

Bob Dole



NEWS

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

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BALANCED BUDGET VOTE

CLOSING STATEMENT OF SENATE MAJORITY LEADER BOB DOLE

This debate has been lengthy, and I won't delay a final vote much longer. But I do want to take a minute or two to comment on what is a very historic day for the United States Senate.

I have cast over 12,000 votes during my years in the Capitol. Many of those didn't have a great deal of impact on Americans, and are hard to recall. But some votes you remember forever--they are the votes that touch the life of every American, and that change the course of history.

I remember the vote on President Reagan's historic tax cut bill--and the vote against President Clinton's historic tax increase bill.

I remember the vote which made Martin Luther King's birthday a federal holiday--and I was pleased to lead the debate in favor of that bill.

And I vividly recall the vote authorizing President Bush to send troops to the Persian Gulf.

Historic Vote for Fundamental Change

And no doubt about it, the vote we will cast in just a few minutes is one we will remember forever.

It is a vote for putting America on a path to a balanced budget.

It is a vote for low interest rates, so more Americans can own a house, buy a car, and send their children to college.

It is a vote that will give new life to the 10th amendment, because we are transferring power out of Washington, and returning it to the people, where it belongs.

It is a vote for cutting taxes, and allowing American families to keep more of their hard earned money, and to make their own decisions on how best they can spend it.

It is a vote for securing, strengthening, and preserving the Medicare program, on which so many of our seniors depend.

It is a vote for real, meaningful, and fundamental change.

And, above all, it is a vote for America's future. For our children and grandchildren--and their children and grandchildren.

It is a vote for the teen-ager who was in my office a few years back with a group of high school students from across the country. And this young man said to me, "Senator, everyone has someone in Washington who represents them. Someone speaks for labor, for the farmers, for business...but no one speaks for us. No one speaks for America's future."

I don't know where that young man is today, but if he happens to be listening, I want to tell him that at long last, someone is speaking for you...someone is speaking for America's future. This Republican Congress had the courage to look beyond the next election, and ask what is best for the next generation.

President Sits on Sidelines & Defends Status Quo

But I would also tell this young man that our battle on behalf of the next generation is far from over. President Clinton will veto the final reconciliation bill that will be reported out of conference, the forces of the status quo will do all in their power to return to business as usual.

President Clinton says he wants change. But his actions speak much louder than his words.

He says he wants to balance the budget--and at various times, he says he can do it in either five years, ten years, eight years, or seven years--but each budget he has proposed doesn't balance the budget in 100 years.

He says he wants to cut taxes for the middle class, but he inflicted the largest tax increase in history on the American people.

(more)

He says he wants to save Medicare from its impending bankruptcy, but he has refused again and again to join in a bipartisan effort to do so.

Instead of providing leadership, the President has been content to sit on the sidelines and use increasingly harsh rhetoric to scare the American people.

And that rhetoric reached new lows yesterday with the sad remarks of the President's press secretary, which I won't dignify by repeating.

And there's no doubt that these past few days of debate on the Senate floor have created quite a few "sound bites" for the nightly news.

Some of my friends on the other side of the aisle would have you believe that each and every Republican Senator has it out for Americans in need.

Rein In Government Spending By Slowing Rate of Growth

I just wish that each time the media reported one of these phony accusations, they would follow it up by reporting the truth. And the truth is, the Republican plan reins in government spending by slowing its rate of growth. The truth is, more than 70% of our tax cuts go to working families making less than \$75,000 per year. The truth is, the Republican budget allows Medicare to grow by an average of 7% per year. Medicare beneficiaries will receive more money next year than they do this year, and they will keep on receiving more year after year after year.

It truly shows you just how ingrained the status quo is here in Washington...how accustomed the liberals have become to spending American's money, when they attack us for wanting to slow the budget's rate of growth.

I remember a few years back, when we were having a serious national debate on the proposal by former Senators Rudman and Tsongas--one a Republican and one a Democrat--to freeze the federal budget. Just think what the rhetoric would be like if we had proposed a freeze. But we haven't. Instead, we've proposed limiting government's growth to \$350 billion over the next seven years.

So I say to my friends in the media: You have a duty to report the truth to the American people. Report that Medicare will grow, not get cut. Report that Republicans are giving working families a tax cut, and not a giveaway to the "rich."

Let me close by saluting Senator Domenici for the outstanding job he has done throughout this debate. I know how much time and energy he has invested over the years in the quest for a balanced budget, and I like to think that I know how much this vote means to him.

Congratulations, as well, to Senator Roth, for his leadership in achieving the historic tax cuts contained in this budget, as well as the Medicare provisions, which involved a tremendous amount of work.

Speaking for America's Future

It's no secret this vote is not the end of the budget process. We have repeatedly said that if President Clinton has constructive ideas to offer, we are ready to listen. But, with or without the President's help, we're determined to deliver the change the American people voted for, determined to move America forward, and determined to continue speaking for America's future.

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