

Remarks of Senator Daniel K. Akaka before the Federal Managers Association, chapter 19

Senator Daniel K. Akaka Papers

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REMARKS OF SENATOR DANIEL K. AKAKA
BEFORE THE FEDERAL MANAGERS ASSOCIATION, CHAPTER 19
PEARL HARBOR NAVAL SHIPYARD CAFETERIA
August 30, 1990

Aloha!

It is a pleasure and an honor for me to speak to you today.

I will keep my remarks brief and to the point today, because I have a 4:55 flight to Kaua'i. I'm sure that all of you would prefer brevity anyway.

My campaign supporters on Kaua'i are holding a fundraiser for me tonight, and they told me that I had better show up ... or else I would miss out on ono stew and rice.

I felt that it was well worth the extra effort to meet with you because there are some very important issues before Congress that affect you -- issues that make Hawaii's Senate race very important nationally.

It is a vital race because the Administration needs only five seats to gain a Republican majority in the Senate. This would mean that the Administration's federal budget request would also become the budget of choice for the U.S. Senate.

It is very important for me to tell you this because under the most recent Republican budget federal workers would have taken a beating.

Under President Bush's 1991 Budget proposal to Congress, he completely eliminated your lump sum retirement option. Fortunately, Congress rejected his proposal.

The Democratic plan is to retain the current 50/50 lump-sum option. Under this option, retirees can choose to receive 50% upon retirement and 50% plus interest the following year as well as a reduced annuity for life.

For many retirees, this option makes financial sense. The Democratic Congress has fought the Administration on this because we believe federal retirees have earned this option. You deserve this option.

My opponant may try to tell you that she agrees with you and me on this issue. But I can tell you that her pipeline to the President flows two ways. What happens when the President picks up his phone from the White House and says, "I want you to support my budget -- 'or else'." (She would lose more than stew and rice.)

Another area are where Democrat and Republican paths diverge is on COLA's for federal retirees. The Administration's budget asked for a cap on retiree's COLA's at last year's level.

We rejected the Republican request. The Democratic budget calls for federal COLAs to keep pace with inflation. After a career of federal service, federal retirees should not be pushed into a financial hole by the Administration.

You need a Democratic Congress to stick up for your rights! And you need this now more than ever.

The dilemma we face today over the federal budget deficit is worse than when President Reagan left office. I believe he will go down in history as the father of our big deficits.

Let me explain why. Early in his first term, President Reagan asked for and got tax cuts for huge corporations and the wealthiest Americans. At the same time, he sharply increased military spending. In other words, the Administration reduced revenue and increased spending. In any language, this spells deficit.

This year, we are looking at a \$221 billion dollar shortfall. Come October, we are faced with severe across-the-board cuts under the Gramm Rudman deficit reduction law.

To meet this crisis, Congress and the Administration are moving forward with the budget summitt. Even under the best budget proposal, sacrifices will have to be made in every area. I am sure that all of you realize this.

But I am here to tell you today that as the budget proposals come before Congress, I will be fighting from your corner ... without making apologies to anyone.

I want to assure you that I will continue to strongly oppose attempts by the Republican Administration to solve our budget crisis at your expense.

To close, I want to say that we must not allow the quality and desirability of federal jobs to fall below those in the private sector. If we do, it will hurt not only federal workers. It will hurt our country as a whole.

We must maintain top quality in our federal workforce, or we will become a second-rate nation. That is my belief.

Thank you very much, and God bless all of you.

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