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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON, D.C., May 25 --- U.S. Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kans.) introduced today a bill that would permit farmers to continue to hire young people to drive farm vehicles, both for individual farm operations and for large custom service operations.

Speaking from the Senate floor, Dole explained that the Federal Highway Administration announced last year that it would enforce regulations prohibiting the interstate operation of farm trucks by persons under 21 years of age. These regulations were officially scheduled to go into effect July 1, 1971.

Dole said his bill would exempt young men and women from the proposed regulations, allowing them to operate farm vehicles because it includes a provision for custom harvest operations, while other measures provide exemptions only for regular farming operations.

The Kansas Senator explained that "some custom wheat harvesters are individual farmers who have invested in several combines and trucks, and supplement their own farm income by harvesting the crop of their neighbors. Other farmers and individuals own and operate fleets of combines that are worth hundreds of thousands of dollars, and form up in Texas and Oklahoma in late May, and harvest wheat all summer for farmers from Texas to North Dakota and on into Canada."

Dole said:

In the High Plains area of Kansas, these custom operators harvest about 50 per cent of the wheat crop. These custom operators also hire our young high school and college youth to drive their combines and trucks.

The use of these young drivers is especially needed during harvest periods; and in Kansas and the surrounding states, we are now preparing to harvest our winter wheat crop. The farmers of this nation, whether they are hauling wheat, corn, cattle, insecticides, fertilizer, or whatever use they have for a truck, depend on these young people to drive for them. To forbid a teenager to drive a farm vehicle would cause undue hardship to the agricultural community.