

*Bob Dole*



NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

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## RELIGIOUS BIGOTRY: GOP LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT

ALL 44 REPUBLICAN SENATORS URGE PRESIDENT TO  
REPUDIATE RELIGIOUS BIGOTRY CAMPAIGN TACTICS

WASHINGTON -- Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole today made the following remarks on the floor of the United States Senate:

With the increasing unpopularity of the Clinton health care plan, confusion over American leadership on the world stage, and a long string of Democrat electoral losses, it's becoming increasingly clear that some members of the Democrat party are resorting to campaign tactics based on religious bigotry to divert attention from these failings. That's regrettable. The essence of democracy is participation, and using terms such as "fire-breathing Christian radical right" to label Americans who happen to go to church and go to the polls -- to question their participation on religious grounds -- only cheapens our democracy. These are the kinds of comments that bring to mind the unpleasant attacks faced by Al Smith in 1928 and John F. Kennedy in 1960.

As I said yesterday, the American people are much smarter than the Democrats who resort to these tactics realize. They care about where a candidate stands on the issues. They aren't concerned with whether or not a candidate is Catholic, Jewish, Episcopalian, Methodist, or Evangelical.

In my view, the American people will reject these appeals to religious bigotry, and I hope the President of the United States will do so, as well. President Clinton has spoken eloquently about the need for tolerance in our nation, and the importance of religion in the lives of Americans. Accordingly, all 44 Senate Republicans sent a letter to the President today asking him to join us in repudiating the remarks of those in his party who have resorted to this strategy of religious bigotry.

Republicans look forward to a healthy debate this campaign season on the challenges facing our nation. The American people will cast their votes this November based on the issues and the quality of the candidates, not on manufactured political hysteria.

The text of the letter signed by all Senate Republicans follows:

*Dear Mr. President:*

*As the November elections draw closer, Americans will be looking to Republican and Democrat candidates to discuss their positions on the challenges facing our country. And we believe that a frank debate of our differences on issues like health care, taxes, crime, and foreign policy is the essence of a healthy democracy, and will be good for America.*

*What is not good for America, however, is questioning a candidate's fitness for office because of his or her religious beliefs. And that is precisely what several prominent members of your party have done in recent days, making comments that bring to mind the type of attacks faced by Al Smith in 1928 and John Kennedy in 1960.*

*Mr. President, you have spoken eloquently in the past about the need for tolerance in our lives, and about the importance of religion in the lives of Americans. We write to ask that you now join with us in repudiating the remarks of those who use terms like "fire-breathing Christian radical right," and who cheapen our democracy through religious bigotry.*

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