

News from Senator

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BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

SH 141 Hart Building, Washington, D.C. 20510

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CONTACT: WALT RIKER,
DALE TATE (202) 224-3135

REMARKS OF MAJORITY LEADER ROBERT DOLE COUNCIL OF 100

WASHINGTON -- Thank you Sam. It is always a pleasure to address the Council of 100. I am particularly pleased that you are honoring Trudi Morrison, the Senate's new Deputy Sergeant at Arms. As the first black and first woman to hold that position, Trudi has become a unique and important figure in the Senate's history. She was selected on the basis of her experience as a prosecutor, dedicated service at the White House, and extensive administrative and political expertise -- these are qualifications that serve her well as the second in command of an office which has 18,000 employees and does everything from maintaining the Capitol's Police Force to escorting visiting Heads of State. She is a highly valued addition to our team and I am gratified that she accepted the job.

THE KEY TO OUR FUTURE

I want to speak today on a subject we both care about deeply and that is the role of blacks in the Republican Party during the remainder of this century. Our party is moving toward majority status, even though Democrats regularly receive over 90 percent of the black vote. Some experts are now saying we don't need significant black support and couldn't get it even if we tried. I don't subscribe to that theory any more than you do. I believe that black voters hold one of the keys to our becoming -- and remaining -- the majority party at all levels of Government.

As we try to make further progress with black voters, we must look to you -- the party faithful -- for advice and leadership. In the proud tradition of Sam Jackson -- a man I was honored to call my friend -- and under the current stewardship of Elaine Jenkins, the Council of 100 has been at the forefront of efforts to make the two-party system work for black Americans. You have been in the trenches -- you know how difficult the task before us is. Your help and continued support is crucial in steering the party over the rocky road that lies ahead.

A SOLID RECORD

You are among our most articulate and effective spokespersons when it comes to spreading the word about what it really means to be a Republican. You know we still hold to our historic ideal -- that no man can be free so long as his neighbor is in bondage. It is the ideal of individual responsibility along with the legal and economic tools to make the most of that responsibility. It is the ideal of inviting black Americans in from the economic reservations to which previous administrations, however noble their intentions, condemned them.

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We take pride in our record and bristle at the pretense that the other party somehow has an exclusive claim on civil rights. Under the leadership of a Republican President, a Republican controlled Senate passed a twenty-five year extension of the Voting Rights Act -- three times longer than any of the previous extensions passed while the Democrats were in control. Under the leadership of a Republican President, a Republican controlled Senate passed the Martin Luther King Holiday Bill -- a bill that had languished for nearly 15 years while the Democrats were in control.

We offer new ideas and new hope for the economic betterment of America's disadvantaged. We offer enterprise zones for the revitalization of our distressed inner cities; the youth opportunity wage for black teenagers who have been priced out of the job market; and tax reform to alleviate the disproportionate financial burden imposed on the working poor by the current system. Never before has any administration proposed and supported such sweeping tax revisions--revisions that will take many low-income working Americans off the tax rolls altogether.

USING OUR RESOURCES

We have a record we can be very proud of, but there are also some areas where, clearly, we can do a better job. Black Republicans represent a rich resource of talent -- a resource too precious to waste. We must work harder to increase black participation in Federal procurement programs and appoint more blacks to Government office. And by doing so, we will provide role models who will help other black Americans identify with the Republican party.

We must also make better use of your networks and grassroots political contacts to field more black Republican candidates. We must encourage and support black Republicans who run for office and persuade black Democrats who have become disillusioned with their party to join us, as you so effectively helped us to do with Bill Lucas.

Finally, we must strengthen the representation of black Republicans at our State and National conventions through early organization and vigorous political activism at the grass roots level. For there can be no better way to show black America that our party is truly open than to have black Republicans visibly active at our conventions, making a significant impact on the candidate selection process.

CONCLUSION

The task before us is great -- but our strength is resolute. The time has come to run, not walk; persuade, not debate; work, not languish in indecision. We will never concede our Party's rightful heritage; we will never give up the cause. Let our goal be that by the year 2000, the GOP will be the majority party among voters of all races and colors.

Thank you very much.

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