

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

SH 141 Hart Building, Washington, D.C. 20510

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CONTACT: WALT RIKER,
DALE TATE 202/224-3135

STATEMENT OF SENATE MAJORITY LEADER BOB DOLE

A DAY OF HISTORY: TELEVISION IN THE SENATE

TODAY THE UNITED STATES SENATE CATCHES UP WITH THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. AS THE SENATE MAJORITY LEADER, LET ME WELCOME THE MILLIONS OF AMERICANS WHO ARE WATCHING THIS HISTORIC EVENT...AT HOME, IN SCHOOL, AT THE OFFICE, OR WHEREVER TECHNOLOGY TAKES US. THANKS TO TELEVISION, YOU THE VIEWER CAN NOW DIAL-IN YOUR DEMOCRACY. IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME COMING.

SENATE T.V.--THE CHALLENGE

IN MY VIEW, THE HALLMARK OF OUR GREAT POLITICAL SYSTEM IS AN INFORMED ELECTORATE. BUT FOR THE PAST SEVEN YEARS, THE SENATE HAS BEEN THE 'INVISIBLE HALF' OF CONGRESS, OFF-LIMITS TO ELECTRONIC MEDIA. TODAY, THAT DISAPPEARING ACT ENDS. KEEP IN MIND, HOWEVER, THAT THIS COVERAGE IS STILL AN EXPERIMENT. ON JULY FIFTEENTH WE WILL PULL THE PLUG ON THE CAMERAS FOR TWO WEEKS TO ASSESS WHAT HAS TRANSPIRED, AND TO DECIDE WHAT COMES NEXT. AND WHAT COMES NEXT WILL LARGELY BE DETERMINED BY HOW 100 SENATORS CONDUCT THEMSELVES.

TELEVISION IN THE SENATE REPRESENTS A CHALLENGE TO EVERY MEMBER OF THIS BODY. WE CAN EITHER RISE OR FALL TO THE OCCASION. IF MEMBERS PLAY TO THE CAMERAS WITH GIMMICKS, FILIBUSTERS AND ENDLESS SPEECHES, THEN WE HAVE FAILED THE TEST. OUR'S IS SERIOUS BUSINESS AND WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO THE PEOPLE--THIS IS THEIR SENATE. WE HAVE AGREED TO THE T.V. EXPERIMENT WITH THIS PURPOSE IN MIND: TO BRING THE SENATE TO THE PEOPLE, AND IN THE PROCESS MAKE THIS BODY MORE EFFICIENT, RESPONSIVE AND PRODUCTIVE.

IF MEMBERS CAN RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO EXPLOIT TECHNOLOGY, WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE THIS A LANDMARK EVENT: HISTORIANS CAN CALL THIS DAY A TURNING POINT, OR THE DAY THE SENATE WALKED OFF THE STAGE OF HISTORY INSTEAD OF ON.

(MORE)

SENATE PIONEERS

I AM HOPEFUL AND OPTIMISTIC THAT MY COLLEAGUES UNDERSTAND THE CHALLENGE. MY PREDECESSOR AND GOOD FRIEND HOWARD BAKER OF TENNESSEE IS ONE OF THEM, AND I AM PLEASED HE COULD BE ON CAPITOL HILL TODAY AS AN EYEWITNESS TO THIS HISTORIC DEBUT; MY COLLEAGUE, THE DISTINGUISHED MINORITY LEADER ROBERT BYRD OF WEST VIRGINIA IS ANOTHER, AND THE ABLE SENATOR FROM COLORADO, BILL ARMSTRONG, HAS REASON TO BE PROUD THIS AFTERNOON, TO MENTION JUST A FEW OF THE MANY MEMBERS WHO PLAYED A SUPPORTING ROLE IN BRINGING TELEVISION AND RADIO TO THE SENATE.

A NEW HISTORY BOOK

TODAY WE ALSO BEGIN PAGE ONE OF A VIDEO HISTORY BOOK. NO LONGER WILL THE GREAT DEBATES IN THIS CHAMBER BE LOST FOREVER. WHAT A THRILL IT WOULD BE TO WATCH HENRY CLAY, JOHN CALHOUN OR DANIEL WEBSTER IN ACTION. OF COURSE, THERE WERE NO CAMERAS OR TAPE RECORDERS ROLLING WHEN THOSE CONGRESSIONAL GIANTS SPOKE. BUT SADLY, THE SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF GREAT DEBATES FEATURING SUCH LEGENDS AS EVERETT DIRKSEN, LYNDON JOHNSON, HUBERT HUMPHREY AND HOWARD BAKER--MEN WHO LIVED DURING THE AGE OF RADIO AND TELEVISION--WERE ALSO LOST FOREVER. NOW, FUTURE GENERATIONS COULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO WATCH HISTORY IN THE MAKING, THANKS TO VIDEOTAPE.

A BUSY AGENDA

THIS WILL BE A BUSY WEEK, WITH A STACK OF MAJOR ISSUES THAT NEED IMMEDIATE ATTENTION. WE OPEN DELIBERATIONS TODAY WITH AN ISSUE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE--CONTINUED FUNDING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION. ON THE LINE WILL BE 9.6 BILLION DOLLARS FOR EACH OF THE NEXT FIVE YEARS FOR STUDENT AID, FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR BLACK COLLEGES, STUDENT LOANS AND MANY OTHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS BEGINNING WEDNESDAY, I HOPE TO BRING BEFORE THE SENATE A PEOPLE'S ISSUE -- TAX REFORM.

ON MAY SEVENTH, THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE--BY A 20-0 VOTE--APPROVED A REVOLUTIONARY OVERHAUL OF THE TAX CODE. IT IS A REFORM PACKAGE THAT PROMISES TO DO AWAY WITH MUCH OF THE CONFUSION, FRUSTRATION AND INEQUITY IN THE PRESENT SYSTEM.

ON THURSDAY, THE DEBATE ON TAX REFORM WILL BE TEMPORARILY SET ASIDE TO TAKE FINAL ACTION ON PRESIDENT REAGAN'S REQUEST TO SELL A MODIFIED ARMS PACKAGE TO SAUDI ARABIA. THEN WE WILL RETURN TO THE TAX REFORM DEBATE.

FOR THE PEOPLE

FOR THE NEXT SIX WEEKS, THE PEOPLE WILL BE WATCHING US GAVEL-TO-GAVEL AND IT WON'T TAKE THEM TOO LONG TO GET A HANDLE ON THIS PLACE. WE CAN GET DOWN TO BUSINESS AND TACKLE THE ISSUES OF THE DAY. OR WE CAN FOOL AROUND. IT IS UP TO US. LET US HOPE THAT WE MEET THAT CHALLENGE. IF WE DON'T, I AM CERTAIN WE WILL HEAR FROM OUR VIEWERS...LOUD AND CLEAR.

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