



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.-Kans.)

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DOLE SAYS 'YES' TO THE DISTRICT

WASHINGTON--Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kan) today declared his support for the D.C. representation bill. Dole met with black Republican leaders from the District of Columbia and issued the following statement:

I will support House Joint Resolution 554, providing full voting representation for the residents of the District of Columbia.

For 178 years the peculiar circumstances affecting the residents of our capital city have been a living contradiction of the very principles upon which the nation was established.

The Constitution gave to Congress the power: "To exercise legislation in all cases whatsoever, over such district . . . as may . . . become the seat of the Government of the United States." But it did not give to the residents of that district the right to participate in the making of that legislation.

Without intending to, the framers of our Constitution made a colony out of the very place from which we sought to provide and protect the noble goals stated in the preamble to the Constitution.

REPUBLICAN PLATFORM--1976

Two years ago in Kansas City, the Republican Party wrote a platform that clearly and unequivocally endorsed voting representation for the District of Columbia.

I had a role in preparing that platform--as delegate, platform committee member, and temporary chairman of the convention. Two years ago today, I was selected as the Vice Presidential nominee and began a campaign based on our platform. I ran on that platform and travelled the country espousing its principles and policies.

It was a platform to be proud of. Some people question whether platforms mean anything anymore. I know that this platform meant something because we spent a very long week working on it, rewriting it, and reviewing it to make sure that it fully represented the Republican viewpoint. The language of the platform is exceedingly clear--and if it doesn't mean that the Republican Party supports the D.C. representation bill it doesn't mean anything.

The Republican Party agreed on D.C. representation because it was just, and in justice we could do nothing else.

I have particular pride in my party's action on that score--because simple political wisdom indicates that, for the near future, Democrats would be favored to win the Senate seats and the voting seat in the House of Representatives.

Likewise, in the election of 1976, we had no delusions about our presidential prospects in the District of Columbia. We supported full rights of citizenship for D.C. because from the first--from Lincoln forward--we have supported the full rights of citizenship for all Americans.

GEOGRAPHIC DISCRIMINATION

Over the course of our history, we have sought to eliminate economic discrimination, religious discrimination, race discrimination, and sex discrimination--all mighty barriers to

full citizenship for all people. It does seem to me such a small thing to eliminate geographic discrimination. Perhaps because it was such a seemingly small thing we found it easy to avoid. But it is no small thing to the people of the capital of this nation, and we cannot avoid ending this last vestige of discrimination any longer.

The right to vote and the right to representation is the centerpiece of any democracy-- and we can improve our democracy by passing the D.C. representation bill.