

Bob Dole



NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

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Contact: Clarkson Hine
(202) 224-5358

BALANCED BUDGET RESOLUTION

CLOSING STATEMENT OF SENATE MAJORITY LEADER BOB DOLE

Next Tuesday is July 4th. And in neighborhoods and communities across the country, Americans will gather to celebrate our freedom and our independence.

I am proud to say that, with the passage of this historic budget resolution, it will be a very special July 4th--because this resolution will result in more freedom and more independence for all Americans.

And I want to spend just a few minutes before the final vote to discuss the freedoms this resolution strengthens and expands.

Freedom From Burden of Crushing Debt

First and foremost, this resolution will begin to free our children and grandchildren from the burden of a crushing debt--a debt that stifles opportunity and job creation.

Let me share with you some very wise words: Quote: "If the nation is living within its income, its credit is good. If, in some crisis, it lives beyond its income for a year or two, it can usually borrow temporarily at reasonable rates. But if, like a spendthrift, it throws discretion to the wind, and is willing to make no sacrifice at all in spending...if it extends its taxing to the limit of the people's power to pay...if it continues to pile up deficits, then it is on the road to bankruptcy."

Those aren't the words of Bob Dole. They're not the words of Pete Domenici. They are, instead, words spoken 62 years ago by President Franklin Roosevelt.

And Franklin Roosevelt was absolutely right. The fact of the matter is that for much of the past four decades, government has thrown discretion to the wind. No sacrifices in spending have been made. Taxes have been extended to the limits of Americans power to pay. Deficits have piled up. And, as a result, America is well down the road to bankruptcy.

Today, at last, we begin to change direction. Today, we turn away from bankruptcy and set a course for a balanced budget and for fiscal solvency.

We do it without cooking the books. We do it without smoke and mirrors. We do it without--as some have dramatically suggested--throwing seniors, children, and the less fortunate out on the streets.

Rather, we do it by making the tough decisions the people sent us here to make. We do it by slowing the rate of growth of federal spending. Yes, some bureaucracies will be eliminated entirely. A few others will have to learn to make do with less than they receive now. But the vast majority will actually be receiving increases--just not as much as they have become accustomed to.

Under this budget resolution, we will achieve savings of \$894 billion through reductions in government spending. Still, federal spending will increase from 1.5 trillion this year to 1.876 trillion in the year 2002.

For those who missed that, let me repeat: Under this budget resolution, federal spending will increase from 1.5 trillion this year to 1.876 trillion in the year 2002.

Now that may come as a surprise to those who may have believed what they've been hearing from some on the other side of the aisle. Why, if you believed what they said, you would think that Republicans were shutting down the entire government once and for all.

Some might say that's a pretty good idea. But that's not what we propose. And repeating and repeating and repeating that accusation won't make it true.

Freedom From Excessive Taxation

With this resolution, Americans can also celebrate the fact that they will have the freedom to save and spend more of their hard earned money as they see fit, as this resolution provides for \$245 billion in long overdue tax relief.

Republicans believe that America's families are overtaxed.

We believe our tax system should encourage--rather than

(more)

discourage--investment and job creation.

We believe our tax system should be overhauled--and we have charged a blue-ribbon commission with the responsibility of developing some long-term recommendations.

But Americans need relief now. That's why this budget makes \$245 billion in relief available for overtaxed Americans.

This relief should be targeted to families--such as with a \$500 per child tax credit, and marriage penalty relief. And it should increase savings and investment, and create jobs--such as by cutting the capital gains tax rate, and reducing estate taxes for family-held businesses.

And as Senator Domenici and many other Republicans have stated, these tax reductions will not take effect unless and until the non-partisan CBO certifies that we are absolutely on the path to a budget that is balanced in the year 2002.

Freedom From Big Government

With this resolution, Americans can also celebrate the fact that they, their states, their communities, and their businesses will have more freedom from big government, and more independence to make the decisions that affect their lives.

This budget reduces bureaucracies. It makes government leaner, more efficient, and more cost-effective. It returns power to our states, our communities, and our citizens.

Freedom From Worry About Future of Medicare

Under this resolution, American will also be free from the worry that Medicare will go bankrupt in the next seven years.

Medicare is one issue that has been the subject of a great deal of political rhetoric--although the rhetoric has lessened somewhat since President Clinton's budget proposal acknowledged that Republicans were right, and that we must slow the growth of the Medicare program if it is to be preserved, protected, and improved. And this budget does just that.

Again, there are those who are trying to scare America's seniors into believing that Republicans are out to slash Medicare to the bone.

I don't know what those who seek to scare America's seniors would do. Are they advocating doing nothing? Of not reducing Medicare's rate of growth? Well, then they're advocating a future with no Medicare, because if we do nothing, Medicare will go bankrupt.

We will not allow Medicare to go bankrupt, nor will we allow Medicare to be cut to the bone. Indeed, under this budget resolution, Medicare spending per beneficiary will increase from \$4,816 per beneficiary to \$6,732 per beneficiary by the year 2002.

Safeguarding Our Freedom and Independence

Under this resolution, Americans will also know that their freedom and independence--which was purchased by the sacrifice of countless Americans who risked and lost their lives--will remain secure, as this budget resolution maintains our commitment to a national security second to none.

While this vote will give Americans much to celebrate, it is not the end of the process. As Senators know, this budget resolution only sets guidelines. During the Appropriations process, the House and the Senate will have to prove again that we have the courage to follow those guidelines. I am confident we will do just that.

There's a saying that's been around for about as long as America has: That there are two ways to get to the top of an oak tree. One is to climb. And the other is to find an acorn and sit on it.

Well, for too long, Congress has sat on the acorn, hoping that somehow our debt and our deficits could be reduced, and a balanced budget would magically sprout.

As Americans have hoped, however, this Congress is different. We chose to get to a balanced budget...to get to the top...by climbing the tree.

And make no mistake about it, there's still some climbing left to do. This budget resolution does not solve all America's problems. The President made a belated entry into the fight for a balanced budget, but at least he did enter the arena. And I hope he remains there in the months ahead.

In fact, if the President wanted to make this July 4th an even more meaningful Independence Day, he could do so by announcing that he will support and fight for passage of the Balanced Budget Amendment.

Let me conclude by saluting Senator Domenici for his tireless leadership in making this moment possible. As I have said before, the taxpayers of America have no better friend than the Senior Senator from New Mexico. I also want to thank the Senate Budget Conferees for their dedication and hard work--Senators Brown, Gorton, Grassley, Gregg, Lott, and Nickles.

Thanks, as well, to Speaker Gingrich, House Budget Chairman Kasich, and the House conferees. As we have throughout this Congress, House and Senate Republicans were able to work out our differences, and to focus on our mission--a mission of ensuring that America will always stand for freedom and independence.