

Bob Dole



NEWS

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MAY 23, 1991

CONTACT: WALT RIKER
(202) 224-5358

FRONT-PAGE TEST

DOLE ANTI-KEATING AMENDMENT WOULD REQUIRE
DISCLOSURE OF CONGRESSIONAL CONTACTS WITH AGENCIES;
CONSTITUENT SERVICE SHOULD BE SUITABLE FOR FRONT PAGE

IN ITS RECENT REPORT ON THE SO-CALLED "KEATING FIVE," THE SENATE ETHICS COMMITTEE EMPHASIZED THE NEED TO ESTABLISH CLEAR-CUT RULES ON CONGRESSIONAL CONTACTS WITH FEDERAL AGENCIES.

AS A FOLLOW-UP TO THE ETHICS COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION, THE DISTINGUISHED MAJORITY LEADER AND I HAVE APPOINTED A BIPARTISAN TASK FORCE ON CONSTITUENT SERVICE.

THE TASK FORCE -- WHICH IS CHAIRED BY SENATORS FORD AND STEVENS -- WILL OFFER SOME SUGGESTED GUIDELINES LATER THIS YEAR.

IN THE MEANTIME, I THOUGHT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO OFFER THIS AMENDMENT, WHICH ADDRESSES THE CONGRESSIONAL-CONTACTS ISSUE BY PROPOSING SOMETHING-CALLED THE "FRONT-PAGE" TEST.

THIS TEST -- WHICH IS PART OF THE REPUBLICAN CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM PACKAGE -- EMPHASIZES THE DISCLOSURE OF CONGRESSIONAL CONTACTS, NOT THEIR OUTRIGHT PROHIBITION.

IN A NUTSHELL, THE FRONT-PAGE TEST WOULD REQUIRE FEDERAL AGENCIES TO KEEP A MONTHLY LIST OF ALL UNWRITTEN CONGRESSIONAL CONTACTS CONCERNING 1) POTENTIAL OR ONGOING ENFORCEMENT MATTERS, AND 2) PROCEEDINGS RELATED TO THE AWARD OF AGENCY CONTRACTS.

THESE LISTS WOULD SPECIFY THE SOURCE OF THE CONTACT, THE STATED PURPOSE OF THE CONTACT, AND ANY INFORMATION OR ACTIONS REQUESTED.

THE LISTS WOULD THEN BE FORWARDED TO THE APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE FOR PUBLICATION IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON A SEMI-ANNUAL BASIS.

THE FRONT-PAGE TEST WOULD ALSO REQUIRE FEDERAL AGENCIES TO INCORPORATE -- INTO THE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC FILE -- ALL LETTERS AND OTHER WRITTEN CONGRESSIONAL COMMUNICATIONS ON ENFORCEMENT MATTERS AND AGENCY CONTRACTS.

AGAIN, THIS IS A DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENT, NOT AN OUTRIGHT BAN.

AS I'VE SAID BEFORE, MEMBERS OF CONGRESS SHOULD CONTINUE TO GO BAT ON BEHALF OF THEIR CONSTITUENTS.

THAT'S OUR JOB, AND FRANKLY, THAT'S WHAT THE PUBLIC EXPECTS.

BUT IF WE'RE NOT WILLING TO READ ABOUT AN INTERVENTION ON THE FRONT-PAGE OF THE NEWSPAPERS, THEN WE OUGHT TO THINK TWICE ABOUT MAKING THAT PHONE CALL OR WRITING THAT LETTER.

SOME OF MY COLLEAGUES MAY BE WONDERING WHY I AM OFFERING THIS AMENDMENT.

WELL, THE REASON IS SIMPLE.

CONSTITUENT SERVICE IS -- UNDER ANY STANDARD -- A CAMPAIGN FINANCE ISSUE.

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WANT TO KNOW WHETHER THE KEATING-STYLE QUID PRO QUO IS THE RULE OF THE CAMPAIGN FINANCE GAME, OR THE EXCEPTION.

AND THEY WANT TO KNOW WHETHER "BIG-MONEY" CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTORS GET SPECIAL TREATMENT WHEN IT COMES TO CONGRESSIONAL HELP WITH A PESKY FEDERAL REGULATOR.

NO CAMPAIGN FINANCE PROPOSAL CAN LEGITIMATELY BEAR THE NAME "REFORM" IF IT DOES NOT OFFER A SOLUTION TO THE PERCEIVED ABUSES THAT MASQUERADE UNDER THE HEADING "CONSTITUENT SERVICE."

THE FRONT-PAGE TEST MAY NOT BE THE PERFECT SOLUTION, BUT IT'S A SOLUTION THAT'S SIMPLE ENOUGH, AND COMPREHENSIVE ENOUGH, TO GUARANTEE PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE PUBLIC'S ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES.

###