

291

FROM: THE OFFICE OF U.S. SEN. BOB DOLE
NEW SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510
(202) 225-8947

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON, D.C., July 29, 1971 ---- U.S. Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kans.) said today that the Senate Committee on Public Works, of which he is a member, passed out of committee today legislation that he believes could be of major significance to economically depressed areas such as Wichita, Kans.

Dole said the legislation approved in executive session today was patterned after the Disaster Relief Act of 1970, which he assisted in drafting last year.

The Kansas Senator outlined the following provisions of the bill and the aid which would be provided for economic disasters:

- 1) The findings and declarations of the Disaster Relief Act of 1970 would be amended to provide the rhetorical base for including economic disasters.
- 2) The definition of a "major disaster" would be modified to include the existence of a rate of unemployment 50 per cent above the national average for six of the preceding twelve months, or a 100 per cent increase in unemployment to 6 per cent or more over the preceding 12 months in any area, community or neighborhood (without regard to political boundaries.)
- 3) Designation as a major disaster area brings the appointment of a Federal Coordinating Officer for the area under the Office of Emergency Preparedness (OEP). He makes an initial appraisal of the types of relief most urgently needed, and coordinates and administers aid in the area.
- 4) Individuals in economic disaster areas may then qualify for aid already available to victims of natural disasters:
 - a) temporary housing or emergency shelter,
 - b) mortgage or rental payments up to a year upon written notice of foreclosure or eviction,
 - c) food coupon allotments and surplus commodities.
- 5) Individuals would receive expanded unemployment compensation under this bill --- both those who have exhausted their eligibility and those not otherwise eligible would receive unemployment compensation as long as the area is designated as a major disaster, unless reemployed.
- 6) A new section added by this bill would authorize relocation assistance to unemployed individuals in disaster areas, including the costs of seeking a job in another area and moving to a new job.

- 7) New authority would be given to the President to provide medical services in major disaster areas, without regard to ability to pay, utilizing Public Health Services, military and State facilities and personnel.
- 8) Aid to major sources of employment under section 237 would be expanded to include loans to enterprises which have the potential to be major sources of employment in a disaster area, as well as those that have been a major employer and are out of operation because of the disaster.
- 9) Communities with economic disasters could receive grants for which they are now eligible in natural disasters, to take the place of lost property tax revenues. Also, as under existing law for natural disasters, in economic disaster areas Federal agencies could waive or modify administrative procedural conditions for assistance, and the President could take steps to avert or lessen an imminent economic disaster before its actual occurrence.

Commenting on the bill's provisions, Dole said, "The legislation would authorize a managerial team from the Office of ^{Emergency} Economic Preparedness to focus the resources of existing federal programs on the needs and problems of unemployment, and to authorize new assistance to communities and individuals."

Dole said he expects the Senate to take up the bill following the summer Congressional Recess which is schedule to end on noon, Sept. 8.