

Bob Dole

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER



NEWS

FROM:

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CONTACT: CLARKSON HINE
(202) 224-5358

CLINTON HEALTH CARE BILL

DOLE WELCOMES BEGINNING OF DEBATE

Washington -- Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole made the following remarks today in Statuary Hall at the transmittal ceremony for President Clinton's Health Security Act of 1993:

I will not speak long, because we have a lot of reading to do.

We meet this morning in a room which was the scene of many of the most important debates of the 19th century. And today, we are officially beginning one of the most important debates of the 20th century -- reforming America's health care system.

The debate will not be over the diagnosis. Everyone here -- be they Republican or Democrat -- agrees that America's health care system can be improved.

Rather, the debate will be over the prescription for improving our system -- while preserving the quality and choice that Americans have come to expect.

Let's face it. We begin this process with some honest differences of opinion. Turning over one-seventh of our economy to the United States government is an idea that has many Americans, Republicans and Democrats, very concerned.

And terms such as "employer mandates," "premium caps," and "mandatory health alliances" have many small businessmen and women, their employees, and health care providers asking important questions whose answers will affect their families, their hopes, and their dreams.

This is not to say that other plans Republicans and Democrats have proposed are perfect or are written in concrete. They're not. And I hope the President and the First Lady feel the same way about the legislation they presented today.

Many of my Republican colleagues -- including Senators Chafee, Nickles, Gramm, Durenberger and Kassebaum, and Congressmen Michel, Gingrich, Hastert and Grandy, to name a few -- have been working on this issue for some time, and there are a lot of good ideas out there. What we owe to the people is a promise that we will not worry about pride of authorship, and that we will work together on a bipartisan basis to adopt a plan that is good for the health of all Americans, our nation, and our economy.

We also owe them the truth. No smoke and mirrors, no juggling of the books, no rosy scenarios. We must explain honestly and clearly who gains, who loses, and what it will cost.

I look forward to the debate which will soon begin not just in committee rooms in Congress, but in living rooms and workplaces all across America.

I will not try to predict when a health reform package will pass the Congress, but I'm willing to wager the final product will be considerably different than any bill that has been proposed to date. Hopefully, it will reflect a bipartisan consensus on what must be done to expand coverage, restrain runaway health care costs, and preserve quality, choice and jobs.

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