



WASHINGTON — Behind the facade of party-wide euphoria over President Nixon's huge lead in the polls, dissension is rising among Republican candidates for Congress who want — but cannot get — presidential help on their own uphill campaigns.

Pressure to get Mr. Nixon, who dreams of an all-time record majority, to risk a few points of his own vote by coming to his party's aid is centered in the Republican National Committee and the Senate and House Campaign Committees. Sen. Robert Dole (photo) of Kansas, the party chairman,

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is leading the way and hopes to take the case directly to Mr. Nixon.

The case is clear: if the President is serious about making his vaunted "new majority" a long-range proposition, rather than a majority that will dissipate right after the Nov. 7 election, he must also bring in a Republican Congress.

Sen. Peter Dominick of Colorado and Rep. Bob Wilson of California, chairmen of the Senate and House Campaign Committees, agree with Dole that if Mr. Nixon descends from above the partisan battle and makes an all-out fight for a Republican Congress, he will unquestionably sacrifice the votes of some — perhaps many — Democrats for Nixon.

The reason for that is obvious. If Mr. Nixon, for example, campaigned hard in Rhode Island for former Navy Secretary John Chafee and against his opponent in the Senate race, Democratic Sen. Claiborne Pell, he would alienate thousands of Democrats who now plan to vote both for Pell and the President. Their party loyalties, centered on Pell, would be mortally offended.

The same is true in other states with close Senate contests but where the President rides far, far ahead of Sen. George McGovern — and of his own party.

Dominick and Wilson are extremely dis-

GOP candidates fear Nixon's short coattails

turbed by this imbalance and the disproportionate financing of Mr. Nixon's campaign to the grave detriment of lesser Republicans. But a direct request to the Committee for the Re-election of the President for financial help has been quietly rejected.

That decision was made by committee chairman Clark MacGregor, his predecessor John Mitchell (still a superpower without portfolio in the Nixon campaign) and Maurice Stans, the committee's chief fund-raiser.

Instead, MacGregor now has gained White House approval for a series of relatively minor assists to congressional candidates. Thus, the President's "surrogates" — cabinet members assigned to speak for him around the country — will be channeled into states where Republican Senate candidates might win with a little outside help. So will the direct-mail campaign and Nixon-Agnew storefronts.

The outer edge

That's a pittance, but it may mark the outer edge of presidential help for beleaguered Republicans.

Mr. Nixon uses biblical language to describe his reluctance to jump into the slippery snakepit of the congressional campaign. "The laying on of hands" by the President to elect a Republican Congress, he says, is not in his 1972 scenario.

Accordingly, when his campaign begins in earnest he plans only low-decibel appeals for Republican congressional and gubernatorial candidates. Eschewing the kind of bitterly partisan campaign of 1970, Mr. Nixon will try to cling to the high road, bestowing routine words of praise on Republican candidates who will share the rostrum with him but avoiding "the laying on of hands."

The real reason

Although the real reason is to protect his own huge lead, White House strategists defend the decision with other arguments. Thus, they say, the value of Mr. Nixon's coattails is questionable. Moreover, by campaigning as President Nixon, not as partisan leader of his party, the effect of his coattails may be maximized simply by pulling in the largest possible pro-Nixon vote.

Presidential aides talk glowingly of a new "respect" for the President, based largely on his foreign policy, that could dissipate if he gets into a bare-knuckle struggle against the Democrats.

That's the self-serving mood Dole, Dominick, Wilson and Co. will try to change, with only small hope of success.