

Many people assume that the Red Cross is primarily a disaster relief agency, primarily funded by voluntary donations. In fact, over sixty percent of the organization's expenditures go to its bio-medical division, which provides about 45% of the nation's blood supply. The sale of blood accounts for 50% of the revenues of the Red Cross. As a blood provider the Red Cross continually deals with the federal government. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA), for example, specifies the requirements a blood provider must meet in terms of screening tests and safety procedures. At times in recent years the FDA has found the Red Cross out of compliance with its regulations. The blood market in the United States is highly competitive at this time owing to increased costs from new testing procedures for AIDS and other diseases, as well as because of demands for lower cost blood from financially strapped hospitals. This year the Red Cross requested the Pentagon to grant it the exclusive right to conduct blood drives on military bases (The Pentagon denied the request.) Elizabeth Dole, wife of Republican Presidential candidate Robert Dole, is currently President of the Red Cross. She has indicated her intention to continue in office even if Mr. Dole is elected President. The Board of Directors of the Red Cross has stated it has no objection to Mrs. Dole continuing to serve as President of the organization.

Should Elizabeth Dole continue in office as President of the American Red Cross if her husband is elected President? If so, why? If not, why not?

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