

Bob Dole



NEWS

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

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103RD CONGRESS

END OF SESSION STATEMENT **SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER BOB DOLE**

The day after President Clinton took office I said that the duty of Senate Republicans would be to support him when we believed his policies were moving America in the right direction; and to change or oppose his policies when we believed they moved America in the wrong direction.

And I think the record will reflect the fact that we fulfilled our duty in the 103rd Congress.

From NAFTA, to the Russian reconstruction program, to approving all the appropriations bills before the new fiscal year, to rapid approval of the President's cabinet and Supreme Court nominees, there were many areas of bi-partisan cooperation.

It goes without saying that there were also issues of disagreement. The so-called stimulus package. The budget. Health care reform. The crime bill. Campaign finance reform.

No Apologies For Protecting American Taxpayers

Republicans make no apologies for trying to protect the American taxpayer from bad legislation in each of these areas.

We make no apologies for opposing the largest tax increase in American history.

We make no apologies for fighting the government take over of our health care system.

We make no apologies for working for a crime bill that was heavier on the penalties and lighter on the pork.

And we make no apologies for opposing taxpayer-financing of our campaigns, and for supporting a complete ban on PAC's.

And the fact is that on each of these issues, we did much more than just say "no" -- we also offered responsible alternatives, based on principles of limited government, less spending, free enterprise, and individual choice.

The "Lock-Out" Congress

The Democrats would have you believe that this Congress was a "gridlock" Congress. It is much more accurate, however, to say that it was a "lock-out" Congress.

I said very early in this session -- and repeated it countless times -- that if President Clinton and the Democrats wanted Republicans there "at the landing"-- they had to include us at the take-off.

President Clinton said today that he was "sure there are some things he could have done differently," in dealing with Congress. He's right. And the most important thing would have been to listen to that advice on issues other than NAFTA.

We were locked out on the budget package. We were locked out from the start on health care reform. We were locked out on the crime bill. And we were locked out on campaign finance reform.

The fact is that Republicans had good ideas and worthy proposals on all these issues. And had we been invited in the room when legislation was being drafted, there would have been a real chance at true bi-partisan legislation that would have won the support of the American people.

There are many other areas where the Democrat majority bottled up Republican proposals and locked the door. A line-item veto, the balanced budget amendment, product liability and tort reform, and congressional reform, to name just a few.

And on several occasions, the White House also tried to lock-out the entire Congress--Democrats, as well as Republicans. We were locked out from a real congressional oversight role in the Whitewater matter, and we were locked out in advance of the president's Haiti deployment.

(more)

Put Congress Under New Management

The most important lock out, however, is the one that has lasted for 40 years. That's how long Republicans have been locked out of controlling both houses of Congress.

On November 8, the voters will have the keys to open that lock. And if Americans truly want a change from "business as usual" in Washington, they'll put Congress under new management.

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