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THE WICHITA EAGLE-SEACON
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8 THE NEW AGE July 1987

Senators have offered legislation promoting the goals of our Constitution—"to establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty."

**45,000 Laws Later,
We Are The World's Envy**

Since the first Congress met in 1789 (and through the 99th Congress last year), 45,786 bills have been passed. Of these, 43,521 have been signed by the Presidents. Of the 2,354 bills vetoed by Presidents in the last 200 years, 89 became law when Congress overrode vetoes. A few laws signed by the Presidents (or enacted when Congress overrode their vetoes) have been declared by the Supreme Court to be unconstitutional in whole or in part. The result is a nation and society that is the envy of peoples around the world. While ours is not a perfect country, it certainly offers more of its citizens freedoms and opportunities that are unequalled by any other nation in the world, past or present.

While our Country's 40 Chief Executives (Presidents Washington, Lincoln, Eisenhower, Johnson among them) deserve much credit

for making America a stronger, freer Nation, it is the Congress—the 535 present members and the 1,768 men and women who served between 1789 and 1986—which, I believe, is closest to the people and more directly represents them.

**A Precious Contract
In A World Of Change**

To me, the Constitution is the contract with the people in which Congress pledges to make our Government work. Sometimes we may feel frustrated with its many checks or uneasy about its imperfect balances. We may bemoan its lack of efficiencies or debate its implications. But we remember that it has stood the test of time and for two centuries enabled America to grow and develop beyond the grandest dreams of those 55 revolutionaries who authored the Constitution.

William Gladstone, the English statesman who led the push for expanding his own country's election participatory process in the 1800's, called the American Constitution "the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man." I agree; in a world of change and struggle we have no more precious possession than this great document.

Experience is one thing you can't buy on the easy payment plan.
Sunshine Magazine

The Washington Times July 7, 1987

Dole, Laxalt and Kemp get 'right' score for ACU

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Three Republicans running for president scored well to the right of the average American Conservative Union ratings released yesterday, while all the Democratic hopefuls save one fell predictably at the other end of the spectrum.

The ACU gave Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole a rating of 91 percent; former Sen. Paul Laxalt, Nevada Republican, 90 percent; and Rep. Jack Kemp, New York Republican, 89 percent. That means they agreed much of the time with the ACU's conservative viewpoint on 20 key congressional votes in 1986.

Although ACU Chairman David Keene works as a consultant for Mr. Dole's still-unofficial presidential bid, Mr. Dole is expected to have a tougher time wooing conservatives than either Mr. Laxalt or Mr. Kemp, who are more closely identified with the so-called Reagan revolution.

Among Democrats, Sen. Sam Nunn of Georgia, an oft-mentioned possible presidential candidate in 1988, scored 55 percent, in sharp contrast with already-announced Democrats, who all averaged less than 10 percent.

Of the Democrats, Sens. Albert Gore Jr. of

Tennessee and Paul Simon of Illinois came up with 9 percent ACU scores; Delaware's Sen. Joseph Biden and Rep. Patricia Schroeder of Colorado, who is pondering a bid, had 5 percent scores; and Rep. Richard Gephardt of Missouri flunked the conservative test completely, earning a zero score.

The ACU noted Sen. Edward Kennedy, Massachusetts Democrat, as "a benchmark," scored 10 percent. The survey also included former Sen. Gary Hart, the Colorado Democrat who withdrew from the Democratic race amid questions about his relationship with a Miami model, "for nostalgia buffs." Mr. Hart scored 14 percent.

"The Democratic hopefuls are a very liberal bunch, much more so than the House or Senate as a whole and even more so than the Democratic members on average," Mr. Keene said. "Most of the candidates fall to the left of Kennedy."

The ACU said the Senate average in 1986 was 50 percent while in the House it was 42 percent. Party by party, Senate Republicans scored 72 percent while Democrats averaged 25 percent. In the House, Republicans averaged 74 percent, compared with 20 percent for Democrats.

Why paper focuses on Dole

It has been almost 30 years since a Kansan was a serious presidential contender. This time around, Sen. Bob Dole is that.

His prominence puts special burdens on our news staff between now and the Republican convention. And calls for special understanding on the part of our readers, including those who don't care to see him in the White House.

We're going to be covering him more closely than we do the other candidates because what he does



Davis Merritt Jr.
Executive Editor
FYI

and how he does it reflect directly on our state and its people.

The conventional political wisdom is that a Kansan (or Nebraskan or Dakotan) can't be elected president because of geography. A successful candidate must be from a state and a region with lots of voting clout, and Kansas and the Plains States don't have it. Dole's candidacy will test that theory, and the outcome can say much about where the American electoral system finds itself today.

YOU HAVE read here before that we don't apply a ruler to political coverage. While we strive for some relative balance, candidates who make news are simply going to get more space than candidates who don't. It is neither the responsibility nor the right of the news department to make a candidate's campaign for him or her. Rather, we report news.

One element of news, which is at best a hazy and subjective concept, is potential reader interest.

We assume that our readers have a higher-than-normal level of interest in the Dole campaign because, whether one likes it or not, he does represent the state and the region on the national scene. So our coverage, so long as he is a clearly viable candidate, will be somewhat more intense than for some other candidates.

As candidates often discover, however, intense coverage is a two-edged sword. Any candidate will stumble on occasion, say something dumb, take lickings from the opposition. Any campaign will have money problems, get caught trying to hedge the facts, put out erroneous information.

We'll naturally report those, too.

OUR reporters and editors are sensitive to the delicacies of this situation, even more so because the people who make editorial de-



isions for the newspaper decided some time ago to take the unusual step of endorsing Dole's candidacy before the campaign was even under way.

That step, taken for reasons best understood by those in the editorial department, would naturally raise in the minds of some readers questions about the newspaper's news coverage.

It has been written here many times, for it is the truth, that the news and editorial departments are separate in every way. The decisions made there represent a view that does not extend beyond the editorial page. The news department's job is to report news, whether or not it seems to fit with the views expressed on the editorial page.

But that truth will not keep some observers from confusing the two roles and making incorrect assumptions as we go about the important business of covering the Dole campaign.

Our level of coverage reflects

our judgment of local and regional impact and interest, not whether we like or dislike him or want him to win or lose. We may be wrong in that judgment of extraordinary interest, but all we can do is use the best lights available to decide what to cover and how. There is no guidebook.

POLITICAL campaigns arouse normally dormant passions. People whose eyes glaze over by the third paragraph of a story about the workings of government run hot-blooded when the horse race starts. With many, issues are of less concern than a partisan litmus test. That's all part of what makes American politics the most exciting exercise of liberty in the world, because admission is free and anybody can play. But it is frustrating for those of us in the news business, who too often are seen as the makers rather than the bearers of news. We understand that reader predilection and guard against it. We seek your understanding, too. And, of course, invite your comments.