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Dole stumping, but not for politics

He raises awareness about prostate cancer.

By JAKE THOMPSON
Washington Correspondent

WASHINGTON — Friday afternoon, Sen. Bob Dole telephoned Turget Ozal, the president of Turkey.

The Kansas Republican also chatted recently with Boone Arledge, head of ABC News; David Broder, chief political writer for *The Washington Post*; Robert Novak, a conservative columnist; and Len Dawson, sports commentator and former Kansas City Chiefs quarterback.

Is another political quest taking shape in Dole's Capitol offices? Not at all.

Dole's latest crusade is personal

— in more ways than one. The 68-year-old politician has been talking to others who have been diagnosed with prostate cancer, a disease that strikes one in 11 men, kills about 34,000 men a year and can be successfully treated in many cases.

After his cancerous prostate gland was surgically removed last December, Dole recovered and launched a campaign to raise awareness about the disease.

He is becoming the Betty Ford of prostate cancer. What the former first lady did to raise



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awareness of breast cancer among women a decade ago, Dole is now doing for men and prostate cancer.

"I told President Ford I'm following in his wife's footsteps," Dole said in an interview in his offices.

He and his staff have fielded hundreds of letters and telephone calls from men and their wives. He rarely passes up a chance to mention prostate cancer in speeches, and he always urges men over 50 to get a blood test called a Prostate Specific Antigen or PSA test, which can identify prostate problems.

Dole has talked about prostate cancer on "Larry King Live" and morning news shows, and he has appeared in national publications, among them *USA Today*. *People* magazine interviewed him on the

subject, and *Life* television featured him in a segment of good, Dole said.

"When someone of Senator Dole's stature starts talking about it, people listen."

"Men are being diagnosed at an earlier stage, but it's through the efforts of Senator Dole and others that they even know to ask about the PSA test."

Dole has assigned Vicki Stack, one of his staff health care experts, to work with him on prostate cancer issues.

Stack, a nurse by training, showed two thick folders full of letters that Dole has received this year. Some directly credit Dole's outspokenness as the reason they got checked.

A man from Newton, Kan., wrote: "Without the information you made public after your surgery I would never have asked for this PSA blood test. Myself, my wife and family all thank you, Bob."

A woman in Missouri wrote that her husband wasn't fortunate enough to have caught the cancer early and was dying from it, but she thanked Dole for raising the issue publicly.

A Wichita man, also terminally ill with the disease, wrote that he was too poor to afford a drug that might extend his life a few more months.

Stack and Dole swung into action. They found that the drug maker had a policy to provide the medicine free to those who couldn't afford it, but the Wichita man did not know that.

The man recently wrote back to say he is getting the medicine, and he thanked Dole.

Several women have called to

ask whether they have a prostate gland to worry about. Women don't.

Diagnosing prostate cancer early is critical. If caught before it spreads beyond the prostate gland, a variety of treatment methods can remove or destroy the cancer. Besides surgery, some patients undergo radiation therapy or placement of small "seeds" containing radioactive material around the prostate gland.

Like other cancer victims, Dole himself has become an expert on the disease, laws affecting it and research.

He and Sen. Ted Stevens of Alaska, Sen. Alan Cranston of California and Sen. Jesse Helms of North Carolina — who all have

been treated for prostate cancer — sponsored a bill concerning research that has passed the Senate and awaits action in the House.

The bill increases National Cancer Institute prostate research from \$28 million to \$100 million, and adds \$20 million for new prostate research at the federal Centers for Disease Control.

In early April, Dole explained his campaign in a speech on the Senate floor: "Compare that to the almost \$2 billion we spend — and should be spending — to research AIDS, a disease which claims about the same number of lives, and you know it's time to devote more resources to the battle against prostate cancer."

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Dole says it's time to cut 'super perks'

WASHINGTON (AP) — It's time to eliminate the "super perk" enjoyed by members of Congress, Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole says.

That would be the mass mailings — unsolicited newsletters, questionnaires and surveys, and post cards announcing town meetings — lawmakers send at taxpayer expense.

The Kansas Republican contends most mass mailings by members of Congress are nothing more than political junk mail.

"Obviously, you're going to answer your mail ... but you don't have to flood the district or flood the state with newsletters," Dole said. "They're all self-serving. We don't put out any newsletter where we criticize ourselves."

If lawmakers are serious about eliminating the perquisites of office, then they should cut some of the nearly \$60 million spent in 1991 by the House and Senate for mail, Dole says.

In the Kansas delegation, neither Dole nor Sen. Nancy Kassebaum, R-Kan., sent mass mailings in 1991.

Each of Kansas' five House members sent at least one mass mailing to constituents in 1991, usually a newsletter or a questionnaire.

Under congressional rules, a "mass mailing" generally covers any bulk mailing of more than 500 letters at one time. One of the most popular methods is known as a "postal patron" mailing. That allows lawmakers to send a letter to every address in their district or state without the name of the resident.

Some lawmakers also send out newsletters using targeted mailing lists. Usually, members develop their lists by taking names of people who have written their office on some subject, such as health care or agriculture, or returned a member's questionnaire. The names are entered into the office computer system along with the issue of concern.

For example, Rep. Pat Roberts,

a Dodge City Republican, mailed a half dozen newsletters on agriculture last year. Each one went to about 16,000 people in his district.

Rep. Jim Slattery, a Topeka Democrat, sent a foreign policy mass mailing earlier this year. It went to a group of 711 people, who previously had written Slattery's office on foreign policy issues.

The letter opened with the addressee's name. "Knowing of your interest in U.S. foreign policy, I wanted to recap some of the major foreign policy legislation which Congress faced in 1991." The letter, for example, mentioned the Persian Gulf War and Slattery's views on it.

Dole says he's working with other Republicans, including House Minority Leader Bob Michel, R-Ill., to develop a package of legislation to trim congressional spending. Dole proposes the mass mailing ban as part of that effort.

"We're going to suggest that one way to save real money is to take a look at the real perks," he said.

He describes mass mailing as a "super perk" — one of the privileges of office "that keep incumbents here forever."

According to the National Taxpayers Union, the House spent \$44.8 million on mail in 1991 and the Senate \$13.8 million. The group estimates most of that went for mass mailings, about 90 percent of the Senate's mailing costs, for example.

Lawmakers also may mail news releases and opinion columns to newspapers and broadcasters, even those outside their districts, although those aren't considered mass mailings under the congressional mailing system.

David Keating, a spokesman for the National Taxpayers Union, says the group would support a prohibition on unsolicited mass mailings.

"It would certainly level the playing field between incumbents and challengers," he said.

In 1991, he notes, 185 House members spent more on taxpayer-paid mailings than the average amount challengers spent on their political campaigns in 1990, roughly \$108,500.

Targeted mailings are among the most effective political tools available to members of Congress, Keating says. By writing to people interested in specific issues, a lawmaker can "help solidify a very important part of your voting base," he says.

Slattery predicts the House will cut the mailing budget in response to attacks on congressional perks, including the free mailing system for lawmakers, known as the "franking" privilege. He says he'd support a 50 percent spending cut for all congressional mail.

In 1991, Slattery spent about \$101,000 on mail, which was 58 percent of his yearly postage budget and the most among Kansans in the House. The spending covered mass mailings as well as all other letters, such as those responding to constituents.

In the House, each member has an annual mail budget, which is roughly equal to the cost of three district-wide mailings to residential households at first-class postage rates.

Slattery concedes there are abuses of the congressional free mailing system but maintains some mass mailings can help constituents.

One of Slattery's newsletters, for example, listed telephone numbers and addresses for a host of federal agencies, from the Agriculture Department to the White House. He also contends mailing town meeting notices helps increase attendance.

"It's perfectly legitimate for members of Congress to be able to send out questionnaires to their districts with the frank ... and it's part of representing your people for goodness sake," he said. "Also, it's legitimate to report to your constituents about what legislation you are working on and to do it in detail."

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Dole says this may be year for plan to balance the budget

Entitlements should be open to cuts

By Harris News Service
HUTCHINSON — The frustration of American voters has made the climate right for adding a balanced budget amendment to the United States Constitution, said Sen. Bob Dole, R-Kan.

"I think the balanced budget amendment is going to pass this year," Dole said Friday during his weekly telephone press conference with Kansas journalists.



Dole

"I think many Democrats who have opposed it, including the two Democrats from Kansas in the House, probably will vote for it this time. I think you are going to see a lot of legislation aimed at trying to regain confidence — Congress trying to regain the confidence of the American people."

Earlier this week, Sen. Nancy Kassebaum, R-Kan., expressed reservations about the balanced budget amendments as proposed. Dole said he sensed her concern was over the language of such an amendment.

"My view is — and I have been a proponent of the balanced budget amendment for some time — we ought to pass it. We ought to do the best we can on the language and then let it be implemented and see how it works. It's got to be ratified by three-fourths of the states, so we will see very quickly if the state legislators agree with us that we ought to have some limit on spending."

The popular version of the amendment being considered would require a three-fifths, recorded vote of both chambers of Congress in order to spend more than the government takes in — known better as deficit spending.

Dole said he would attempt to amend the amendment on the Senate side to include a provision that requires a three-fifths, recorded majority to raise taxes.

Cutting entitlements

He also said he favored taking a close look at entitlement programs in an effort to get federal spending

under control.

"I was one of 28 senators who voted to take a look at entitlements just before the recess," he said. "What the Democrats did was say you can't do anything about veterans entitlements. Well, my view is you've got to do something about all the entitlements. I mean there's veterans, Medicare, Medicaid, food stamps, whatever there is. There's 40 or 50 different programs on entitlements."

"If we say up right up front we're not going to do anything with it, not even look at those programs to find savings, then we're never going to balance the budget. Everything ought to be on the table, and that includes agriculture."

If congressional salaries and budgets, the White House budget and other previously untouchable portions of the budget are included, the public might gain some confidence in the process.

"We do that and then the American people are going to have some confidence we are not going to exempt special interests or people with influence or politicians or whatever."

Good news for Bush

On another topic, Dole said, recent positive economic news will bolster President George Bush's reelection. The public will vote its pocketbook in November, and lower unemployment, higher farm prices and other good economic news will help the president.

He was not sure which political party candidate will be affected more by independent Ross Perot's entry into the fall presidential campaign. He does not put much stock into polls that show Perot with considerable support.

Dole noted that independent John Anderson had about 24 percent support in polls before the 1980 election, but ended up with 7 percent of the popular vote and no electoral votes.

Perot also has a negative image with a considerable chunk of the electorate, according to the same poll, Dole said.

"Perot obviously is the unknown quantity," the senator said. "He already has some negatives. I think in that same poll, his negatives were about 23 percent, which seems to be fairly high for somebody who's not even a candidate."

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Dole wants to eliminate Congress' perks

By Barry Massey
Associated Press Writer

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