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NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

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BOATHOUSE UPDATE

TIME TO SET SAIL TOWARDS FUTURE:
PRESIDENT WELCOME TO TIE-UP BOAT
AT PRIVATELY-FUNDED WICHITA BOATHOUSE ANYTIME

I would like to thank the President of the United States for focusing the national spotlight for at least 48 hours on Wichita, Kansas -- the Air Capital of the world, home of McConnell Air Force Base, Wichita State University, home of well-known companies including Pizza Hut, the Coleman Company, Rent-A-Center, Beech, Cessna, Lear, Boeing Military, and home of a certain privately-funded boathouse along the banks of the Arkansas River.

I've seen a lot of stories about a so-called "war of words" between the White House and the Republican Leader. Well, as far as I'm concerned, it's all water under the boathouse. The only capsized fact I would like to turn upright is that there are no federal dollars at stake in the private renovation of the boathouse, a building scheduled to be torn down if it wasn't rehabilitated. Local officials, the charitable foundation renovating the building, and the area's Democratic congressman all agree to this fact. And the Arkansas River Foundation has already said that if the federal government doesn't grant the waiver to change the purpose of this building, it will raise private funds to reimburse the federal government.

So, when the White House Communications Director said last night that the "cost to the taxpayers is not as high as" the \$23 million cited by the President, he really means the cost to the taxpayers is zero -- not one million dollars, not 850,000 dollars, not one dollar.

Although some people passed it off as a joke, believe me, the news media recognized it as hard news, and followed-up with serious questions. My office had an obligation to set the record straight.

I believe the President would agree with me that it's time to put words behind us and set sail towards the future, charting a course for national challenges such as health care reform, fighting drugs and crime, reducing the deficit, and bringing peace to Bosnia.

I would also point out that the Arkansas River runs through both Wichita and Little Rock, so whenever President Clinton wants to sail up to Kansas, he's welcome to tie-up his boat at our privately-funded boathouse anytime.

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