

Bob Dole



NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

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SENATE MAJORITY LEADER BOB DOLE
CPAC CONFERENCE
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I've been coming to CPAC meetings for a long time, but this one is special. This time, I have one basic mission, and that's to tell you, "thank you."

You have been proud to be conservatives, when being conservative was not in fashion.

You were drawn to politics not for power, but by the power of your ideas.

You are the reason we are living a little miracle this winter.

For not only does the Republican Party control the Senate and the House, most governorships and more legislative bodies than anyone can remember--but conservatives now firmly control the Republican Party, and nothing could be better for America.

Reining in Government

Together we will reconnect American government with the wishes of the American people. We will rein in government at home in ways you have been advocating and the people have been demanding for years.

We've already passed legislation to stop unfunded mandates. We are about to pass a balanced budget amendment. Let me be clear. We will pass the balanced budget amendment. I predict we will be ready to send it to the States before the month is out.

And on the theory that we'll have a President who knows how to use it in a couple of years, we will soon grant Ronald Reagan's fondest wish: We will pass the line item veto.

We're about to roll back oppressive regulation with the most sweeping deregulatory bill in memory. We'll force term limits to a vote. We will cut taxes. And--because one of the most oppressive aspects of our government is the way every year it forces Americans to fill out and sign documents so long and complicated only lawyers and accountants can understand them--we're going to take a long, serious look at a flat tax.

Americans are demanding a government made more free by insisting on a government that is more limited, and we will give it to them. Fewer Federal programs, more power to the States, more freedom for our people. We will roll back laws and regulations from Amtrak to the Zebra Mussel Research Program, working our way through the alphabet soup of government.

And as we do, our guide will be this question: Is this program a basic function of a limited government, or is it an example of how government has lost faith in the judgements of our people and the potential of our markets?

More Freedom, Less Government

I believe that, more often than not, the answer to this question will justify less federal involvement, fewer federal rules and regulations, a reduction in federal spending, and more freedom and opportunity for our states and our citizens.

It's not complicated. More freedom, less government. That's my mission, and I know it's yours, as well.

Liberals are a little upset about this, of course. They say all we want to do is pass the buck. But our desire to see power removed from Washington is not because we are timid about our ideas, it is because we have faith in the American people. One of the things that we know for sure is that sprawling government and strangling regulation not only squeeze the wallet, they stifle the spirit, as well. It is the American spirit you and I are about to set free.

To accomplish that goal, we will dust off my favorite Amendment, the 10th Amendment--the one that reads: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States, respectively, or to the people." You can find it in the Bill of Rights.

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Liberals and "Rights"

Unfortunately, liberals seem to discover a new right every time they stumble across something that's wrong in this country. The trouble is, liberals think America is what's wrong, and we know America's biggest problem is having a government run by liberals. They think "rights" are something a government gives to the people. We think that Jefferson got it right--that we are endowed by our Creator, not by government, with certain inalienable rights. Government exists to secure those rights, not to dream up new ones.

Liberals think people are only free to the extent they are guaranteed resources, which become entitlements, which somehow become rights. And then everyone loses. Let me give you an example. It involves the right to an elevator.

A few years ago, Mother Teresa--I'm not making this up--and her nuns announced a plan to turn some burned-out buildings in the South Bronx into a homeless shelter--and they were ready to spend \$500,000 for the necessary reconstruction. The only unusual thing about their plan was that the nuns, in addition to their vow of poverty, avoid the use of modern conveniences.

Mother Teresa is a remarkable woman. But she is no match for determined bureaucrats. New York's building code requires an elevator in every new or renovated multiple-story building, and despite the fact that the Missionaries of Charity would never use the elevator because of their beliefs, they were told that the law would not be waived, and if they wanted a shelter, they would have to install a \$100,000 elevator. Mother Teresa gave up, canceled the project, and spent the \$100,000 on soup and sandwiches for the poor.

So today, homeless people sleep outside the building, in the shadow of what could have been shelter. But this is how liberals think: Those people may be out in the cold, but at least they don't have to walk up stairs.

But maybe Mother Teresa shouldn't give up on America. Because of last November, a whole lot of liberals left Congress, Governor's offices, and City Halls, and in two more years we'll get them out of the White House, as well.

A Color-Blind America

And while we're straightening out the confusion about rights in America, I think we should ask ourselves an important question. Do we need a color-blind America? I think we do.

Do we want an America that lives up to the dream of Martin Luther King, an America in which each of us is judged by the content of our character and not by the color of our skin?

Or do we want to embrace the liberal vision of an America in which individual rights are trampled by the newly discovered rights of groups; an America beset by factions and grievance groups competing for the special favors of government?

This has been an issue on my mind and on my agenda for a long time. Nearly one year ago, in marking the 40th Anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education, I rose on the Senate Floor and said that

"it is self-deception, pure and simple, to believe that America's tattered social fabric can somehow be patched together simply by using an ever-expanding list of 'rights' as the stitches.

"No right can solve the daunting problem of illegitimacy. No right can end the violence in our inner cities. No right can raise educational standards and guarantee educational success."

The simple truth is, of course, that government has nothing to give to anyone except that which it takes away from someone else--which is why the "government knows best" attitude in Washington has been so offensive to so many for so long. And it is why a great debate is about to erupt in this city and around the country over the policies of affirmative action.

Let there be no doubt: We needed the Brown decision, and the civil rights legislation of the 60's. America is a better country because of them. But the fight for equal opportunity for all Americans was never intended to be a guarantee of equal results.

My good friend Hubert Humphrey said when arguing for passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Bill that he "will eat the paper on which the bill was written were it ever used to promote quotas or racial preferences."

But now we all have indigestion from living in an America where the government too often says that the most important thing about you is the color of your skin or the country of your forefathers. That's wrong, and we should fix it.

Reforming Welfare

We must also act to correct Federal policies intended to lift up our children, but which instead are holding them down. Welfare is one example.

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Since the so-called War on Poverty began in 1965, we have spent more than \$5 trillion trying to defeat poverty. Yet, today there are more children in poverty than at any time in our nation's history. Liberals paint our ideas as Draconian. But liberal policies are the monster in this story.

No, we must not abandon today's children, but neither should we subsidize what we know will be their torment tomorrow. We should stop cash payments to children having children and provide food and shelter for them and their babies in other ways. And we must recognize that the answers to our crisis in welfare lie not in Washington, but in the states, cities, and towns across America.

Facing Up to the War on Drugs

Another great assault on the next generation is the frightening return of rising drug use. When Bill Bennett was drug czar, drug use was going down. The kids were saying "no." We were winning. But today we have a commander-in-chief who has gone AWOL in the war against drugs. We must face up to this problem. Just as we cannot turn away from babies on welfare who have no choices, we must act to save their older brothers and sisters who have too many. We must not abandon our children.

America's Place in the World

Finally, let me touch a moment on America's place in the world. I have spent a lot of time tonight talking about limiting the responsibilities of government. But there is one responsibility only the Federal Government has: to protect our freedom.

To do that the United States must become again a strong, unapologetic leader in the world. We must never be reluctant about our greatness or ashamed of our strength. We must never forget that America has been the greatest force for good the world has ever known. Our success has fueled a global revolution of liberty, shining light where it was once thought totalitarian darkness would always reign.

We must stop this pattern of placing the agenda of the United Nations before the interests of the United States. And we must not subjugate American principles and beliefs to the strait-jacket of global opinion. Sometimes when America stands alone, if she stands for freedom, that's enough. When we take our revolution back to the White House in 1996--and we will--we will vow that America's policies and American soldiers will never again be in the hands of the United Nations or Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

Remaining True to Our Beliefs

Let me close. My first election was to the job of county attorney. I have never forgotten why the people of Russell, Kansas, elected me to that office, or why they sent me to the State Legislature, or the U.S. Congress or the United States Senate. They wanted a voice in their government. They wanted me to fight for a government that reflected their values, and protected their rights. That is still my mission.

In the spring of 1961, Ronald Reagan said, "In this land occurred the only true revolution in man's history. All other revolutions simply exchanged one set of rules for another. Here for the first time the Founding Fathers...evolved a government based on the idea that you and I have the God-given right and ability within ourselves to determine our own identity."

This spring a great contest will be waged over that very idea, over the principles by which America will govern itself in the years ahead. Liberals and conservatives embrace profoundly different ideas about government's proper role and size and intrusiveness in our lives. We disagree with liberals about some fundamental social values. We have a different understanding of America's place in the world, and her history and future in it.

As Abraham Lincoln said, "The most reliable indication of public purpose in this country is derived through our popular elections." I think the public was quite clear on November 8. The American people have entrusted us with their hopes and with their dreams. They have asked us to lead, and we will. As long as we remain committed to ideas and not power, as long as we remain true to our beliefs, we will prove worthy of their trust.

And let me end tonight with the words that Ronald Reagan spoke at this gathering 14 years ago, when he came to thank you for your help in starting the Reagan Revolution.

"Fellow citizens, fellow conservatives, our time is now. Our moment has arrived. We stand together shoulder to shoulder in the thickest of the fight. If we carry the day and turn the tide, we can hope that as long as men speak of freedom and those who have protected it, they will remember us, and they will say, 'Here were the brave and here was their place of honor.'"

Thank you very much.

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