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NEWS

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

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POLL: CHANGE DIRECTION

L.A. TIMES POLL REVEALS EROSION OF CONFIDENCE IN WHITE HOUSE: UNMISTAKABLE MESSAGE FROM VOTERS -- EMERGENCY U-TURN NEEDED

It's clear that the Clinton Administration has been struggling for several weeks to restore public confidence in its leadership and its programs. In view of its deteriorating popularity and bad press, the White House has hired a new spin doctor, tried to patch up some problems with the media, and has experimented with some new public relations ploys.

Unfortunately, the White House has done nothing to fix the root cause of its continuing woes -- the Clinton programs themselves. But the Administration still doesn't get it: it's not about public relations, it's public policy that counts. And the more the American people find out about President Clinton's programs, the more they realize the White House is heading in the wrong direction.

No wonder they're disillusioned. After all the campaign promises, and all the new public relations happy talk, the American people are getting a dose of reality, and they don't like it. They see the Clinton Administration's disastrous tax and spend economic plan, and they see its big ticket, big government solutions to every single problem, and they wonder what is going on. They thought they were voting for change -- but what they're getting now, day after day, is everything they thought they were voting against last year.

Majority Sees Clinton Tax & Spend

Now, the White House may not want to hear all this from Bob Dole, but it had better start tuning in when the American people are speaking out. That was the message on the front page of the Los Angeles Times today in a new national poll that ought to hit the White House like an ice cold shower.

The Times poll makes it clear that the American people are losing faith in President Clinton's economic program. 53% say it is "a return to the tax and spend policies Democrats have been criticized for in the past", and just 28% said it was "bold and innovative".

And it's no wonder, considering the fact that the President's package raises six dollars in taxes for every dollar in spending cuts, considering the fact that most of the spending cuts don't come until after 1996, and considering the fact that the President wants to raise taxes retroactively to January 1st, 1993 -- before he was even President, all the way back to the Bush Administration. Something's haywire here, and the American people know it.

Only 21% believe that the President's avalanche of new taxes will go to deficit reduction, while a whopping two-thirds say the taxes will "end up going mostly toward increased government spending".

Erosion of Confidence in Clinton Policies

Next, while the American people do not see the economy getting worse, discontent over the nation's direction is way up. Only 24% said the country is moving in the right direction, while an alarming 68% said it is heading in the wrong direction.

(MORE)

These ominous numbers represent a huge change since the L.A. Times last polled the American people. Just three months ago, the American people were evenly split on the direction question, but now it's clear they want the President to make an emergency U-Turn.

Let's face it, there is a clear and present erosion of confidence in the White House, especially on the economic front. Everywhere I go these days, businessmen and women are telling me what the Clinton plan means to them -- no hiring, no investment, no risks and no plans to do anything but fasten their seatbelts and brace for the worst.

To Be "Decisive," Start Over

Just yesterday, President Clinton defended his record in the face of increasing criticism and declining poll numbers. The President tried to make the case that he was "decisive".

Well, if he really wants to demonstrate that he is "decisive", then the White House should immediately pull the plug on its massive tax and spend economic plan, announce that it is ready to start over, to sit down with Republicans and Democrats, ready to listen, ready to finally hear the American people's disenchantment, fears, and, yes, anger.

Republicans Stand Ready To Help

It's not too late, although time is running out. It is in no one's interest to see confidence in any White House erode like seems to be happening here. We want the President to succeed for America's sake. That's why Republicans are committed to helping the President, on the economy, on jobs, on the international front. But helping the President win some political points in Washington isn't what the American people see as our top priority. And rubber stamping tax and spend programs is not our idea of helping anybody, either.

But if President Clinton wants to get back on track, heading in the right direction, we are ready to lend a hand. Let's hope the Los Angeles Times' new poll is the wake up call America has been waiting for, let's hope the White House hears it loud and clear.

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