

Bob Dole



NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MARCH 3, 1992

CONTACT: WALT RIKER
(202) 224-5358

PUBLIC BROADCASTING FUNDS

**NO FREE RIDE FOR \$1.1 BILLION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING;
TAX DOLLARS MUST MEET ACCOUNTABILITY TEST**

I AM PLEASED WE ARE BEGINNING THE DEBATE ON CONTINUED FUNDING FOR THE CORPORATION FOR BROADCASTING. ANY TIME THE TAXPAYERS ARE BEING ASKED TO DIG INTO THEIR POCKETS DURING A RECESSION FOR ANOTHER \$1.1 BILLION, THEY HAVE A RIGHT TO KNOW HOW THEIR MONEY IS BEING SPENT, WHO'S GETTING IT, WHO ISN'T, AND WHAT IS IT BEING USED FOR.

IT IS THE SAME KIND OF ACCOUNTABILITY WE EXPECT FROM THE PENTAGON, FROM THE AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT, FROM HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND, YES, EVEN FROM CONGRESS.

EARLIER TODAY I PARTICIPATED IN A KEY FINANCE COMMITTEE MARK-UP OF LEGISLATION DESIGNED TO HELP REVITALIZE AMERICA'S ECONOMY. ONE THING IS CLEAR: THERE ARE NO SIMPLE ANSWERS, AND NO PAINLESS SOLUTIONS. UNFORTUNATELY, THERE IS ANOTHER STRONG PUSH BY THE MAJORITY PARTY TO RAISE TAXES AGAIN. BUT I DON'T BELIEVE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE DEMANDING A TAX HIKE. WHAT THEY ARE DEMANDING IS THAT CONGRESS SLOW DOWN ITS 'SPENDING MACHINE' THAT HAS JACKED THE FEDERAL DEFICIT THROUGH THE ROOF. ABOVE ALL, THEY WANT CONGRESS TO RE-EXAMINE ITS PRIORITIES.

SO IN THIS CLIMATE OF RECORD DEFICITS, UNACCEPTABLE UNEMPLOYMENT AND A STAGNANT ECONOMY, NO FEDERALLY-FUNDED PROGRAM SHOULD BE GIVEN A RED CARPET RIDE THROUGH CONGRESS. I DON'T CARE WHAT IT IS, OR WHAT IT CLAIMS TO BE, NO TAXPAYER-SUBSIDIZED PROGRAM IS GOING TO GET A FREE RIDE, EVEN IF IT CLAIMS TO BE ART, JOURNALISM OR CULTURE.

NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, AS WE HEAD INTO THIS DEBATE, THERE WILL BE PLENTY OF ISSUES TO TALK ABOUT. AS WE PROCEED TO THE FUNDING BILL FOR THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING, WE WILL HAVE AMPLE OPPORTUNITY TO SAY WHAT THE DEBATE IS ALL ABOUT. BUT JUST AS IMPORTANT, AS WE BEGIN, LET ME TELL YOU WHAT THIS DEBATE IS NOT ABOUT:

NOT A TOTENBERG DEBATE

1) IT WILL NOT BE ABOUT NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO REPORTER NINA TOTENBERG. HER ROLE IN THE CLARENCE THOMAS/ANITA HILL STORY HAS ABSOLUTELY NO BEARING ON FUTURE CPB FUNDING. I AM NOT CERTAIN WHO IS SPREADING THE MYTH THAT ANY QUESTIONING OF CPB POLICIES, PROGRAMMING OR FUNDING IS SOMEHOW A "VENDETTA" AGAINST NINA TOTENBERG, BUT NOTHING COULD BE MORE WRONG, OR MORE NAIVE. IT'S A RED HERRING, DESIGNED TO SHIFT THE FOCUS AWAY FROM THE REAL ISSUES, INCLUDING THE 50 PERCENT INCREASE IN FUNDING CPB IS CALLING FOR.

NOT A CENSORSHIP DEBATE

2) THIS DEBATE WILL NOT BE ABOUT CENSORSHIP. I, FOR ONE, DON'T WANT TO CONTROL TELEVISION PROGRAMMING. BUT WE SHOULD MAKE CERTAIN THE AMERICAN TAXPAYERS ARE GETTING WHAT THEY'RE PAYING FOR -- AND NOT GETTING WHAT THEIR TAX DOLLARS SHOULDN'T BE PAYING FOR. IN FACT, IF THE PUBLIC BROADCASTING PROGRAMMERS WERE DOING A BETTER JOB, WE MIGHT NOT BE HERE TODAY. I'VE BEEN A VIEWER OF PUBLIC TELEVISION SINCE IT WENT ON THE AIR. I HAVE EVEN CONTRIBUTED DURING PLEDGE DRIVES. BUT I MUST SAY, AS A FREQUENT VIEWER AND SUPPORTER, I HAVE NEVER BEEN MORE TURNED OFF, AND MORE FED UP WITH THE INCREASING LACK OF BALANCE, AND THE UNRELENTING LIBERAL CHEERLEADING I SEE AND HEAR ON THE PUBLIC AIRWAVES. BUT DON'T GET ME WRONG: THIS DEBATE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH CREATING A "CONSERVATIVE" PUBLIC BROADCASTING NETWORK -- NOTHING WOULD BE MORE UNWELCOME. THIS PHONY ARGUMENT -- THAT "CONSERVATIVES" WANT TO TAKE CONTROL OF PUBLIC TELEVISION AND RADIO -- IS ANOTHER RED HERRING, ANOTHER GIMMICK DESIGNED TO CONFUSE THE ISSUES, AND TO HOODWINK THE TAXPAYERS.

AMERICAN PEOPLE DON'T WANT IDEOLOGICAL GOVERNMENT NETWORK

I DON'T WANT -- AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE DON'T WANT -- TO FUND GOVERNMENT RADIO AND TV BASED ON IDEOLOGY, WHETHER IT IS CONSERVATIVE OR LIBERAL. BUT CAN ANYONE STAND ON THIS FLOOR AND CLAIM THAT PUBLIC BROADCASTING IS NOT LIBERAL? THAT'S THE REAL TEST. IS IT LEANING SO HEAVILY TO ONE SIDE IT'S STARTING TO LOOK LIKE THE "TITANIC"? FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN PBS ANNOUNCED ITS COVERAGE OF THE 1992 PRESIDENTIAL

(MORE)

ELECTIONS WOULD BE HANDLED BY BILL MOYERS AND WILLIAM GREIDER, TWO EXCELLENT JOURNALISTS WHO ALSO HAPPEN TO BE TWO EXCELLENT LIBERAL DEMOCRATS, I KNEW THE FIX WAS IN.

OH, THE CRITICS WILL POINT TO WILLIAM BUCKLEY'S "FIRING LINE", OR JOHN McLAUGHLIN'S "ONE-ON-ONE" AS THE ULTIMATE PROOF OF BALANCE, OR EVEN QUALITY. BUT THE QUESTION ISN'T HOW MANY RIGHT-WING AND LEFT-WING SHOWS ARE ON PUBLIC TV OR RADIO -- HOW MANY CRUMBS ARE TOSSED TO THE EXTREMISTS ON BOTH SIDES -- THE REAL QUESTION IS, SHOULD THE TAXPAYERS BE PAYING FOR ANY OF IT. FRANKLY, I RESENT THE IDEA THAT ANY OF US -- REPUBLICAN OR DEMOCRAT, CONSERVATIVE OR LIBERAL -- CAN BE BOUGHT OFF BY A FEW PROGRAMS, OR PERSONALITIES -- THAT IS NOT THE POINT, NOR WHAT WE WANT TO SEE WITH TAXPAYER-FUNDED PROGRAMMING.

PUBLIC TV DOESN'T EQUAL QUALITY TV

LET'S FACE IT, JUST BECAUSE A PROGRAM IS AIRED ON PUBLIC TELEVISION DOES NOT MEAN IT IS QUALITY PROGRAMMING. THAT IS THE BIGGEST MYTH ABOUT PUBLIC TV AND PUBLIC RADIO. THE SELF-PROCLAIMED PUBLIC BROADCASTING SEAL OF "QUALITY" SHOULD NOT BE A SMOKESCREEN FOR ONE-SIDED POLITICAL BIAS, OFFENSIVE PROGRAMMING IN THE NAME OF "ART" AND "CULTURE", OR, PROGRAMMING THAT MAY BE VERY WORTHY, BUT JUST HAS NO BUSINESS BEING SUBSIDIZED BY THE AMERICAN TAXPAYER.

NO FUNDING CRISIS

3) THIS DEBATE WILL ALSO NOT BE ABOUT PUTTING PUBLIC TV AND RADIO OUT ON THE STREET WITH A TIN CUP NEXT WEEK, NEXT MONTH OR NEXT YEAR, AS SOME WOULD HAVE YOU BELIEVE. DESPITE ALL THE HYPE THAT SOME LIBERALS ARE SPOONING OUT TO THEIR CONSTITUENCIES, THE UPCOMING DEBATE WILL FOCUS ON FUNDING FOR THE YEARS 1994, 1995 AND 1996. THE LAST TIME I CHECKED, IT IS NOW 1992 -- 1994 IS STILL TWO YEARS AWAY. WE DON'T EVEN HAVE A BUDGET FOR THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA YET, BUT SOME FOLKS ARE WRINGING THEIR HANDS ABOUT LOCKING IN \$1.1 BILLION TWO YEARS FROM NOW.

GOP ENSURING PROPER DEBATE

4) THIS DEBATE WILL NOT BE ABOUT A REPUBLICAN CONSPIRACY, AS SOME LIBERALS WOULD HAVE YOU BELIEVE. IN ALL MY YEARS IN THE SENATE, I'VE NEVER SEEN SUCH ADVANCE HYPE, PANIC, MISINFORMATION AND PROPAGANDA ABOUT A "HOLD" PLACED ON A BILL -- A ROUTINE PROCEDURE AND A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT AROUND HERE, AS MY FRIENDS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE AISLE HAVE DEMONSTRATED OVER AND OVER AGAIN WITH REAGAN AND BUSH NOMINATIONS.

UNFORTUNATELY, MORE THAN ONE PERSON CALLED MY OFFICE ARGUING THAT REPUBLICANS, BY TEMPORARILY "HOLDING" THE BILL, WERE SOMEHOW SHORTCIRCUITING THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS -- THAT REPUBLICANS WERE USING A SINISTER NEW TOOL, CALLED "SECRET HOLDS," TO DERAIL DEMOCRACY, TEAR UP SESAME STREET, KILL BIG BIRD, AND STARVE THE COOKIE MONSTER. SADLY, EVEN SOME MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA, WHO ARE PAID TO KNOW BETTER, BOUGHT INTO THE "SECRET HOLD" NONSENSE.

LET'S FACE IT, HOLDS HAVE BEEN PART OF THE SENATE SINCE DAY ONE. THEY ARE AN ESSENTIAL TOOL TO PRESERVE THE RIGHTS OF THE MINORITY AND THE WIDE-OPEN DEMOCRACY OF THE U.S. SENATE. ONE SENATOR CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE, AND HAS THE RIGHT TO THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE. BUT STILL, SOME REPORTERS WERE RUNNING AROUND HERE IN A PANIC LIKE THEY'D JUST DISCOVERED HOLDS, EVEN THOUGH HOLDS WERE PUT ON TWO-THIRDS OF THE APPROXIMATELY 250 BILLS REPORTED OUT OF COMMITTEE AT THE END OF LAST SESSION.

BY TEMPORARILY HOLDING THE BILL, REPUBLICAN SENATORS HAVE ENSURED THAT THIS BILL WILL BE DEBATED IN THE LIGHT OF DAY, WHERE IT BELONGS, NOT WAVED THROUGH ON SOME MAGIC CARPET AS IF IT WERE PRIVILEGED LEGISLATION.

MEETING THE ACCOUNTABILITY TEST

SO, WHAT WILL THIS DEBATE BE ABOUT? ABOVE ALL, IT WILL BE ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY. WHY SHOULDN'T A \$1.1 BILLION PIECE OF LEGISLATION BE SUBJECT TO THE SAME SCRUTINY AS A HALF MILLION DOLLAR GRANT FOR LAWRENCE WELK'S HOUSE? OR A \$100 BILLION DEFENSE CUT.

I GOT BLASTED LAST WEEK BY A SELF-STYLED "PORKBUSTER" GROUP IN CONGRESS FOR WINNING CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL FOR SEVERAL ESSENTIAL PROJECTS IN MY HOME STATE OF KANSAS, INCLUDING TORNADO SIRENS FOR 94 KANSAS TOWNS, FUNDING FOR BATTERED AND ABUSED KIDS, SOCIAL SERVICES AND HIGHER EDUCATION PROJECTS. THEY HAD EVERY RIGHT TO TAKE THEIR SHOTS AT OUR PROJECTS, AND I HAD EVERY RIGHT TO FIRE BACK -- AND I DID. THAT'S DEMOCRACY.

SOME FOLKS ON OUR SIDE ARE GOING TO FIRE SOME SHOTS AT THIS BILL. IF THEIR CONCERNS DON'T STAND UP TO SCRUTINY, FINE. BUT IF SOMETHING IN THIS BILL CAN'T BE DEFENDED, WE'RE NOT HERE TO BE CHEERLEADERS -- FOR THIS BILL OR ANY OTHER.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO A VIGOROUS DEBATE.