

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

2213 Dirksen Building, Washington, D.C. 20510

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1981

CONTACT: BILL KATS/RANDY MILLER
(202) 224-6521

KANSAS CITY IRS BUILDING STATEMENT

WASHINGTON -- Senators Bob Dole and Nancy Landon Kassebaum (R.-Kansas) and Congressman Larry Winn, also of Kansas, today wrote the Senate and House Public Works Committees to outline their specific reasons for requesting reconsideration of the GSA's selection of Pershing Square as the site of the new IRS Service Station. In releasing the letter, Senator Dole made the following statement:

"When Senator Kassebaum, Congressman Winn and I wrote the Public Works Committees on January 27, we promised to provide them with further information to support our statements that preferable sites were not given adequate consideration in the selection of Pershing Square. Because of the controversy surrounding our efforts, I think it is useful to release this letter to the public so the people of Kansas and Missouri can make their own judgment on our motivation.

"I hope that this presentation conveys the seriousness and the sincerity of our efforts to relocate the center. Our only concern is that the sites be weighed fairly. GSA consideration was inadequate because it ignored many costs of the Pershing Square site, as well as other problems such as parking, access, future expansion and federal urban policy. Pershing Square will be much more expensive than the other sites, and IRS does not favor Pershing Square because it doesn't meet IRS needs. Corresponding advantages of the Center City site in Kansas City, Kansas, such as cost, efficiency, parking and access, were given too little weight. We have detailed specifics in our letter.

"We feel that our efforts may well save the service center for Kansas City. The proposed Pershing Square building would be the most expensive federal building ever built. We are not sure that Congress would approve such an extravagance, when other sites will cost 30 percent to 40 percent less. In today's budgetary climate, a cheaper site makes ultimate approval more likely.

"This is especially true given the concern that has already existed at OMB and the Congressional committees about the Pershing Square proposal. I know that officials at OMB and the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee were already aware of the excess costs of the service center even before we raised the issue. I have been informed that it is possible OMB would reopen the decision on its own at a later date because of the exorbitant cost of the site.

"Therefore, our efforts to gain further reconsideration will not delay ultimate construction. Funds are not scheduled to be made available for the service center until 1984, meaning construction is not planned to begin until 1985, at earliest. By bringing this controversy out into the open at this early date, we are actually hastening consideration and actual construction.

"I would also like to emphasize that we are not intervening at the last moment and subverting the process. This is the process. Congressional consideration of the GSA prospectus is the critical step in the federal building process. Indeed, the prospectus is merely a recommendation for construction, and normally does not detail a specific site. Since the prospectus was sent to Congress late last fall, the first opportunity for Senate and House consideration is this session of Congress. We have endeavored to bring our concerns to the appropriate committees as early as possible in 1981, far before official consideration is due.

"I am no expert in the siting of federal buildings, but I do believe that federal structures should be built at the lowest reasonable cost and located where the governmental function can best be performed. I also believe that procedures should be followed and all important factors should be considered. I intend to see that this is the case, and I intend to see that Kansas City, Kansas, which has only 3 percent of Kansas City's federal office space, is given a fair shake. As Congress cuts dozens of important programs, we shouldn't needlessly waste tens of millions of dollars."