

(VETERANS) Please contact us with any questions or comments: <http://dolearchive.ku.edu/ask>

WASHINGTON.--FOR AWHILE TODAY REP. BOB DOLE, R-KAN., BELIEVED HE HAD WON HIS BATTLE. GOVERNMENT AUDITORS HAD UPHELD HIS CONTENTION THAT PRESIDENT JOHNSON HAS NO LEGAL AUTHORITY TO ISSUE MEMORIAL CERTIFICATES TO SURVIVORS OF DECEASED SERVICEMEN.

BUT DOLE DRAFTED HIS VICTORY COMMUNIQUE JUST A LITTLE TOO SOON. THE 22 CENTS THAT EACH OF THOSE CERTIFICATES COSTS WAS AUTHORIZED IN A VETERANS ADMINISTRATION APPROPRIATION BILL PASSED BY THE HOUSE YESTERDAY AND EN ROUTE TODAY TO THE SENATE.

"I WAS AFRAID THEY WOULD TRY THAT, AND I LOOKED FOR IT," DOLE MOURNED TODAY. "I JUST DIDN'T SEE IT."

DOLE CONTENDS THE CERTIFICATES, BEARING THE PRESIDENT'S SIGNATURE, ARE NOTHING MORE THAN INVITATIONS TO VOTE FOR PRESIDENT JOHNSON. HE SAID THE ESTIMATED \$4.2 MILLION THE PROGRAM COULD COST THROUGH THE YEAR 2010 COULD BETTER BE SPENT ON VETERANS BENEFITS.

THE GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE (GAO), IN A REPORT MADE PUBLIC TODAY, DID NOT PASS ON THE MERITS OF THE PROGRAM ORIGINATED BY THE LATE PRESIDENT KENNEDY AND SINCE THEN, ACCORDING TO DOLE, EXPANDED BY PRESIDENT JOHNSON.

ALL IT SAID WAS THAT THERE WAS NO AUTHORITY IN LAW FOR OUTLAY OF VETERANS ADMINISTRATION (VA) FUNDS FOR THIS PURPOSE.

EVEN AS THE GAO REPORT AND DOLE'S ACCOMPANYING STATEMENT WERE BEING READIED FOR DISTRIBUTION, THE HOUSE WAS APPROVING WITHOUT CONTROVERSY A VA APPROPRIATION BILL INCLUDING AMONG PURPOSES FOR WHICH THE AGENCY CAN SPEND ITS GENERAL FUNDS THE "RECOGNITION" OF VETERANS.

"I HAVEN'T LOST YET," DOLE SAID WHEN ADVISED OF THIS WORDING, "I'LL TRY TO GET IT KNOCKED OUT IN THE SENATE."

MEANTIME THE PRESUMPTION IS THAT SURVIVORS OF VETERANS, DYING CURRENTLY OR HAVING DIED IN YEARS PAST, CAN CONTINUE TO WRITE TO THE WHITE HOUSE FOR THE 8 INCH BY 10 INCH CERTIFICATES, SUITABLE FOR FRAMING, AND BEARING A FACSIMILE OF THE PRESIDENT'S SIGNATURE.

THE CERTIFICATE STATES THAT THE UNITED STATES HONORS THE VETERAN'S MEMORY. IT INCLUDES HIS NAME AT THIS POINT AND CONTINUES: "THIS CERTIFICATE IS AWARDED BY A GRATEFUL NATION IN RECOGNITION OF DEVOTED AND SELFLESS CONSECRATION TO THE SERVICE OF OUR COUNTRY IN THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES."

"THE ONLY THING LEFT OUT," ACCORDING TO DOLE, "IS 'VOTE FOR JOHNSON FOR PRESIDENT.'"