

REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE
INTRODUCTION OF MR. HARRY G. WILES
NATIONAL COMMANDER OF THE AMERICAN LEGION
BEFORE THE SENATE VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
MARCH 2, 1976

MR. CHAIRMAN, IT IS A PLEASURE AND AN HONOR FOR ME TO INTRODUCE A FELLOW KANSAN, COMMANDER HARRY G. WILES, NATIONAL COMMANDER OF THE AMERICAN LEGION, FROM MACKSVILLE, KANSAS.

LET ME SAY AT THE OUTSET THAT COMMANDER WILES IS THE THIRD NATIONAL COMMANDER OF THE AMERICAN LEGION FROM THE GREAT STATE OF KANSAS. WE IN KANSAS ARE PLEASED TO PRODUCE MEN OF HIGH CALIBER TO SERVE IN HIGH POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY LIKE THE NATIONAL COMMANDER OF THE AMERICAN LEGION.

WITH 2.7 MILLION MEMBERS, THE AMERICAN LEGION IS THE LARGEST VETERANS ORGANIZATION IN THIS COUNTRY. THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND POSITIONS OF THIS GREAT ORGANIZATION CARRY A GREAT DEAL OF WEIGHT, AND PROPERLY SO.

COMMANDER WILES IS HERE TODAY TO PRESENT A MESSAGE FROM THAT ORGANIZATION--THE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM OF 1976. IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO MENTION JUST A FEW OF HIS ATTRIBUTES THAT MAKE HIM ESPECIALLY QUALIFIED TO PRESENT THAT MESSAGE.

THE CAREER OF COMMANDER WILES COMBINES A SUCCESSFUL PRIVATE LAW PRACTICE AND MANY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC WITH A LONG INVOLVEMENT IN VETERANS AFFAIRS. THIS COMBINATION GIVES HIM THE COMPLETE AND WELL-ROUNDED BACKGROUND HE NEEDS TO PROVIDE RESPONSIBLE AND FORTHRIGHT LEADERSHIP TO THIS MAJOR ORGANIZATION.

COMMANDER WILES' INVOLVEMENT IN VETERANS AFFAIRS BEGAN IN WORLD WAR II, WHEN HE SERVED IN THE OFFICE OF NAVAL INTELLIGENCE. AFTER WORLD WAR II HE CONTINUED A FAMILY TRADITION BY JOINING THE LOCAL AMERICAN LEGION POST.

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COMMANDER WILES DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF BY SERVING IN MANY OFFICES AT ALL LEVELS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION. THESE OFFICES INCLUDE THAT OF LOCAL POST COMMANDER, WHICH WAS FILLED BY HIS UNCLE FIFTY-SEVEN YEARS AGO WHEN THE LEGION WAS FIRST FORMED. THEY INCLUDE STATE COMMANDER IN 1970-1971 AND NATIONAL VICE COMMANDER IN 1971-1972.

COMMANDER WILES' FINE CAREER IN LAW BEGAN AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS LAW SCHOOL. IN ADDITION TO HIS SUCCESSFUL PRIVATE LAW PRACTICE, HE HAS SERVED IN NUMEROUS PUBLIC OFFICES, RANGING FROM COUNTY AND CITY ATTORNEY TO CHAIRMAN OF THE KANSAS CORPORATION COMMISSION WHICH REGULATES PUBLIC UTILITIES, ENERGY PRODUCTION AND A GREAT DEAL OF COMMERCE IN KANSAS.

I MIGHT ADD THAT HE SHOWED HIS BROAD TALENTS BY SETTING A TRACK RECORD AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS THAT HAS BEEN HARD TO BEAT. HIS RECORD IN THE 200 YARD LOW HURDLES STOOD FOR 22 YEARS. HIS TRACK RECORD IN OTHER WALKS OF LIFE SINCE THAT TIME HAS ALSO BEEN HARD TO BEAT.

IN 1964 HE RAN FOR THE OFFICE OF GOVERNOR OF KANSAS AND WAS ONLY NARROWLY DEFEATED. WHILE I PERSONALLY MIGHT HAVE COUNSELED HIM TO RUN UNDER A DIFFERENT PARTY, I THINK HIS BID FOR THE GOVERNORSHIP DEMONSTRATES A WILLINGNESS AND COMMITMENT TO WORK FOR THE BETTERMENT OF THE PEOPLE OF KANSAS. I AM CONFIDENT THAT ALL VETERANS IN THIS COUNTRY WILL BENEFIT FROM THIS KIND OF COMMITMENT WHICH COMMANDER WILES BRINGS TO THIS NATIONAL OFFICE.

AS NATIONAL COMMANDER OF THE AMERICAN LEGION, COMMANDER WILES HAS A GREAT RESPONSIBILITY AND HE HAS WELL DEMONSTRATED HIS QUALITIES OF PATRIOTISM, LOYALTY, INTEGRITY, INSPIRATION AND RESOURCEFULNESS.

THE MESSAGE HE PRESENTS HERE TODAY IS THE MESSAGE OF MILLIONS OF OTHERS LIKE HIMSELF. IT IS THE MESSAGE OF THOSE WHO RESPONDED TO THE CALL TO SERVICE AND SACRIFICE FOR THEIR COUNTRY IN ITS TIME OF NEED.

IT IS NOW THE PLACE OF THOSE ON THIS COMMITTEE AND THOSE OF US IN THE SENATE AND THE CONGRESS TO HEAR THEIR MESSAGE AND TO RESPOND. AND IN SO DOING WE WILL BE RESPONDING TO A STATEMENT BY AN OUTSTANDING KANSAN AND INDIVIDUAL OF THE VERY HIGHEST QUALITY, THE NATIONAL COMMANDER OF THE AMERICAN LEGION, HARRY G. WILES.