

Bob Dole



NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, January 10, 1996

Contact: Clarkson Hine
(202) 224-5358

WELFARE REFORM VETO

**PRESIDENT'S "STEALTH VETO" BLOCKS FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE;
DESPITE COVER OF DARKNESS, PRESIDENT BEARS RESPONSIBILITY
FOR CONTINUATION OF FAILED WELFARE SYSTEM**

In the State of the Union speech President Clinton delivered nearly one year ago, he said--and I quote--"Nothing has done more to undermine our sense of common responsibility that our failed welfare system."

In just a few weeks, President Clinton will deliver another State of the Union Speech. And he will do so with the knowledge that he bears total responsibility for the continuation of that failed welfare system.

Rhetoric Can't Obscure President's Veto of Reform

America heard a great deal of rhetoric in 1992 from candidate Clinton, and a great deal of rhetoric since then from President Clinton about "ending welfare as we know it."

But all the words in the world cannot obscure President Clinton's action of last night.

Given his promises, it's no wonder President Clinton used the cover of darkness to veto the truly revolutionary welfare reform bill which would have kept his commitments. This bill was, of course, the result of almost a year of hard work by a bi-partisan group of Members of Congress, Senators--and, very importantly, our nation's Governors.

The President may have tried to hide this "stealth veto" by doing it late at night, but he can not hide the message he is sending to the American people: A loud and clear message that he will stand in the way of fundamental change, and, instead, will fight for the status quo.

The President's veto means that American taxpayers will enter 1996 continuing to pour countless millions into a system that has failed. And those who are served by the system will enter a new year with little or no hope for escaping from a future of welfare.

What a different 1996--and a different future--it would have been had the President backed his words up with action by signing the legislation.

Shift Power To States & Encourage Personal Responsibility

Instead of the status quo where all authority resides in Washington, we would have shifted power to our state capitals, and given our Governors the ability to create a system that meets the unique need of their states.

Instead of the status quo, where welfare often becomes a way of life, and where some receive federal cash benefits just because they choose not to work; we would have a system where people are

(more)

required to work after two years, and one with a five-year limit on the receipt of federal benefits.

Instead of the status quo, where children are rewarded for having children and for moving away from home, we would have one which recognizes the importance of family--one that discourages illegitimacy, and encourages personal responsibility.

Instead of the status quo, which often allows "deadbeat dads" to escape their financial responsibilities, we would have a system that streamlined paternity establishment, that established state registries, that made child support laws uniform across State lines, and that required States to use the threats of denying drivers licenses to parents who refuse to pay child support.

Instead of the status quo which wastes billions of taxpayer dollars, we would have a system that gives our states the authority and responsibility to crack down on fraud and abuse.

GOP Plan Offers Hope & Opportunity

I am not claiming that our welfare reform legislation was perfect. Nor would it have magically solved our nation's many social problems.

But it did put an end to a failed system.

It was a big, big, step in the right direction.

It did return power to our states and cities, and to our people.

It did offer hope and opportunity to millions of Americans.

But instead of beginning 1996 by signing this legislation, the President has chosen to begin it by keeping the status quo intact.

I suspect that in this year's State of the Union Address, the President will again talk about how he wants to end welfare as we know it."

But they are words that will sound very hollow to many in this chamber, and to all Americans who pay for, or who are served by, the status quo: And that's a failed system that remains intact thanks to the President's actions.

###

* Remarks delivered on Senate floor, approximately 12:05 p.m.