



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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FOR RELEASE

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NO TIME TO RAISE PAY, SAYS DOLE

A bill to change the system for setting Senators' and Representatives' salaries is presently pending in Congress. Basically it would mean that recommendations for congressional--as well as civil service and judicial--pay raises would be made every two years, instead of every four as at present. If approved by the President these increases would go into effect automatically--unless vetoed by either the Senate or the House.

I believe this procedure is backwards, and such increases should be blocked automatically--if Congress does not go on record giving its specific, clear approval. I recently sponsored an amendment in the Senate to stop these automatic congressional pay increases.

At home, inflation continues to be a major problem. The Phase IV economic policy has been announced as the latest step in the effort to overcome inflation and provide the stability required for sound growth. Throughout this effort, major sacrifices have been called for on the part of every sector of the economy. Workers have been told to restrain their bargaining for wage increases. Manufacturers have been required to curtail price rises. Farmers have had ceilings imposed on their prices. These requirements have not been easy or enjoyable for those who have had to live with them. But the American people have always been willing to make sacrifices when needed to serve the country's best interest.

Phase IV will apparently not be as strict as Phase 3 $\frac{1}{2}$, but the battle is far from over. No one can consider for a moment that the lid is off and that we can now go on a rampage of wage and price boosts to make up for lost time. Such an attitude is dangerous and exactly the opposite of the mood which must be maintained if our anti-inflationary policy is to work.

Unfortunately, the Congress appears determined to pursue such a course by presenting itself with this system of automatic new pay raises every two years.

PERSPECTIVE ON CONGRESSIONAL SALARIES

As one who has served in the House and Senate for some 13 years, I have developed my own opinions about the salaries for Members of Congress. And I believe there is a need to provide high enough pay for congressional service to make it a career which people of modest or limited means can afford to take up. Independent sources of income should never be set as a requirement for seeking or serving in federal elective office.

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- 2 -

We should also recognize that--fairly or not--congressional salaries act as a lid upon the whole federal pay structure. So, when the pressure builds up for higher salaries for the millions of employees covered by the entire civil service structure--especially at the higher levels--Congress gets put in a very tight spot. There is never a "good" time to raise congressional salaries--that is a political fact of life.

But there are valid reasons to do so, both in the interest of providing a fair living for those in the House and Senate who must support themselves and their families, and because the civil service pay structures must be kept in line with the private sector if government is going to be able to compete for the talent required to conduct the nation's business.

WRONG TIME

As the saying goes, there is a time and a place for everything. But now--in the middle of the fight against inflation--is no time to boost congressional salaries or to put in motion a mechanism which will do it automatically, every two years.

In my view, Congress should receive appropriate pay increases and at appropriate times, but in all fairness I do not feel we should get these increases at a time when millions of Americans are being told to tighten their belts and pitch in to control the economy.

MEMBERS SHOULD GO ON RECORD

If any Member of Congress believes he is entitled to a pay raise and is willing to accept it at any time--the least that can be expected is for him to stand on the floor of the House or Senate and vote for it.

The requirement of an up or down vote on this issue is not too much to expect of a public servant.

In fact, I believe the practice would be healthy and beneficial. It would certainly do much more to instill the people's confidence in their elected representatives than any sort of quiet, automatic, low-profile pay boost every two years--whether they want, need or deserve it.