthening project readiness and positioning northeastern New Mexico for long-term growth tied to **Future Interstate 27**.

Ben Ray Luján — Champion of New Mexico’s Future Interstate



Senator Luján has played a key role in ensuring **New Mexico’s inclusion in the Future Interstate I-27 system**, advancing **rural connectivity, safety, and trade access**. He helped secure the **Ports-to-Plains Interstate designation** through the **Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023** and supported efforts tied to the **I-27 Numbering Act of 2023** to move the corridor toward implementation. Working with Senator Martin Heinrich, he secured **\$4.8 million in Congressionally Directed Spending** for I-27 planning between Clayton and Raton, including city location studies and an I-27/I-25 interchange alignment study—critical steps for project readiness and future funding eligibility.

Deb Fischer (R-NE) — Champion of the Heartland Expressway



Senator Deb Fischer’s leadership underscores the **national importance of completing north-south interstate connections** that support **agriculture, freight movement, and supply chains** across the Great Plains. A long-time advocate for the Heartland Expressway, she has worked to keep **Nebraska’s rural corridors safe, competitive, and nationally connected**. Her support advanced **\$6.0 million (FY 2026)** for the Heartland Expressway north of Chadron to the South Dakota state line and secured **\$12.865 million in Congressionally Directed Spending** for US-385 and US-26 / Nebraska Link 62A improvements—projects that improve safety, advance interstate-ready standards, and reinforce Nebraska’s role in the **Ports-to-Plains and Heartland Expressway system**.

Kevin Cramer (R-ND) — Champion of the Northern Plains Corridor



Senator Kevin Cramer’s leadership underscores the **Ports-to-Plains Corridor’s importance to energy production, rural economies, and interstate commerce** across the Upper Plains. As a **co-sponsor of the Ports-to-Plains Highway Act of 2021 (117th Congress)**, he helped elevate congressional recognition of the corridor’s **national significance and Future Interstate potential**. Senator Cramer has also supported targeted federal investment through the **Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program**, advancing **\$55 million** for a **four-lane facility on U.S. 85 along the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway**. This investment improves **freight mobility, safety, and reliability**, strengthening **north-south connectivity and supply-chain resilience** critical to North Dakota and the central U.S.

August Pfluger (R-TX) - Delivering I-27 for West Texas Growth



Congressman **August Pfluger** has been a strong advocate for **I-27 and Ports-to-Plains priorities**, representing key West Texas segments that support **energy, agriculture, and freight mobility**. He was a **co-sponsor of the Ports-to-Plains Highway Act of 2021** and played a direct role in advancing the **I-27 Numbering Act of 2023**, which designates the route from **Laredo, Texas, to New Mexico as Interstate 27**. In **FY 2026**, Congressman Pfluger secured **\$1,000,000 in Community Project Funding for Future Interstate planning from San Angelo to Sonora**, strengthening **project readiness, regional coordination, and delivery of I-27 as a nationally significant Future Interstate corridor**.

Jodey Arrington (R-TX) - Leading the Charge on I-27 Implementation



As a senior member of the Texas delegation, Congressman **Jodey Arrington** has played a central leadership role in advancing **I-27 and Ports-to-Plains corridor readiness** through decisive legislation and targeted federal investment. He served as the **House sponsor of the Ports-to-Plains Highway Act of 2021** and the **sponsor of the I-27 Numbering Act of 2023**, laying the groundwork to move I-27 from designation toward implementation. Congressman Arrington has also secured **\$17.24 million in Community Project Funding** for interstate planning and corridor improvements, including **Phase I planning, US 87 upgrades, the Lubbock Outer Loop interchange, and Lamesa operational studies**—advancing **safety, mobility, and long-term delivery of I-27 as a nationally significant Future Interstate**.

Ronny Jackson (R-TX) – Championing Texas roads and rural prosperity.



Congressman Ronny Jackson (TX-13) secured funding for two projects:

SL 335 - Upgrade to Freeway- Amarillo from West of FM 2590 to (South) to FM 2186 (TxDOT Project ID 2494-02-011): \$1,000,000

The funding for this project will be used to provide critical upgrades for SL 335 between Amarillo West of FM 2590 to South to FM 2186 (TxDOT Project ID 02494-02-01). The TxDOT Amarillo District and the Amarillo Metropolitan Planning Organization have identified SL 335 as a top priority transportation project candidate, and this project will allow for the upgrade of the entire loop to a controlled-access roadway consisting of main lanes, ramps, one-way frontage roads with bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, and four multi-level interchanges—helping to increase the safety of the residents and pedestrians of the City of Amarillo.

Interstate Planning Funds for City Location Study at Dumas: \$1,000,000

The funding for this project will be used to continue a City Location Study as recommended by the Ports-to-Plains Corridor Interstate Feasibility Study Final Report, which will be used to determine the alignment connecting the City of Dumas and US 87. The development of US 287 is projected to take 30 years to plan and construct, however; once completed, it will provide major economic benefits to the region. Initiating this planning will help ensure each segment of I-27 remains on track.

Henry Cuellar (D-TX) - Strengthening I-27 at America's Southern Gateway



Congressman **Henry Cuellar** has played an important role in advancing **I-27 and Ports-to-Plains priorities**, particularly at the southern gateway of the corridor. As a **co-sponsor of the Ports-to-Plains Highway Act of 2021**, he helped elevate federal recognition of the corridor's national freight, trade, and mobility significance. Congressman Cuellar also **co-sponsored the I-27 Numbering Act of 2023**, supporting the formal assignment of Interstate numbers needed to unlock full federal funding eligibility. His leadership reinforces the importance of **border connectivity, trade efficiency, and north-south Interstate continuity** linking Laredo and South Texas to the broader Future Interstate 27 system.

Teresa Leger Fernández (D-NM) - Expanding I-27 to Strengthen Rural New Mexico



Congresswoman **Teresa Leger Fernández** has been a strong supporter of extending **I-27 into northeastern New Mexico**, emphasizing **rural access, highway safety, and long-term economic opportunity**. Her advocacy supports full integration of New Mexico into the **Future Interstate system** connecting Texas to national markets. In **FY 2026**, she helped secure **\$1,000,000 in interstate planning funds** for a **City Location Study in Raton**, a critical step toward interstate standards. This investment supplements **\$1.6 million in Congressionally Directed Spending** secured by Senators **Martin Heinrich and Ben Ray Luján**, strengthening **project readiness, freight mobility, tourism access, and regional connectivity** tied to **Future Interstate 27**.

Lauren Boebert (R-CO) - Preparing Colorado for the Future



Congresswoman Boebert's support highlights growing momentum for the **Ports-to-Plains Corridor and Future Interstate connectivity beyond Texas and New Mexico**, as additional corridor states prepare for future designation and implementation. Her advocacy recognizes the importance of strengthening **north-south trade routes, rural mobility, and economic competitiveness** across the central United States. In **FY 2026**, Congresswoman Boebert supported **\$2,000,000 in Community Planning Funding** for the **SH 71 Corridor Improvements Project** along the **Heartland Expressway**. This investment advances planning and corridor readiness in eastern Colorado, improving safety

and connectivity.

Why This Matters

Bipartisan congressional champions send a clear signal to **USDOT** and **FHWA** that the **Future Interstate I-27** is a national priority. Their leadership strengthens grant competitiveness, guides federal agency action, and accelerates progress from designation to construction.

