

Bob Dole



NEWS

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

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REPEAL CLINTON GAS TAX INCREASE
STATEMENT OF SENATE MAJORITY LEADER BOB DOLE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Thank you, Chairman Roth for holding this hearing and responding so quickly to put the Clinton gas tax repeal in the fast lane.

As we all know, gas prices are at their highest level since the Gulf War, and we are here to provide much-needed tax relief to American travelers.

Last week I wrote to President Clinton inviting him to join my efforts to repeal the 1993 increase in the gas tax, which was part of his \$265 billion tax increase -- the largest in history.

The 1993 tax increase raised fuel taxes on all modes of transportation by 4.3 cents-per-gallon. This tax increase was not dedicated to the highway trust fund to maintain and to improve our nation's highways, roads, and bridges.

Rather than cut wasteful government programs and cut the size of government, the President chose instead to raise gas taxes, as well as income, estate, and Social Security taxes. This \$265 billion tax increase passed without a single Republican vote in either the House or the Senate.

The 1993 tax hike illustrates a fundamental difference between Democrats and Republicans. As Ronald Reagan said in 1982, "[w]e don't have a trillion dollar debt because we haven't taxed enough; we have a trillion dollar debt because we spend too much." Democrats raise taxes to fund a bigger and more intrusive federal government. Republicans cut wasteful spending to reduce the size and pervasiveness of the federal government -- and cut taxes, too.

I look forward to the testimony of the witnesses. While they may not have agreed with the President in 1993 when he raised their taxes, they may agree with him now that he thinks he raised their taxes too much.

The witnesses know all too well that gas prices are skyrocketing across the country. I understand that some families in California are forced to pay more than \$2.00 per gallon -- spending money they may otherwise need to feed, clothe, and educate their children.

While there are many factors contributing to the high gas prices, we know that 4.3 cents for each gallon is the 1993 gas tax hike. As Memorial Day approaches, and the start of the summer driving season, I am determined to repeal the 4.3 cents-per-gallon tax increase.

This tax hike has not only hurt Americans who drive to work, school, worship, or on vacation, it penalizes truckers and others who drive for their livelihood. Repealing this gas tax immediately will lower transportation prices, help to keep inflation in check and help to protect the jobs of millions of Americans who work in transportation-related businesses.

Repealing the 1993 gas tax is the fastest and surest way to lower gas prices. It will provide immediate relief -- especially to American families who drive to their summer vacations. The President's call for yet another government study will hardly help Americans traveling this summer -- especially since the study is not even due until mid-June.

I understand that the President is prepared to discuss repealing his 1993 gas tax hike. I welcome him to join my efforts to immediately cut transportation costs for American families and American businesses. Americans are over-taxed and need relief that will allow them to keep more of what they earn to spend as they see fit.

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