

Bob Dole



NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

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BALANCED BUDGET VOTE

CLOSING STATEMENT OF SENATE MAJORITY LEADER BOB DOLE: "TODAY, WE BEGIN TO SPEAK FOR THE FUTURE"

Like most Senators, I've lost track of the meetings I've attended. But a few years back, I was in a meeting that I will never forget. Some would say that the people I met with weren't all that important. They weren't Presidents or Prime Ministers. They didn't run big businesses. In fact, most of them didn't even have a job.

Who were they? They were high school seniors--one hundred of them--one boy and one girl from each state.

The reason why I will never forget that day is because of what they taught me--and what they should teach all of us.

"Who Speaks for the Future?"

Sometime during our meeting, one young man stood up and said, "Senator, it seems like every group of Americans is represented in Washington. Everyone has somebody who speaks for them." "But who speaks for us?" he asked me. "Who speaks for the future?"

It was a good question then. And it's a good question now. And for far too long, the answer has been that "No one speaks for the future."

Instead, we've piled deficit upon deficit, mortgaging our children's future for the temporary convenience of the present.

Senate Making History

But today, the Senate will make a statement, and we'll make history in the process. We will finally begin to unpile the deficits. We will finally begin to speak for the future. And we'll do it with one word. Leadership.

Harry Truman was right when he said, and I quote, "Where there is no leadership, society stands still. Progress occurs when courageous...leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better." End of quote.

And let's be frank. When it comes to reducing the deficit, Congress has stood still--frozen in place year after year after year.

Republican Majority: Accepting Responsibility of Leadership

But in November 1994, Americans changed all that. For the first time in 40 years, they gave control of Congress to the Republican Party. And with that control came a responsibility. A responsibility to do what we promised...to act courageously...to seize the opportunity to change things for the better.

And under the leadership of Senator Domenici that's exactly what we've done. We've accepted the responsibility of leadership. We have made the tough choices. We have put a plan on the table that will result in a balanced budget within seven years.

Principle of Balancing Budget

This budget is based on the underlying principle that we simply cannot go on spending our children's money.

In fulfilling that principle, those bureaucracies and programs counting on their usual big spending increases must learn to make do with less--\$961 billion less over the next seven years, to be exact. And we begin right here in Congress, as this budget reduces legislative branch spending by some \$200 million.

Those who are used to more and more power flowing to Washington, D.C. will have to adjust to a new tide, where power is carried back to the states and to the people.

And we will have to learn how to make do without the Department of Commerce, and its more than 140 federal departments, agencies, and programs. This Senator is confident that we'll do just fine, thank you.

Preserve, Improve, Protect Medicare

And despite the rhetoric coming out of the White House, this budget also recognizes that government has certain responsibilities.

Responsibilities like taking the steps necessary to preserve, improve, and protect Medicare, which three of the President's Cabinet members tell us will go bankrupt in seven years if we do nothing. We do this by slowing the growth rate of Medicare--while still allowing

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Medicare spending to increase by \$1.6 trillion.

This budget also recognizes that there are those in need who depend on government programs, and who often have nowhere else to turn.

Therefore, it provides for an additional \$36 billion in spending for Medicaid.

It increases funding for the Women Infant Children Program by \$2 billion.

It increases funding for food stamps, for Aid to Families with Dependent Children, for Supplemental Security Income, and for the Earned Income Tax Credit.

Tax Relief for American Families

Is the budget perfect? Of course not. Some of us would have reduced spending in other programs than the ones chosen. Some of us would have increased spending in others. And some of us--including this Senator--would have dedicated more funds to reducing the tax burden on Americans.

But make no mistake about it, this budget does provide tax relief. The \$170 billion fund this budget creates must and will be devoted to tax reductions that will help America's families, stimulate savings, increase investment, create jobs, and promote economic growth.

Family tax credits, spousal IRA's, estate tax relief for family businesses, and a capital gains rate reduction are some of the actions I will promote as Senate Majority Leader, and as a member of the Finance Committee.

Additionally, it's no secret that when the House and Senate return from conference on our respective budgets, we are likely to return with a budget that will dedicate even more funds to tax relief.

Leadership vs. the Politics of Fear

When Republicans drew up our plan to reach a balanced budget, we also drew a line in the sand.

And we said that those who are serious about balancing the budget will cross that line and work with us, or propose an alternative.

And those who are not serious will stay on the other side of the line and offer no leadership. I regret to say that President Clinton has never come close to crossing that line.

While he says we have the wrong plan, he never comes close to saying what the right plan is--except one that gave America \$200-300 billion deficits well into the next century, and that would have added \$1.2 trillion to our debt in the next five years. Thankfully, that plan was defeated by a vote of 99-0.

Instead of leadership, the President offers fear. And he casts his net far and wide. Seniors...children...the so-called middle class...the needy...farmers...students...the list goes on and on. Each day, the President tells them they should be afraid of our budget...they should be afraid of Republicans.

Let me again quote the words of Harry Truman. Truman said, and I quote: "America was not built on fear. America was built on courage, on imagination, and an unbeatable determination to do the job at hand."

So, we will win this vote today. We will take our budget to conference. We will work with the Republican majority in the House. And we will return with a plan that will balance the budget in seven years. We will do it with the help of the American people--people who have always exhibited courage, imagination, and an unbeatable determination to do the job at hand.

"Today, We Begin to Speak for the Future"

I conclude where I began. With speaking for the future. And I conclude not by quoting Harry Truman, but by quoting another President.

Quote: "Somewhere at this very moment, another child is born in America. Let it be our cause to give that child a happy home, a healthy family, a hopeful future. Let it be our cause to see that child reach the fullest of their God-given abilities..."

Those words were spoken by Bill Clinton in 1992, as he accepted his party's nomination for President.

And with passage of this budget, Republicans will turn those words into action. Because somewhere at this very moment, another child is born in America. And that child comes into the world already owing \$18,500 as his or her share of the national debt. That child comes into the world with the knowledge that he or she will pay \$163,300 in taxes during his working life just to pay off interest on the debt. That child comes into a world facing a future of fewer jobs, fewer opportunities, and higher interest rates.

Today, we begin to change that child's world for better. Today, we begin to speak for all the children born today and in the days to come. Today, we begin to speak for the future.

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