

Bob Dole



NEWS

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

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MOTOR-VOTER

This morning in a session with reporters, the distinguished Majority Leader summed up the motor voter debate by saying that Democrats want more people to vote, and the Republicans want less.

With all due respect to my friend from Maine, that's not what this debate is about at all.

This debate is about who wants more government, and who wants less.

It's about who wants more heavy-handed Washington mandates, and who wants less.

It's about who trusts government more and trusts the people less.

AN UNFUNDED MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR MANDATE

Let's face it, our governors, our state legislatures, our county officials, our city mayors, and our town supervisors have plenty of problems of their own without being forced to implement another multimillion dollar mandate from Washington politicians who think they always know what's best for the people back home, especially when they don't want to pay for it.

In fact, I probably would have voted for the bill, if Congress had come up with the cash to pay for it.

Last week, Senator Nickles and I offered an amendment to do just that, but the amendment was defeated on an almost straight party-line vote.

CRASS-ROOTS POLITICS

You know, I've heard a great deal this week about how this bill has come up from the grassroots.

This bill is not from the grassroots. It's from the crass-roots: crass-roots politics.

Forget about fraud, forget about citizenship--let's throw the bodies onto the motor-voter wagon and stick it to the states--no matter what the cost.

PARTY-LINE VOTES

How else would one explain why the Senate rejected, along straight party line votes, the common-sense amendments that were offered today.

Even the amendment offered by my colleague from Arizona, Senator McCain, which would have made registration easier for members of the Armed Forces, met defeat at the hands of party-line politics.

BILL HAS IMPROVED

I want to commend my distinguished colleague from Kentucky, Senator McConnell, for all his work on holding the line, and indeed, improving this bill with the core package of amendments.

This bill is substantially better because of the good work of the junior Senator from Kentucky.

I am also pleased that the distinguished Majority Leader and the senior Senator from Kentucky have both agreed to do their very best to ensure that the core package is preserved in the conference report.

If this commitment is kept--and I have no doubt it will be kept--the conference report will be a significantly better product than the original House and Senate versions of the bill.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

No doubt about it, the right to vote is among the most precious rights of American citizenship. But overlooked in all the motor voter exhaust has been an important fact: along with that right comes a certain level of personal responsibility. No matter how hard the government tries -- or no matter how hard some proponents of this bill hope -- it can't make anyone vote. People have to take it upon themselves to fulfill their obligations of citizenship.

The motor voter bill may not be out of gas--yet--but the American people have no interest in refueling it.

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