

News from Senator

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ANNOUNCEMENT OF CANDIDACY

TOPEKA -- "The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. We must disenthral ourselves -- and then we shall save our country."

So spoke the Father of our Party in a time of grave crisis and national uncertainty. And Lincoln's words have never been more relevant.

For 1980 is a year piled high with difficulty. Wherever we turn, we seem beset with problems. But it isn't enough for you and I to criticize the failures of those who hold national responsibility. The people of Kansas know that much of our current dissatisfaction is spiritual in nature. They know, and we can never forget, that before we regain our greatness as a nation, we must first regain our self-respect.

A POSITIVE ALTERNATIVE IN 1980

It's not enough for Republicans to just criticize what we're against; we must tell the voters what we're for. Tell them we're for less taxation as an incentive to greater production. Tell them we're for unleashing the private sector to overcome the energy crisis. Tell them we're for a farm policy that promises a fair return to farmers and fairness to consumers.

And, having told the people of this state what we're for, we must go further and tell them how we can accomplish our objectives. Because if there's one thing we've learned in this unpredictable election year, it's that people are thirsty for leadership that can provide answers to their pressing problems. Slogans aren't enough: only well-reasoned responses will win the confidence of voters in 1980.

I believe I know something about problems and their solutions. As the Ranking Republican on the Senate Finance Committee, I deal nearly every day of the week with problems that affect the economy, energy, social security, welfare reform, tax reduction and health care -- the bread and butter issues that determine the quality of life in Kansas and the nation.

My work on the Finance, Agriculture and Judiciary Committees has served to remind me that government can be creative in addressing people's problems -- without becoming remote, insensitive or wasteful.

I read many letters that come to me from Kansans, and from people throughout America. They're not strangers in some foreign land, those letter writers - some are probably in this audience. They have problems. Problems buying shoes for the kids and groceries for the dinner table. Problems meeting the payroll or finding a job. Problems coping with the ocean of paperwork that Washington, D.C. calls federal regulation -- problems making a decent return on their agricultural or business investment.

That's what politics is all about. Those are the people we strive to serve. And service, for an individual or a party, is never something you lay down easily, nor walk away from with a light heart.

A CAUSE ABOVE PARTISANSHIP

Today is not one for partisanship alone. This convention, like the party it represents, cares deeply about reaching out to people in need, to people previously uninvolved in the political process, to thousands of Democrats and Independent voters who share our convictions and who will support our candidates if given good reasons.

You and I can provide those reasons.

We love politics, or we wouldn't be here. We can be, and at times we should be, partisans. We can raise our voices. We can even take pride in the fact that the policies we have been promoting for many years have finally enlisted the support of a majority of the American people.

But those things alone don't win elections. Neither do promises. But service to the citizen, and to the vision we all share of a great state and the greatest nation in the world -- that's what entitles a party to govern.

A TIME TO TAKE STOCK

Service is in my blood. It was thirty years ago, when I first ran for the Kansas legislature. It is today, twelve years after the people of this state first sent me to represent them in the United States Senate.

But there comes a time in most every life when you take stock of who you are and where you want to go. You ask yourself how you can render the greatest service to the friends and neighbors who have supported and sustained you over the years. You ask what is best for yourself and your family.

I've asked myself such questions lately. I've pondered the satisfactions as well as the frustrations of work in the Senate. I've thought about the challenges of the place, and about the impact I've had in key areas.

I've thought about the friendships established, on both sides of the aisle, and about the kind words of Democrats and Republicans who have said publicly that Bob Dole has been a positive force for change. They know the difference between a carping critic and a thoughtful advocate. That is a distinction worth making, and worth remembering.

Finally, I've thought about this state, what it means to me, and what its people have given me over the years. For nineteen years, they have honored me with their trust, and provided me with countless opportunities to pay back that trust in ways large and small.

CAN I DO SOMETHING TO HELP KANSAS?

Throughout my career, I've never forgotten the question with which I launched it thirty years ago: what could I do to serve the people of Kansas? I've pondered it often these last few weeks, even while thinking about the attractions of private life. And in the end, the answer remains the same.

I am pleased to announce that I am a candidate for re-election to the United States Senate. And I am moved to seek your support in a campaign that can sweep this state in November - and help put Ronald Reagan in the White House next January. In this year of crisis and opportunity, Elizabeth and I will be traveling all across Kansas, listening to voters and carrying our message of service and commitment. We promise you a campaign that is vigorous, a campaign that is enthusiastic, a campaign that is fair in the highest tradition of American politics.

It is not merely a personal victory we seek in November. It is not simply an endorsement of one party over another. Because we know that great challenges lie before us. The Eighties demand fresh ideas and Republicans must provide them. And we must return to an old idea as well -- to the role that God intended for this country from the moment of her birth -- as the last, best hope for freedom on a tired and oppressed globe, where too few men and women breathe free.

A VICTORY FOR KANSAS

So join with me, fellow Republicans, and win a victory, not for the party alone. Win a victory for the farmer. Win a victory for the working man and woman. Win a victory for the poor, the handicapped, and the generation of young people who have yet to come into their inheritance.

It won't be easy, and we cannot do it alone -- I know this from recent experience. We will need the help of thousands of Kansans who share our beliefs, and are willing to work together in a cause greater than individual ambition.

But the problems of 1980 pale by contrast with the potential. It is that potential we must realize in the months ahead. We will not retreat from our responsibility. We will not bow meekly before those who are satisfied with an America that is second best. We will not accept the cruel hoax that says an economy must first be slowed to a crawl before inflation can be brought under control.

"The occasion is piled high with difficulty -- and we must rise with the occasion."

With those words ringing in our ears, we will leave this hall united for the campaign to come. We will carry our message throughout the state, and on November 4th, you and I and thousands of our neighbors will win a victory not just for themselves, but for Kansas.