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Dole might step down as Senate majority leader



Sen. Bob Dole

The Associated Press
WASHINGTON — Sen. Bob Dole said Sunday he would consider stepping down from his post as Senate majority leader if early wins in Republican primaries next year make him the front-runner in the GOP presidential race.

statement made Saturday on CNN's "Evans and Novak" by Senate Majority Whip Trent Lott, R-Miss., that it would be difficult next year for Dole to lead the Senate and still run for the GOP presidential nomination.

"I think Trent is right," Dole said. "I think he stated it about right."

The candidate who can capture the presidential contests in Iowa and New Hampshire is probably going to win the nomination, the Kansas Republican said on CBS' "Face the Nation."

"If I lose those two states, I can be full-time majority leader. If I win those two states, then I think I'd take a hard look at stepping aside," he said.

Dole was responding to a

Dole said he expected the outcome of the presidential race to be decided fairly quickly once the primary season begins in the spring of 1996. "It might be that you could just take a leave of absence for 30 days, but I'll address that later."

At least three other Republican senators, Phil Gramm of Texas, Richard Lugar of Indiana and Arlen Specter of Pennsyl-

vania, are expected to run against Dole, as is former Tennessee Gov. Lamar Alexander.

Alexander, also appearing on CBS, said Dole should remain as majority leader while a Washington outsider such as Alexander occupies the White House.

"The best contribution Bob Dole can make is to stay right where he is," Alexander said.

Hatfield blasted for amendment vote

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Republican Sen. Mark Hatfield, whose solitary defiance of his own party helped bring down the balanced budget amendment last week, offered to resign before the vote, Majority Leader Bob Dole said Sunday.

Dole, R-Kan., also said President Clinton used the balanced budget debate to discredit Dole, a potential rival in next year's presidential campaign.

"The president and the Democratic leadership in the Senate decided this might be a pretty good shot at Bob Dole, because the leaders who voted in this last year voted against it this year, with President Clinton's blessing at least."



Dole

Hatfield joined 33 Democrats last week in sending the balanced budget amendment, which needed a two-thirds majority, to a one-vote defeat.

Hatfield, Dole said, "made a mistake, he's part of the leadership." Dole said he told the Oregon senator before the vote that his opposition was a reflection on Republicans and their leader, Dole.

Hatfield responded by offering to resign from the Senate, giving amendment supporters 66 of 99 votes, the two-thirds majority.

"That's not an option, Mark," Dole said he replied.

Sen. Majority Whip Trent Lott, R-Miss., blasted Hatfield on Saturday, saying it "exhibited an awful lot of arrogance for him to reject the feelings of his own constituency, his own legislative leaders, his colleagues in the Senate and his leadership, including Bob Dole."

Dole said GOP senators are drafting a letter concerning Hatfield's defection. There's a lot of frustration, and new members in particular "feel that this ought to be examined," Dole said.

Dole denied that the defeat was a setback for his own political ambitions, saying the balanced budget amendment was now "going to be a big campaign issue." He promised to revive debate on the amendment "near the election next year so people would be focused on it again."

He mentioned a "victory fund" being set up by Sen. Alfonse D'Amato, R-N.Y., to finance campaigns against Democrats who voted against the amendment.

Dole asserted that Clinton should bear blame for the defeat of the amendment.

"A real president would have been helping us on this," Dole said.

Dole picks up an endorsement from D'Amato

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole was endorsed for president Tuesday by Sen. Alfonse D'Amato of New York, a state rich in Republican convention delegates and a key source of campaign money.

"Bob Dole has earned the honor to lead our nation," D'Amato said at a news conference with Dole at the Kansas senator's presidential campaign headquarters.

Dole, in turn, named D'Amato to head his national campaign steering committee, which will provide guidance on policy and political strategy.



D'Amato

"If Al D'Amato is known for anything, he's known to be a fighter," Dole said. "We'll be looking to him for advice."

New York, with 102 delegates to the GOP convention in 1996, ranks third behind California and Texas. It also has moved up its primary from April to March — precisely a year from Tuesday — making it the first major industrial state to hold a primary next year.

Tuesday's announcement was timed in part as a show of strength to California Gov. Pete Wilson, who is nearing a decision on whether to get into the race. New York is considered an important state in Wilson's possible strategy for winning the nomination.

"I will say that was part of it," said Bill Lacy, Dole's deputy campaign chairman. "It will be a big plus."

The endorsement coincided with a New

York Post poll showing President Clinton ahead of Dole 45 percent to 38 percent in New York if the election were held now.

Dole, however, was far ahead of the GOP pack with Republican voters, with 47 percent.

The telephone poll of 743 voters was conducted March 1-4. It has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

D'Amato's political organization is credited in large measure with helping topple former New York Gov. Mario Cuomo, a Democrat, by boosting the candidacy of the new GOP governor, George Pataki. D'Amato said Pataki has "great regard" for Dole but was unsure when an endorsement from the governor might come.

But D'Amato noted Dole had made campaign appearances with Pataki when "he was barely a blip" on the political radar

screen.

"(Dole) came in and campaigned for him when he was trailing, when he wasn't doing so good," D'Amato said. "He's been there for us."

As one of the world's great financial centers, New York also provides millions of dollars in campaign cash. Lacy said the move will help Dole get better organized in the state.

"The bottom line is, we've got a lot of work to do. But this is an important step," he said. "(D'Amato's) organization has been very, very useful."

Dole plans to officially announce his third campaign for president April 10 in Topeka, Kan. So far, Texas Sen. Phil Gramm and former Tennessee Gov. Lamar Alexander officially have entered the race, and several others are considering it.

New York senator backs Dole

Endorsement shows Kansas senator has organizational strength

By CURT ANDERSON

Associated Press
WASHINGTON — The endorsement by New York Sen. Alfonse D'Amato of Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole's presidential campaign does more than give the Kansas Republican an edge in a state rich in GOP convention delegates.

The announcement Tuesday is a clear signal of organizational strength to California Gov. Pete Wilson and other candidates who are pondering a run for the White House.

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D'Amato became the first senator to publicly endorse Dole. Gramm has picked up endorsements from GOP Sens. Bob Smith of New Hampshire, John McCain of Arizona and Kay Bailey Hutchison of Texas.

"I've known from the beginning that he was going to support Bob Dole,"



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, left, with Sen. Alfonse D'Amato, R-N.Y., laughs during a press conference Tuesday where D'Amato announced his support for the Kansas Republican's bid for the GOP presidential nomination in 1996. D'Amato will chair Dole's national campaign steering committee.

Gramm said of D'Amato. "He supported him in 1988. They have a very close political alliance, and I've always known that."

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Clinton ahead of Dole 45 percent to 38 percent in New York if the election were held now.

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New York Sen. D'Amato endorses Dole



— The Associated Press
Sens. Dole and D'Amato, right, at a news conference Monday.

New York is No. 3 in GOP delegates, rich in dollars; timing may affect Pete Wilson camp

By CURT ANDERSON
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Dole appoints two to lead area offices

The Associated Press

Sen. Bob Dole has named new directors of his Topeka and Kansas City offices.

Scott Hesse, a Manhattan attorney and Rossville native, will head up Dole's Topeka office. Alan Cobb, a Wichita lawyer and native, was named to run the Kansas City, Kan. office.

Dole said they will be available to make speeches, hold town meetings and work with local service clubs.