

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas) SH 141 Hart Building, Washington, D.C. 20510-1601

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CONTACT: WALT RIKER,
DALE TATE 202/224-3135

SENATOR DOLE SALUTES FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF SENATE TV

WASHINGTON -- Following is the statement Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole (R-KS) made on the Senate floor today in honor of the one-year anniversary of Senate TV:

ONE YEAR AGO TODAY, THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WERE FINALLY PLUGGED IN TO THEIR DEMOCRACY. IT BEGAN IN THIS CHAMBER AS AN EXPERIMENT. NOW TELEVISION IN THE SENATE IS A PART OF THE INSTITUTION.

WHEN WE BEGAN THE EXPERIMENT LAST YEAR, THERE WERE FEARS OF ABUSE: MEMBERS PLAYING TO THE CAMERAS, ENDLESS PRIME TIME FILIBUSTERS, AND RUMORS OF MAKE-UP IN THE CHAMBER. BUT SO FAR SENATE TELEVISION HAS DELIVERED. LET'S FACE IT, THERE HAS BEEN SOME GRANDSTANDING. AND THERE HAVE BEEN CHANGES. THE CHAMBER IS HOTTER BECAUSE OF THE TV LIGHTS. THE SPEECHES ARE A BIT LONGER. AND NO ONE SEEMS TO BE SUFFERING FROM STAGE FRIGHT. BUT THE BOTTOM LINE TELLS US THAT THE PEOPLE'S GOVERNMENT -- THE HOUSE AND THE SENATE -- CAN NOW BE SEEN IN MILLIONS OF HOUSEHOLDS AROUND THE COUNTRY.

IN JUST ONE YEAR, SENATE TELEVISION HAS BROUGHT SOME HISTORIC MOMENTS TO OUR LIVING ROOMS: THE APPOINTMENT OF A NEW CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT; PASSAGE OF A LANDMARK TAX REFORM ACT; THE ENACTMENT OF A SWEEPING OVERHAUL OF THIS NATION'S IMMIGRATION LAWS; CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL OF AID TO THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS IN NICARAGUA; THE IMPEACHMENT TRIAL OF A FEDERAL JUDGE; AND VOTE AFTER VOTE ON A MOUNTAIN OF LEGISLATION THAT WILL AFFECT EACH AND EVERY AMERICAN.

WE AGREED TO THE TV EXPERIMENT WITH TWO PURPOSES IN MIND: TO BRING THE SENATE TO THE PEOPLE, AND TO MAKE IT MORE EFFICIENT, RESPONSIVE AND PRODUCTIVE. ON THE FIRST COUNT, I GIVE IT FOUR STARS. ON THE SECOND SCORE, LET US JUST SAY WE ARE CONTINUING TO IMPROVE. AS LONG AS THE VIEWERS CAN DIAL-IN THEIR DEMOCRACY, WE WILL HAVE TO GET BETTER. AFTER ALL, THE PEOPLE ARE WATCHING.

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