

BOB DOLE
1ST DISTRICT, KANSAS

COMMITTEE:
AGRICULTURE

DISTRICT OFFICES:
ROOMS 210 211
FEDERAL BUILDING
HUTCHINSON, KANSAS

BOX 31
RUSSELL, KANSAS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

| COUNTIES: | | |
|-----------|----------|----------|
| BARBER | HODGEMAN | RAWLINS |
| BARTON | JEWELL | RENO |
| CHEYENNE | KEARNEY | REPUBLIC |
| CLARK | KINGMAN | RICE |
| CLOUD | KIOWA | ROOKS |
| COMANCHE | LANE | RUSH |
| DECATUR | LINCOLN | RUSSELL |
| EDWARDS | LOGAN | SALINE |
| ELLIS | MEADE | SCOTT |
| ELLSWORTH | MITCHELL | SEWARD |
| FINNEY | MORTON | SHERIDAN |
| FORD | NESS | SHERMAN |
| GOVE | NORTON | SMITH |
| GRAHAM | OSBORNE | STAFFORD |
| GRANT | OTTAWA | STANTON |
| GRAY | PAWNEE | STEVENS |
| GREELEY | PHILLIPS | THOMAS |
| HAMILTON | PRATT | TREGO |
| HARPER | | WALLACE |
| HASKELL | | WICHITA |

Room 244
Ext. 2715

For Immediate Release
May 14, 1963

Congressman Bob Dole (R-Kansas) today introduced a Resolution which he said would "exempt farmer-elected County Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Committeemen from taking any loyalty oath binding them to support Administration farm programs".

Dole's Resolution would rescind the following regulation promulgated by Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman on March 1, 1963:

"Provided, however. That before any such county committeeman or alternate committeeman may take office he shall sign a pledge that he will faithfully, fairly and honestly perform to the best of his ability all of the duties devolving upon him as a committeeman, and that he will support the programs he is called upon to administer."

The Dole Resolution would also amend the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act to bar the Secretary from requiring "any statements, either verbal or written, from any farmer-elected committeeman or alternate committeeman, pledging their loyalty, allegiance, or support to any farm program or proposal of the National Administration, nor shall any such committeeman be discharged for any reason, other than for cause as provided by this Section."

"The committeemen are elected by their own neighbors and are not employed by anyone in the United States Department of Agriculture," Dole said. "There is ample existing authority to remove them for just cause, and moreover, farmers themselves could oust any county committeeman who is not doing a satisfactory job by not re-electing him. It was never intended by Congress the Secretary of Agriculture should seek to intimidate or coerce farmer-elected committeemen to support or oppose any specific farm theory or program. In fact, Congress has traditionally established and supported a policy of independence and separation of power for such committeemen. Secretary Freeman, by administrative order, would now compel these farmer-elected committeemen to become an integral part of the Administration propaganda team, requiring them to support programs which they, and the farm neighbors who elected them, might flatly oppose.

"It is one thing to pledge fair and honest performance of duty, but quite another to take an oath to support programs advocated by Secretary Freeman, or any successor. You can imagine a farmer committeeman's dilemma if a new Secretary of Agri-

culture with other ideas were appointed. Certain provisions of the 'Freeman Oath' are apparently conflicting, for it would be impossible at all times to 'fairly and honestly perform' if a committeeman supported a Freeman program as suggested by the USDA hierarchy in Washington. The USDA propaganda barrage preceding the May 21 wheat referendum has contained half-truths, but in accordance with the 'Freeman Oath' a committeeman would have a solemn duty to support his program by fully utilizing all USDA propaganda. Many committeemen favor Freeman programs but are opposed to tactics employed by the USDA. Frankly, I have the highest regard for the farmer-elected committeeman system and, in my opinion, this ridiculous oath insults the intelligence and integrity of farmers required to sign it.

"I can find no precedent for this 'loyalty oath' promulgated by Freeman. The House of Representatives requires of its own employees an affidavit to the effect they do not advocate overthrow of the government and will not strike against the government. There is the oath to 'support and defend the Constitution of the United States...' taken by all government employees. The National Defense Education Act of 1958 requires a similar oath from students participating in its loan program, but there is no evidence that any agency has ever required its employees to sign an oath to 'follow the leader' even though he might be wrong.

"If the Freeman concept of absolute ideological loyalty should be adopted by other agencies, Mortimer Caplin might require of all Internal Revenue Service agents an oath to work for limitation of charitable deductions and other reforms suggested by Caplin; Secretary Celebrezze might demand from each HEW employee a signed pledge of support for medicare financed through Social Security; Newton Minow's minions within the Federal Communications Commission--even those who surreptitiously watch the TV Westerns--might be required under oath to view only cultural programs. And what of the Defense Department? Ponder the fate of the bureaucrat who preferred to believe that Boeing, not General Dynamics, should have received the TFX contract.

"It seems we have arrived at a point where Congress needs to rescue Mr. Freeman from himself before he suggests putting farmer-elected ASC Committeemen in special uniforms."

H. J. RES. _____

To prohibit the Secretary of Agriculture from requiring loyalty pledges of farmer-elected Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Committeemen.

WHEREAS, County and local Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Committeemen are farmers elected to their offices by farmers in their local communities; and

WHEREAS, such committeemen are not employed by the United States government; and

WHEREAS, such committeemen have for many years provided administrative continuity during the terms of offices of a number of different Secretaries of Agriculture; and

WHEREAS, Section 503 of the Agricultural Act of 1954, as amended, specifically prohibits the Secretary from imposing any limitation upon the number of terms for which members of County Committees may be re-elected; and

WHEREAS, Congress has traditionally and historically established and supported a policy of administrative independence and separation of power for such committees;

BE IT RESOLVED, That:

1. The proviso in Section 7.18 of the Regulations promulgated by the Secretary of Agriculture on March 1, 1963, (Vol. 38, Number 42, Federal Register, page 1979) reading as follows is hereby rescinded:

"Provided, however, That before any such county committeeman or alternate County Committeeman may take office he shall sign a pledge that he will faithfully, fairly, and honestly perform to the best of his ability all of the duties devolving on him as a committeeman, and that he will support the programs he is called upon to administer."

and (2) Section 8 (b) of the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act, as amended, is amended by adding at the end of the first paragraph the following new sentence:

"Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Agriculture shall not require any statements, either verbal or written, from ~~any farmer-~~ elected committeeman or alternate committeeman, pledging their loyalty, allegiance, or support to any farm program or proposal of the National Administration, nor shall any such committeeman be discharged for any reason, other than for cause as provided by this Section."