

News from Senator

# BOB DOLE



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

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CONTACT: WALT RIKER  
202-224-5358

CAMPAIGN SPENDING -- PAC'S AND THE INCUMBENCY PROTECTION PLAN  
SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER BOB DOLE

WASHINGTON, ON WEDNESDAY THE SENATE RULES COMMITTEE WILL BEGIN A SERIES OF HEARINGS ON CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM. ACCORDING TO A NEW SURVEY TODAY BY THE WASHINGTON POST ON CAMPAIGN SPENDING BY POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEES, THE TIMING FOR THESE HEARINGS COULDN'T BE ANY BETTER.

THE POST REPORTS THAT NEARLY \$7 OF EVERY \$10 GIVEN BY POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEES IN 1988 WENT TO INCUMBENTS. COMMON CAUSE SUPPORTS THAT FINDING WITH A STUDY OF ITS OWN INDICATING THAT HOUSE INCUMBENTS ENJOYED A 7-TO-1 PAC FUNDING ADVANTAGE OVER CHALLENGERS.

THESE NUMBERS ARE IMPORTANT. THEY ARE PART OF THE REASON WHY REPUBLICANS, DEMOCRATS AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WANT CAMPAIGN SPENDING REFORM. LET ME UNDERSCORE THAT REPUBLICANS ARE DETERMINED TO PRODUCE REAL CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM -- FAIR TO DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS, TO INCUMBENTS AND CHALLENGERS ALIKE.

LET'S LOOK AT THE NUMBERS. ACCORDING TO THE POST SURVEY, PACS GAVE \$99 MILLION TO DEMOCRATS LAST YEAR AND \$72 MILLION TO REPUBLICANS. YET FROM THAT TOTAL \$117 MILLION WENT TO INCUMBENTS AND ONLY \$36 MILLION TO THEIR CHALLENGERS. IN LAST YEAR'S SENATE RACES, INCUMBENTS HAD A WHOPPING 314% PAC FUNDING ADVANTAGE OVER THEIR CHALLENGERS. BUT IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THE DIFFERENCE IS EVEN MORE STAGGERING: PAC DONATIONS TOTALLED \$86 MILLION FOR HOUSE INCUMBENTS, WHILE HOUSE CHALLENGERS RECEIVED LESS THAN \$11 MILLION.

I ASK UNANIMOUS CONSENT THAT THE FULL WASHINGTON POST REPORT BE INCLUDED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD AT THIS POINT.

NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, PACS HAVE EARNED SOME BAD PUBLICITY LATELY. IRONICALLY, POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEES WERE CREATED AS PART OF THE SWEEPING POST-WATERGATE REFORM MOVEMENT. NOW THE REFORM NEEDS REFORMING.

PACS WERE ORIGINALLY DESIGNED TO GIVE INDIVIDUALS MORE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS AT THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL. UNFORTUNATELY, MANY PAC DIRECTORS HAVE FORGOTTEN THIS NOBLE HISTORY. LOOKING AT HOW PAC MONEY IS DISTRIBUTED, IT IS EASY TO SEE THEIR GAME: PACS GIVE TO INCUMBENTS BECAUSE ACCESS TO AN OFFICEHOLDER IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN A MEMBER'S PARTY, IDEOLOGY OR EVEN VOTING RECORD ON THE ISSUES.

SOMETHING IS WRONG HERE.

PAC DIRECTORS DEFEND THEIR INCUMBENCY PROTECTION PLAN AS A RESPONSE TO A LOPSIDED SYSTEM THAT OVERWHELMINGLY FAVORS INCUMBENTS. THEY POINT TO THE 98 PERCENT RE-ELECTION RATE POSTED BY HOUSE INCUMBENTS LAST YEAR TO SUPPORT THEIR CLAIM. BY GIVING TO INCUMBENTS, PAC DIRECTORS ARGUE THAT THEY ARE MAKING A BETTER "INVESTMENT".

WELL, THE AMERICAN PEOPLE DON'T BUY THAT ARGUMENT.

IF OUR DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM IS GOING TO WORK, CHALLENGERS MUST HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO TRULY COMPETE FOR ELECTED OFFICE.

AS A MEMBER OF THE RULES COMMITTEE WHO IS GENUINELY INTERESTED IN THIS ISSUE, I AM GRATEFUL TO THE CHAIRMAN, SENATOR FORD, AND THE RANKING MEMBER, SENATOR STEVENS, FOR SCHEDULING THESE HEARINGS ON A BIPARTISAN BASIS. I LOOK FORWARD TO AN EXTENSIVE DEBATE IN THE COMMITTEE.