



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE

LINCOLN DAY
LENOIR, NORTH CAROLINA

FEBRUARY 5, 1977

It's that season of the year identified on Republican political calendars as "Lincoln Day". But Lincoln Day is not just a calendar event. It's much more than that. It's a period for organization and self-analysis for the Republican Party, a time when we honor the founder of our great party, and re-dedicate ourselves to the principles and philosophy he so well articulated.

My first "Lincoln Day" event this year was last weekend in my home state. Party leaders from across Kansas joined in celebrating the 116th birthday of our state. The pundits had predicted a less than festive occasion. After all, we had lost an additional Congressional seat. We had lost control of the State House of Representatives for the first time in more than 60 years. Our majority in the State Senate had been reduced to a single vote. And Mother Nature added her chilling influence with several days of sub-zero temperatures.

But the temperament of the Kansas Republicans at that meeting did not reflect the recent election returns or the temperature outdoors. Kansas Republicans are confident, hopeful, and ready to dedicate themselves to Republican electoral victories next year and in 1980.

And as I look ahead to more than a dozen Lincoln Day gatherings in the coming weeks, I am confident that I will find the same sentiment expressed at each event. Yes, we lost the White House and our numbers in Congress have dwindled even further.

But looking ahead, there is a reason to be optimistic. Because of the party of Lincoln is still the party of the people. Our philosophy of limited government, reduced spending, and lower taxes best represents the views of most North Carolinians and most Americans. We don't have to change our philosophy. It is sound. What we must do more than ever before is take our message to the people.

In my view, that's been our biggest failing in recent years. We have just not articulated our philosophy and our principles at the grass roots level. As a result, the Democrats are now trying to take the lead on many issues which have traditionally been Republican. And, on many other issues, we have forfeited our leadership role.

We mustn't let the Democrats get away with this. Not only must we stay out front on "Republican" issues like tax cuts, reduced government spending, lessening bureaucratic red tape, maintaining a strong national defense, and ensuring a fair profit for our farmers, we must not hesitate to criticize the opposition when the advocate programs detrimental to the American people or engage in "Democratic double-talk". After all, it's the Democrats who talk about healing the wounds of the Nation while inflicting emotional wounds to those who served their country honorably by granting pardons to those who did not. It's the Democrats who now talk about a strong national defense, but fill key Cabinet level offices with individuals who ignore the importance of our international intelligence gathering activities, advocate some unilateral force reductions, and are committed to carrying out President Carter's pledge to slash defense spending. It's the Democrats who talk about the needs of working Americans while espousing big government spending programs which will only add to the nearly intolerable tax burden now

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confronting lower and middle income taxpayers. It's the Democrats who talk about tax "reform" while ignoring the fact that it was a Democratic Congress which wrote the "disgrace to the human race" we now call our Tax Code.

So, the Democrats are vulnerable. But we Republicans cannot stand in the wings and wait for President Carter and his Democratic colleagues to make mistakes.

We must move forward, taking the Republican philosophy and the Republican programs to the people, to Democrats and Independents as well as Republicans, to Black, White, Spanish-speaking, and ethnic Americans.

As the minority party, we have a responsibility -- to ourselves and to the American people -- to articulate our views. Too often in the past, the people have perceived us as the party of political againsters, a party that cares for the rich, not the poor; the businessman and not the consumer; the industrialist and not the environmentalist; those who can help themselves and not those who need help. You and I know this is not true, but a lot of people seem to hold that view, even though most of them -- especially Carolinians and other Southerners -- share our fundamental philosophy.

Perhaps we have spent too much time talking about what we are against, not what we are for. That is clearly not productive. And it isn't winning us any elections. We can, and must, formulate Republican alternatives which demonstrate to the people what Republicans already know: that we do stand for something, that we do have a vision for the future, and that we do not advocate burying our heads in the sand when there is a legitimate need for government action.

On a number of issues, our positions are sound, our programs responsive, and politically appealing.

Our stand on taxes and government spending is a good case in point. As the party of individual freedom, we have consistently advocated lower federal taxes and reducing the growth of federal expenditures. This is an issue which makes sense -- economic, philosophical, and political sense. Here we have an opportunity to express our Republican philosophy in concrete legislative terms and reap the political benefits. Senate Republicans have proposed an alternative to President Carter's economic stimulus package, an alternative which would provide meaningful permanent tax reductions to all Americans, especially middle and lower income taxpayers. Included in that proposal is my Tax Credit Jobs Provision which would provide permanent jobs with a future to Americans in the private sector rather than in the public sector.

The energy crisis and critical shortages of natural gas offer us another opportunity to put forward a positive program. If President Ford, Jim Broyhill, Jesse Helms and other Republicans had been listened to a couple of years ago, if we had embarked on a sound program to deregulate natural gas, North Carolina and the rest of the Nation might have avoided some of the suffering of this bitter winter. Carolina factories might not be scrambling for supplies of propane to replace the natural gas which has been diverted to homes and small businesses. Republicans have been and are on the right side of this issue. Our energy policies are good for the country. Let's let the people know where we stand.

And we must continue our push for a scaled-down, more rational federal bureaucracy. While we wish President Carter well in his efforts to reorganize the Executive Branch, I think we should take the lead in the drive to alter programs, abolish those that are unnecessary, and modify those that are inefficient and wasteful, and consolidate those that are duplicative. Again, we need to be out front on this issue. And, again, our position makes sense and it will be politically attractive.

The issues are there. The opportunities are there. The future of the Republican Party in North Carolina and across this Nation can be bright. But it won't be unless we let the people know where we stand, why we stand there, and convince them that we have their best interests at heart. We must recognize that people are not going to come beating down our doors begging to be Republicans. We have to go

out and get them. I think we should focus heavily on recruitment. We need the women, the young, the Blacks, the Hispanics, the ethnics and the Indians. We need working men and women.

These groups may not be easy to reach. But how better to test the vitality of our Republican beliefs than by persuading these groups face to face as individuals that what we stand for best serves their interest. How better to demonstrate that we stand for the interests of all Americans by reaching all across the whole broad spectrum of our population for new members and new candidates.

The Republican party does not have to wait to make its comeback. If we work hard, act constructively, stress Republican principles, and if we begin now, we can realize immediate success. But we have sacrifices to make. We have tremendous opportunities. We have hard work to do. And "Lincoln Day" is a good day to begin.

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