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EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE, 6:00 A.M., NOVEMBER 9, 1987

ANNOUNCEMENT SPEECH OF SENATOR BOB DOLE
RUSSELL, KANSAS NOVEMBER 9, 1987

Thank you Nancy, and good morning everyone.

Elizabeth, Robin and I are grateful to all of you for joining us today. I appreciate Senator Kassebaum's remarks. The last time we were in Kansas together was at her father's 100th birthday. Alf Landon was a wonderful man. He never lost his sense of humor, his love of learning or his joy for living. We miss him very much.

I know many of you have come a good distance, and I'm thankful for that. I also recall a time in 1976 when President Gerald Ford joined me here, and that was another great day for Russell. I enjoy showing Russell off, although it doesn't take a whole lot longer now than it did when I was a boy.

When I look out on Main Street this morning, I see the faces of people who know me best -- or their children or grandchildren -- people who have always accepted me, and believed in me.

There are people standing here who long ago put quarters they couldn't spare in this cigar box. That generosity helped reshape my life.

I remember the experience -- many years ago -- that began when I felt a sting in the shoulder. I remember the first thing I thought about was home.

The goodness of the people of Russell over the years has been the source of my inspiration and my strength. The people who settled this community, like so

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here in Russell. I offer a willingness to work hard, to hang tough, to go the distance. I offer the strength and determination -- molded in America's smalltown heartland and tempered during a career of public service -- to bring common-sense answers to the complex problems facing America in its third century.

America's great heartland Presidents were plain-speaking men whose clear-eyed vision enabled them to make the tough choices: Abraham Lincoln, Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower and Ronald Reagan. My vision, like theirs, is shaped by the aspirations of shopkeepers and farmers, workers and everyday Americans. Like them, I see the opportunities before us. Like them, I see the dangers. Like them, I'm willing to make the tough choices needed to preserve opportunities for generations to come.

The Federal budget deficit is the single greatest threat to a prosperous and dynamic America. We do not expand opportunity when we burden our children with debt from our own self-indulgence. We will either sacrifice for our children or we will continue to make our children sacrifice for us. We have the privilege of choosing. Our children do not.

Since the deficit problem began, every Administration and every Congress has tried to postpone true reckoning. At no point has our government been willing to face and weigh the tough choices, to act resolutely to cut spending.

My pledge today is that we will tackle the runaway federal budget head-on -- without raising tax rates.

With the single exception of programs to assist vulnerable Americans, no area of Federal spending will be off-limits. Americans are fair-minded people. They are willing to endure some changes in federal programs -- if they know everyone is sharing equally.

There's nothing complicated about what needs to be done. It requires the same common sense and discipline every responsible wage-earner uses to balance the family books. We can no longer rely on stopgap economic fixes that only reel from one crisis to the next. I will sit down with Congressional leaders during my first weeks in office and we'll stay there as long as it takes, and we will not stop until we come up with a renewed commitment to a multi-year plan -- a new compact -- that ends with a balanced budget.

I will also seek an iron-clad assurance that we will never again confront such overwhelming deficits. That goal will require approval of two long-overdue measures.

First and foremost, it's time to amend the Constitution to require a balanced budget. Without a Constitutional restriction, Congress will always fall back on deficit spending.

many others across America, were immigrants and frontiersmen and homesteaders who knew that grit and endurance and reliance on one's neighbors were needed to build a better life for their children. They were optimists and builders; they harnessed invention and hard work to carve a life out of the wilderness. I have carried the spirit of this place with me throughout my life.

That is why I have come back home today to announce before family and friends, that I am a candidate for my party's nomination to the office of President of the United States.

I offer a record, not a resume.

A track record of nearly 11,000 votes in Congress, and 27 years of leadership that says:

I can make a difference.

I have made a difference.

I will make a difference.

Sometimes it isn't easy. Sometimes the cynics tell you it can't be done.

Social Security -- It was bankrupt, they said, and you couldn't fix it. But with leadership and hard work we fixed it.

Rural America -- It was on its back. They said you couldn't save it. But with leadership and hard work, we're bringing it back.

Voting Rights -- They said we'd lost our resolve, that a consensus couldn't be forged. But with leadership and hard work, we did it because all Americans, regardless of race, color, creed or physical disability should have the right to participate in the political process without fear or intimidation.

Taxes -- They said that taxes couldn't be reduced, that loopholes for the special interests couldn't be closed. But with leadership and hard work, we did it.

I'm talking about making a difference. One person who has is Ronald Reagan. He restored America's prosperity, rebuilt our military strength and revived our spiritual wellbeing. Ronald Reagan set us on a new course, and history will be grateful. But the Reagan record is not something to stand on. It's not something to run on. It's something to build on.

I want to lead America into an even greater era of opportunity for our people and security for our nation. And so I offer a lifetime of experience and a record that shows not merely where I stand, but the hopes of a lifetime rooted

The will of the people has been ignored for too long. I will once again ask Congress to give the people what they want. But if I can't get satisfaction, I will go over the heads of those in Congress and call for a Constitutional Convention to approve a balanced budget amendment.

Just as important, the President -- whatever his party -- must have a line-item veto. Today, the Chief Executive too often is faced with a take-it-or-leave-it choice when Congress approves huge, all-or-nothing spending bills. The President is put in the position of the car buyer forced to accept an automobile loaded with options he doesn't need or want. A line-item veto would allow the President to reach within massive spending bills and strike out wasteful and unnecessary pork-barrel projects.

A thriving economy must also include a new global community linked by fair and open trade. We cannot be seduced by the delusion that if only we build trade walls high enough, we can shut out a flood of foreign-built products. But neither will we play the patsy. Our workers are the best in the world, and we will fight for their right to compete. Where we are competitive, we will insist on access. And where we find a persistent pattern of unfair trade practices, we will act.

Our Nation is not only saddled with an economic deficit. We're also facing an education deficit. And making the tough choices means reexamining our priorities. At home, education must be at the top of the list. State and local governments, communities and parents bear the main responsibility for the education of our children. But the Federal Government can stimulate school systems to improve what goes on in our classrooms.

Certainly, we must accelerate the move to basics -- back to emphasizing English, math and science -- and we have to begin during the pre-school years.

We must reaffirm our commitment to education as the great equalizer -- as the door to opportunity for millions of children who may start a step behind others.

We must carefully target our assistance to programs of proven effectiveness -- merit pay for good teachers and magnet schools that focus on students with special needs and abilities.

In the highly competitive world of the 1990's, we can't afford to squander a single talent. As a start, we must cut the drop-out rate by at least 10 percent a year, and we must reduce by 2 million a year the 23 million adult Americans who can't read or write well enough to fill demanding jobs.

We are not going to produce qualified people for the workforce of the next century until we commit to programs that emphasize technical skills and scientific knowledge. We should establish national fellowships to train outstanding teachers in the uses of technology and encourage partnership programs that allow elementary and secondary schools to tap into the expertise of universities and the private sector. And finally we must remember that learning is for everyone, and it extends through a lifetime. But it is also necessary that those who borrow Federal tax dollars must repay their debt.