

mailed

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NEWS from
U.S. Senator
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FROM THE NATION'S CAPITOL

BY SENATOR BOB DOLE

THE FEDERAL BUDGET PROCESS

There is an historic opportunity for this Congress to make really positive steps in reversing the trend of ever-expanding federal spending and ever-growing federal deficits.

ENCOURAGING PROGRESS

Some progress can already be seen. This is the first year the new Congressional Budget Act has been in operation and the new House and Senate Budget Committees have gotten off to a quick start. In addition, on May 6th, the Senate passed my bill requiring that ever spending proposal offered in Congress be analyzed before it is voted on, to determine its probable impact on inflation over the future years.

So some progress is being made. Not enough has yet been done by any means. But I have detected a changing attitude among many of my colleagues about federal spending. Some who have traditionally been in the "spend, spend, spend,...tax, tax, tax" school of thought have begun to appreciate the fact that the federal government can't go on forever spending like there is no tomorrow.

The Budget Committees have agreed to a spending limit this year of \$367 billion which would hold the deficit to \$68.8 billion. That is still too high. I tried to lower the total during Senate floor debate but my amendment to cut the budget by \$3.2 billion was unsuccessful. Nonetheless, the proposed deficit is far preferable to the \$100 billion or more deficit for fiscal year 1976 which many had feared.

REVIEW ALL FEDERAL SPENDING

Now that the Congress has made these first small but promising steps toward fiscal restraint, the next logical step, in my view, is a comprehensive review of all federal programs to see where we can economize. I am convinced that many federal programs need administrative streamlining. Some were started many years ago and may have outlived their usefulness. A few may simply be failures that ought to be eliminated.

(more)

At a minimum, it is my strong feeling that they ought to be carefully reviewed and I have introduced legislation this week to require every committee of the Congress to analyze and evaluate the programs under their jurisdiction. No program should be exempt from close examination. This kind of scrutiny is long overdue, and I am hopeful that the rest of the Congress will agree that it is necessary.

Unless Congress makes an enthusiastic effort to reduce the size and especially the cost of federal government, the cycle of deficit, inflation, recession will continue and eventually grow beyond our ability to control it. If they do make that effort -- and I find increasing reason to be optimistic that they will -- we can bring our nation's financial affairs under control and more easily avoid inflation and recession in the future.

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