

STATEMENT OF SENATOR BOB DOLE, KANSAS
SELECT COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MONOPOLY
HEARINGS ON ORAL CONTRACEPTIVES
JANUARY 14, 1970

I regret these hearings have opened when the Senate is in recess. Most of the members, because of prior commitments, will be unable to join the Chairman in hearing and examining the distinguished witnesses who have been called to appear the first two days. I had requested that these hearings be held after the new session began. However, I was informed by the Chairman that any changes in our hearings were precluded because of his commitments to the Poverty Subcommittee. My longstanding commitments to be in Kansas this week thus prevent my attendance today and tomorrow. I do wish to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to this week's witnesses for their testimony and interest in our work.

Oral contraceptives are the most publicized and discussed pharmaceutical products of our time. They have been praised. They have been condemned. These hearings should afford them a balanced consideration, for it seems certain that they are neither panacea nor scourge. It would be unfortunate if efforts intended to assist American women only served to confuse them. They have already been subjected to heavy doses of alarms and reassurances by the proponents and opponents of "the pill" in the mass media. Let us hope our investigation can provide some clarity, some orientation and, perhaps, some guidelines not apparent in the discussions which have preceded these hearings. Our job will be to give a controversial mass of technical and emotional material an open-minded and broadly based airing. We must avoid doing a disservice to those we seek to help and protect. We must not frighten millions of women into disregarding the considered judgments of their physicians about the use of oral contraceptives, nor can we afford to create an atmosphere that would lead to indiscriminate use despite the contradictions so extensively set forth in the prescribing literature and labeling.

Let us show some sympathy for the beleaguered physician who must weigh not only the safety and efficacy of alternative methods for a particular woman, but the emotional reactions of that woman which have been generated by sensational publicity and rumored medical advise.

I can safely say that I share with the Chairman a deep concern for national and world problems of over-population and environmental health. It is apparent that at the present time the oral contraceptives are important weapons in the struggle to achieve some control over our ability to multiply ourselves into chaos.

Let us hope the presentation in these hearings of highly technical and hotly debated clinical studies will not be wrested from contest and used to plague our physicians and confuse the women we seek to protect.