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NEWS

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

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PRESIDENT CLINTON & REPUBLICANS

WHITE HOUSE ATTACKS OVERLOOK GOP HELP:
GET WHITEWATER FACTS OUT, GET ON WITH PEOPLE'S BUSINESS

As evidenced by remarks that President Clinton made about Republicans last night, these must be very trying times at the White House. Several of the closest friends of the President and First Lady have been forced to leave the Administration, and others are facing subpoenas related to the Whitewater affair.

So, perhaps the frustration coming out of the White House is understandable. But that does not mean White House attacks on Republicans have a shred of truth to them. Partisan finger-pointing doesn't do anything to answer the questions the American people are asking, or change the fact that the blame for the Whitewater mess rests solely with the White House.

President Has Had Republican Help

And despite the President's comments of last evening that the Republican party is just "an opposition party that stands up and says no," he has had our help on issue after issue. Republicans delivered the winning margin on the North American Free Trade Agreement, the defeat of which would have been seen as a stinging defeat for the White House. Senate Republicans and Democrats put aside partisan differences to pass the toughest anti-crime bill ever last year, a bill now bogged down by Democrat gridlock in the House. Republicans worked with the President to pass the Russian reconstruction package, we helped strengthen his hand in Somalia and Bosnia, we've supported his efforts to open Japanese markets to American products, and we've moved quickly to help him fill key government posts.

Health Care Reform

And when it comes to health care reform, I know I speak for my Republican colleagues in saying that we are ready to work with the President and work with the Democrat majority to improve our nation's health care system. That's why Republicans have introduced comprehensive alternative reform plans. That's why Republicans recently held a two-day retreat devoted exclusively to health care. That's why Republicans on the Senate Finance Committee will spend this weekend with our Democrat counterparts to discuss health care reform. And it's why this Senator hopes that we can ultimately arrive at a bipartisan approach that wins 80 or 85 votes in the Senate. The American people are looking for a second opinion on health care reform, and Republicans are determined to be part of the solution.

Role of Loyal Opposition

During the 1992 presidential campaign, then-Governor Clinton said, and I quote, "I understand how to work with people and get the best out of people in the legislative process." I'm not certain playing the blame game is the best way to "get the best out of" Republicans, but despite his remarks last night, we will continue to help him where we can. As the "loyal opposition," our role is clear. When President Clinton moves America in the right direction, then Republicans will support him. But when we believe the President is taking America down the wrong road, then it's our duty to try and change his direction, or, if that fails, then, yes, it's our duty to "apply the brakes" to bad legislation.

Spring Is Here

So let me just say to the White House that it has been a long, cold winter here in Washington, and maybe the weather has made everyone a little cranky. But it finally looks like spring is here. So take a few minutes to relax. Go outside. Take a walk. Enjoy the sun. Remember that the election is over and you won. There is no need to make every day a battle between Democrats and Republicans. We're all here to do the people's business, and the sooner you get the Whitewater facts out in the open, the sooner you can put it behind you, and the sooner we can get on with the people's business.

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