

**UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S STATEMENT
RE: GUILTY PLEA OF MANNY ARAGON**

There are few persons in the history of New Mexico who have ever wielded more power than former Senate Majority Leader Manny Aragon. Whether he was motivated purely by greed, or was intoxicated with his influence, or succumbed to a sense of being untouchable, only he knows. Today, in pleading guilty to public corruption charges, Mr. Aragon has admitted what the United States has long been prepared to prove: that he agreed with others to steal millions of dollars from New Mexico taxpayers by bloating the construction cost of the Metropolitan Courthouse. He has further admitted that he acted on behalf of the conspiracy while on the very floor of the State Senate during a legislative session.

This is a staggering and devastating end to the legal and political career of a larger-than-life public figure.

The United States Attorney's Office, the State Attorney General's Office, and the Federal Bureau of Investigations are optimistic that Mr. Aragon's guilty plea, prison sentence, and enormous financial consequences will send a resounding deterrent message to all public servants in New Mexico. No matter how many times you have been elected, no matter how high you have risen in state politics, no matter how much power you have amassed, the people of New Mexico trust you to do their business, not to pick their pockets. Following the path of Manny Aragon not only ends in the loss of one's career and reputation, but also leads to being charged, convicted, and sent to federal prison.