

REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE
PUBLIC VOICE (GOLDEN CARROT AWARDS)
EASTERN MARKET
7TH AND NORTH CAROLINA, SE
WASHINGTON, D.C.
SEPTEMBER 14, 1983

THANK YOU VERY MUCH, GEORGE, AND ALL THE MEMBERS OF PUBLIC VOICE. AS MANY OF YOU KNOW, SENATOR McGOVERN AND I HAVE A LOT IN COMMON BESIDES OUR ADVOCACY OF PROGRAMS TO FEED THE HUNGRY AND IMPROVE NUTRITIONAL STANDARDS IN GENERAL. BOTH OF US HAVE COME WITHIN A WHISKER OF BEING ELECTED PRESIDENT. GEORGE CARRIED MASSACHUSETTS AND I WON RUSSELL, KANSAS. AND THEN, TOO, THERE ARE THOSE WHO SAY THAT NEITHER ONE OF US HAS LEARNED HIS LESSON. GEORGE IS ALREADY ON STAGE - I'M WAITING IN THE WINGS. ACTUALLY, BOTH OF US GOT UPSTAGED LAST WEEK WHEN HAROLD STASSEN THREW HIS HAT IN THE RING.

AS EVERYONE HERE UNDERSTANDS, NUTRITION ISN'T A VERY SEXY ISSUE POLITICALLY. THE POOR DON'T HAVE MANY LOBBYISTS WORKING THE HILL ON THEIR BEHALF. THEIR VOICE HAS A WAY OF GETTING DROWNED OUT IN ALL

- 2 -

THE HUBBUB OVER THIS DAM OR THAT MISSILE. BUT THIS COUNTRY HAS FORTUNATELY NEVER BEEN GOVERNED SOLELY ACCORDING TO WHO HAD THE MOST POWERFUL LUNGS - OR EVEN WHO HAD THE DEEPEST POCKETS.

WE HAVE A TRADITION IN THIS COUNTRY. IT SAYS THAT PEOPLE WHO ARE HUNGRY OUGHT TO BE FED, THAT PEOPLE WHO ARE SICK OUGHT TO BE CARED FOR, THAT PEOPLE WHO ARE NEGLECTED OR SHUT OUT OF THE SOCIAL MAINSTREAM OUGHT TO BE INVITED IN FROM THE COLD. IT'S A BIPARTISAN TRADITION - AS YOUR CHOICE OF HONOREES THIS EVENING SUGGESTS. BECAUSE, LET ME ASSURE YOU THERE IS NO REPUBLICAN APPROACH TO HUNGER, NO DEMOCRAT APPROACH TO HUNGER. THERE'S NO PARTISAN DIVIDE OVER NUTRITION, OR THE FUTURE PROSPECTS OF KIDS WHO MIGHT GO WITHOUT WERE IT NOT FOR A CARING, COMMITTED GOVERNMENT.

LET ME GIVE YOU AN EXAMPLE: HISTORICALLY, PARTICIPATION IN THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM HAD BEEN LOW PRIOR TO THE LATE SEVENTIES, WHEN, THANKS PRIMARILY TO SENATOR McGOVERN, THE PURCHASE REQUIREMENT WAS ELIMINATED. THIS WAS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CHANGES IN THAT

- 3 -

PROGRAM, BECAUSE IT INCREASED ACCESSIBILITY. ONCE EPR WAS ACCOMPLISHED, RURAL PARTICIPATION INCREASED BY OVER 40%, AND PARTICIPATION BY THE ELDERLY WENT UP BY OVER 30%.

THIS YEAR, A PROGRAM HAS BEEN ENACTED TO DISTRIBUTE EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE IN THE FORM OF SURPLUS AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES AS WIDELY AS POSSIBLE - NOT OUT OF PARTISAN SPIRIT, BUT BECAUSE IT WAS RIGHT, AND NEEDED, AND BECAUSE THIS COUNTRY HAS NEVER FORSAKEN ITS OWN CONSCIENCE.

THAT SAME BIPARTISANSHIP SPILLED OVER INTO BUDGETARY AREAS. I REALIZE RONALD REAGAN WOULDN'T BE LIKELY TO WIN A POPULARITY CONTEST IN THIS AUDIENCE - BUT COMMON FAIRNESS REQUIRES ME TO POINT OUT THAT RECENT CUTS IN FOOD STAMP AND SOME OTHER PROGRAMS WERE THE RESULT, NOT OF WHITE HOUSE PRESSURE, BUT CONGRESSIONAL CONSENSUS. WE TOOK A PLAN PRESENTED BY THE WHITE HOUSE, AND REDESIGNED IT. WE SET OUT TO MINIMIZE THE IMPACT OF BUDGET CUTS ON THE POOR, AND WE REDUCED OVERALL FOOD STAMP SPENDING BY ABOUT \$7 BILLION OVER A THREE YEAR FISCAL

- 4 -

PERIOD -- FROM 1982 TO 1985. WE'VE TRIED TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT BENEFITS WERE BETTER TARGETTED TO THOSE IN NEED -- WE'VE TRIED TO ELIMINATE FRAUD AND ABUSE WHERE THEY OCCUR -- AND WE'VE MADE SOME SIGNIFICANT ADMINISTRATIVE IMPROVEMENTS. ALL OF THIS WAS ACCOMPLISHED WITH A SCALPEL -- NOT A MEAT AX. IN ADDITION, WE HELPED TO SECURE STRONGER PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR A PROGRAM THAT I CONSIDER ABSOLUTELY VITAL.

SO I'M PROUD TO RECEIVE THIS GOLDEN CARROT -- AND I PROMISE TO WIELD A STICK FROM TIME TO TIME, NOT ONLY TO HANG ON TO THE GAINS WE'VE MADE OVER THE LAST DECADE, BUT TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT HUNGER, WHERE IT REALLY EXISTS, IS ELIMINATED IN THIS LAND OF INCREDIBLE BOUNTY. OUR NUMBER ONE PRIORITY MUST REMAIN A COMBINED PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR EFFORT TO ENHANCE THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF ALL AMERICANS.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

We won a two-year extension of the emergency food assistance program - at the same time we reduced overall food stamp spending by an average of \$2 billion

Thank you very much, George, and all the members of Public Voice. As many of you know, Senator McGovern and I have a lot in common, besides our advocacy of programs to feed the hungry and improve nutritional standards in general. Both of us have come within a whisker of being elected President. George carried Massachusetts and I won Russell, Kansas. And then, too, there are those who say that neither one of us has learned his lesson. George is already on stage, I'm waiting in the wings. Actually, both of us got upstaged last week when Harold Stassen threw his hat in the ring. I hear there's even a write-in campaign urging the virtues of Norman Thomas...or is it Eugene Debs?

We made sure to better identify these people who need to do a minute

Anyway, as long as I'm feeling nostalgic, I might as well add my regrets over the loss of such Senate advocates as George and Jacob Javits, with whom I first offered nutrition legislation back in 1976. It suggests that maybe hunger isn't a very sexy issue politically. The poor don't have many lobbyists working the Hill on their behalf. Their voice has a way of getting drowned out in all the hubub over this dam or that missile. But this country has fortunately never been governed solely according to who had the most powerful lungs - or even who had the deepest pockets.

We have a tradition in this country. It says that people who are hungry ought to be fed, that people who are sick ought to be cared for, that people who are neglected or shut out of the social mainstream ought to be invited in from the cold. It's a bipartisan tradition - as your choice of honorees this evening suggests. Because, let me assure you, there is no Republican approach to hunger, no Democratic approach to hunger. There's no partisan divide over nutrition, or the future prospects of kids who might go without were it not for a caring, committed government.

Let me give you an example. Historically, participation in the Food Stamp program had been low prior to the late Seventies, when legislation was passed to eliminate the purchase requirement. Once that took place, rural participation increased by over 40%. Participation by the elderly went up by over 30%. This year, we've enacted programs to distribute emergency food assistance as widely as possible - not out of partisan spirit but because it was right, and needed, and because this country has never forsaken her own conscience.

That same bipartisanship spilled over into budgetary areas. I realize Ronald Reagan wouldn't be likely to win a popularity contest in this audience - but common fairness requires me to point out that recent cuts in food stamp and other programs were the result, not of White House pressure, but congressional consensus. We took a plan presented by the White House and we redesigned it. We set out to minimize the impact of any cuts on the poor - and it isn't just Bob Dole's name on that package, but Pat Leahy's too. So I'm proud to receive this golden carrot - and I promise to wield a stick from time to time, not only to hang on to the gains we've made over the last decade, but to make certain that no American goes hungry in this land of incredible bounty. We've saved as much money as we can save, consistent with that objective. Our number one priority must remain saving people.

and we're taking a scalpel, not a meat-ax to the administrative structure of many of these programs that I consider absolutely vital.

Thank you very much.