

REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE

NAACP CONFERENCE

JULY 2, 1984

THANK YOU, BEN, FOR THAT VERY KIND INTRODUCTION. I'M NOT SURE I DESERVE ALL THOSE GENEROUS WORDS, BUT IT SURE IS NICE TO HEAR THEM ANYWAY. SOMEONE ASKED ME BEFORE I CAME UP HERE TODAY IF I DIDN'T FEEL AT ALL LIKE DANIEL ENTERING THE LION'S DEN. I TOLD HIM -- ON THE CONTRARY -- I FELT LIKE ONE OF THE LIONS MYSELF. AND, FAR FROM CONSIDERING THIS CONVENTION HALL A DEN, I LOOK UPON IT AS A HOME -- FILLED WITH OLD FRIENDS AND FELLOW SOLDIERS IN A WAR THAT HAS NOT YET BEEN WON.

A NEW KIND OF SLAVERY

SLAVERY IN AMERICA WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN PUT TO DEATH MORE THAN A CENTURY AGO. IN THE NAME OF ITS EXTINCTION, MY HOME STATE OF KANSAS BLED, AND LINCOLN WENT TO HIS GRAVE. BUT IT OUTLIVED THE FOUNDER OF MY PARTY. IT INFESTED OUR SOCIETY AND MOCKED OUR PRETENTIONS TO SELF-RULE. IT BLUNTED THE ECONOMIC AMBITION OF MILLIIONS. IT DELIVERED NOTHING MORE THAN SECOND CLASS CITIZENSHIP IN THE ASSEMBLY LINE AND VOTING BOOTH. IT IS WITH US STILL: IN HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT

AMONG BLACK TEENAGERS; IN A MEDIAN INCOME FOR BLACK AMERICANS THAT IS DRASTICALLY LOWER THAN THAT OF WHITE AMERICANS; AND IN A POPULATION THAT IS 11% BLACK AND ELECTED PUBLIC OFFICIALS THAT NUMBER BARELY 1% OF BLACKS AMONG THEIR RANKS.

PROTECTING THE LAW

UNLIKE THE DAYS OF CONSTITUTIONALLY MANDATED SLAVERY, TODAY'S GENERATION OF BLACK CITIZENS HAVE THE LAW AS AN ALLY. YET, EVEN THE LAW CAN BE EQUIVOCAL, OR FAR WORSE, UNENFORCEABLE. THAT IS WHY I SPONSORED THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT COMPROMISE -- TO GUARANTEE A GENUINELY OPEN POLITICAL PROCESS. I THOUGHT THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT WAS A COMPELLING PRIORITY BACK IN ¹⁹⁶⁵~~1964~~, WHEN IT WAS PASSED IN THE SHADOW OF SELMA AND THROUGH THE MORAL INFLUENCE OF ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THIS ONE. I BELIEVE IT IS JUST AS COMPELLING TODAY.

THE LAW HAS WORKED. IT HAS STRUCK LEGAL SHACKLES FROM MILLIONS OF PEOPLE FOR WHOM THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS BEFORE 1965 WAS A CRUEL HOAX. IT HAS LED TO THE ELECTION OF THOUSANDS OF BLACK OFFICIALS NATIONWIDE, AND THEIR ELECTIONS HAVE ENRICHED AMERICAN DEMOCRACY ITSELF. TO HAVE FAILED TO EXTEND THE ACT, OR TO HAVE FAILED TO

STRENGTHEN ITS ENFORCEMENT PROVISIONS, WOULD HAVE BEEN A CALLOUS SLAP IN THE FACE OF 22 MILLION PEOPLE AND AN ACT OF REENSLAVEMENT THAT NO ONE IN GOOD CONSCIENCE COULD HAVE TOLERATED.

PROUD ALLIANCES

AND SO IT IS THAT OF ALL THE STEPS I HAVE TAKEN IN MY PUBLIC LIFE -- AND IT IS A CAREER THAT SPANS DECADES -- I'VE NEVER BEEN PROUDER THAN IN FIGHTING FOR AN EXTENDED VOTING RIGHTS ACT. I'VE NEVER BEEN MORE IMPRESSED WITH LEGISLATIVE ALLIES THAN WITH BEN HOOKS, ALTHEA SIMMONS AND THE LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE ON CIVIL RIGHTS. I'VE BEEN PLEASED TO RENEW THAT ALLIANCE IN SECURING ENACTMENT OF THE KING HOLIDAY BILL AND ON ISSUES OF ECONOMIC FAIRNESS AND JUSTICE.

FOR INSTANCE, IN THE FOOD STAMP AREA, WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO CONVINCE THE CONGRESS AND THE PUBLIC THAT RECIPIENT BENEFITS THEMSELVES CANNOT BE THE MAIN TARGET FOR REDUCTIONS. INSTEAD, THE MAIN BURDEN MUST BE ON THOSE STATES WHERE ERRORS IN ADMINISTRATION AND OUTRIGHT FRAUD COST THE TAXPAYER A BILLION DOLLARS OR MORE. THERE IS NO CONTRADICTION IN ADMITTING WASTE, WHILE REFUSING TO RETREAT FROM BASIC SOCIAL COMMITMENT. WE CAN REDUCE WASTE WITHOUT SINGLING OUT THE RECIPIENTS THEMSELVES FOR SPECIAL RETRIBUTION OR UNEQUAL BURDEN.

SIMILARLY, IN THE TAX AREA, WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PUT AN END TO MUCH OF THE SPECIAL TAX RELIEF THAT HAD BEEN COSTING THE AVERAGE TAXPAYER BILLIONS OF DOLLARS A YEAR. INDEED, IN JUST 3 YEARS, WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH MORE IN THE WAY OF CLOSING TAX LOOP HOLES FOR THE RICH, THAN HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED UNDER ANY OTHER ADMINISTRATION IN THE PAST 30 YEARS. THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WANT THEIR TAXES REFORMED. THEY WANT AN END TO THE DOUBLE STANDARD OF TAXATION FOR WORKING PEOPLE AND TAXATION FOR THE SOPHISTICATED PLANNER OR EXPLOITER OF TAX SHELTERS. FAIRNESS IN THE TAX CODE IS NOT A SEXY ISSUE -- IT DOESN'T FIT WELL ONTO BUMPERSTICKERS OR BILL BOARDS. BUT ITS THE KIND OF THING THE NAACP HAS ALWAYS IDENTIFIED WITH AND I HAVE APPRECIATED YOUR SUPPORT.

GROVE CITY - THE CURRENT CHALLENGE

OUR ALLIANCE CONTINUES IN THE CURRENT LEGISLATIVE EFFORT TO PUT TEETH BACK INTO TITLE VI OF THE 1964 CIVIL RIGHTS ACT, AND 3 OTHER KEY CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS. IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT WE WOULD HAVE TO AGAIN BE DEBATING THE BREADTH OF THE 1964 CIVIL RIGHTS ACT, ON ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY DATE.

TITLE VI OF THAT LAW ACCOMPLISHED, THROUGH THE POWER OF THE PURSE STRINGS, WHAT COULD NOT BE ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH LEGAL FIAT OR MORAL IMPERATIVE. ITS MESSAGE WAS LOUD AND CLEAR: THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WOULD NO LONGER SUBSIDIZE RACIAL SEGREGATION AND DISCRIMINATION WITH

FUNDS TO WHICH ALL TAXPAYERS HAD CONTRIBUTED. FOR MOST, A FEDERAL FUND CUT-OFF WAS TOO DEAR A PRICE TO BE PAID FOR PRESERVING A DUAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE. MASSIVE DESEGREGATION OF SCHOOLS, HOSPITALS, TRANSPORTATION, AND A HOST OF OTHER PUBLIC SERVICES WAS THE RESULT.

THE MONUMENTAL STRIDES ACHIEVED UNDER TITLE VI MADE IT A WORTHY MODEL FOR LAWS ENACTED IN THE 1970'S BANNING FEDERAL AID TO DISCRIMINATION BASED ON SEX, DISABILITY OR AGE. BUT AS WAS THE CASE WITH THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT, THE LAW HAS NOW BECOME EQUIVOCAL. IN THE WAKE OF THE GROVE CITY DECISION, THE BLANKET OF PROTECTION EACH OF THOSE LAWS ALWAYS PROVIDED AGAINST FEDERALLY FUNDED DISCRIMINATION, HAS BEEN EATEN FULL OF HOLES.

CONGRESS IS ACTING SWIFTLY TO MEND THOSE HOLES. LAST WEEK, BY A VOTE OF 375-32, THE HOUSE PASSED A BILL WHICH WOULD RESTORE EACH LAW TO ITS PRE-GROVE CITY STRENGTH. IN THE SENATE, A MAJORITY FROM BOTH PARTIES HAVE COSPONSORED AN IDENTICAL MEASURE. I HOPE FOR FAVORABLE SENATE ACTION WITHIN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS AND AM COMMITTED TO SECURING ENACTMENT OF THE BILL THIS YEAR.

THE BILL HAS REMAINED VIRTUALLY IMMUNE FROM PARTISAN DIVISIONS -- A UNIQUE ATTRIBUTE FOR ANY SENSITIVE LEGISLATION IN AN ELECTION YEAR.

BUT SO IT HAS BEEN WITH EVERY MAJOR PIECE OF CIVIL RIGHTS LEGISLATION ENACTED INTO LAW AND ENGRAVED ON THE HEART OF AMERICA. FOR THERE IS NOTHING LIBERAL OR CONSERVATIVE ABOUT INTOLERANCE FOR BIGOTRY AND PREJUDICE. SOCIAL JUSTICE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A CAUSE THAT TRANSCENDS PARTY LINES.

CONCLUSION

WE MAY NOT AGREE ON ALL THE ISSUES, BUT POLITICAL DIFFERENCES ARE NOT A PROBLEM IN A DEMOCRACY. ONLY POLITICAL INDIFFERENCE POSES A THREAT TO POPULAR RULE. SO I INVITE EVERY ONE OF YOU TO KEEP YOUR MINDS OPEN. TAKE A HARD LOOK AT THE RECORD OF MY PARTY, WHOSE COMMITMENT TO CIVIL RIGHTS HAS BEEN CARRIED FORWARD BY MEN NAMED JAVITS, MCCULLOUGH, MATHIAS, AND BROOKE. LOOK AT THE MARGINS OF VICTORY FOR THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT EXTENSION AND THE KING HOLIDAY BILL. BOTH WERE PASSED WITH OVERWHELMING REPUBLICAN SUPPORT. THE PARTY OF LINCOLN REMAINS TRUE TO ITS HERITAGE. THE LIGHT OF CONSCIENCE HAS NOT GONE OUT.

SOME PEOPLE TELL ME INCREASED BLACK PARTICIPATION IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS WILL ONLY HELP THE DEMOCRATS. I DISAGREE. I SEE BLACK AMERICA AS A CHALLENGE FOR MY PARTY -- A VAST UNTAPPED RESOURCE.

I SEE MILLIONS OF MEN AND WOMEN WHO WANT AN ALTERNATIVE TO FEDERAL PATERNALISM -- WHO WILL SUPPORT A GOVERNMENT THAT ASKS FOR SACRIFICE, SO LONG AS THAT SACRIFICE IS SHARED EQUALLY, WHO WANT A GOVERNMENT THAT IS COMPASSIONATE, BUT REMEMBERS THE EFFECT OF DOUBLE DIGIT INFLATION ON THE POOR; WHO WANT A GOVERNMENT THAT IS GENEROUS, BUT REMEMBERS PEOPLE PREFER JOBS IN A HEALTHY PRIVATE SECTOR TO WELFARE CHECKS.

BUT BLACK AMERICA'S RISING POLITICAL INFLUENCE ISN'T JUST A CHALLENGE FOR MY PARTY. IT'S ALSO A CHALLENGE FOR ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS YOURS, WHICH BLACK AMERICANS LOOK TO FOR LEADERSHIP IN LEARNING HOW TO MOST EFFECTIVELY USE THEIR NEW FOUND POLITICAL CLOUT. THIS ORGANIZATION HAS ALWAYS PRIDED ITSELF ON ITS NONPARTISANSHIP, IT HAS ALWAYS ENCOURAGED ITS MEMBERS TO VOTE THE ISSUES. ON THE BASIS OF 75 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE, YOU KNOW THAT BLIND PARTISAN ALLEGIANCE CAN ONLY LEAD TO A POLITICAL LIMBO -- TAKEN FOR GRANTED BY ONE PARTY, GIVEN UP ON BY THE OTHER -- BLACK AMERICA'S VOTE COULD BE NEGATED JUST AS EFFECTIVELY AS IT WAS BY POLL TAXES AND LITERACY TESTS 20 YEARS AGO.

AS A REPUBLICAN, I INTEND TO FIGHT AS HARD AS I CAN TO PREVENT THAT FROM HAPPENING. AND I ASK YOU TO DO THE SAME. BECAUSE I WANT TO KEEP COMING BACK TO THE NAACP CONVENTIONS, AND EVENTUALLY LOOK OVER A

CROWD THAT IS 50% REPUBLICAN, INSTEAD OF 15.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH. AND NOW, I WOULD LIKE TO INTRODUCE
TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY ELIZABETH HANFORD DOLE.