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412

CONSUMER LEGISLATION

WASHINGTON, D.C., Nov. 5, 1971 --- U.S. Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kans.)

expressed his support of the intent of the Consumer Product Warranties and Federal Trade Commission Act today, pointing out that the legislation, S. 986, "contains a number of desirable features that would constitute an important step forward in solving problems of consumers.

Concerning the need for legislation to aid the consumer, Dole said in a floor statement:

We are all too well aware that consumers do not always get what they have paid for, that product guarantees are sometimes written in language that is difficult if not impossible for the average consumer to understand, and that warranty obligations are all too often disregarded.

Dole said that S. 986 would:

- set forth minimum disclosure standards for written warranties on consumer products costing more than five dollars,
- define federal content standards for full warranties,
- provide consumer remedies for the breach of written warranty and written service contract obligations, and
- expand and improve the Federal Trade Commission's ability to deal with unfair consumer activities.

The Kansas Senator said he strongly supports the goal of the consumer protection legislation, but questions one section of it that authorizes the FTC, under certain circumstances, to bring civil actions in U.S. District Courts to recover damages and to redress injuries caused by unfair or deceptive treatment to consumers.

Dole said he believed the section, Section 203, "would create a score of legal problems, thus creating "more problems than it would solve." Dole explained:

It does not define those acts or practices upon which recovery may be had, rather recovery would be based on the extremely vague standards of acts or practices "unfair and "deceptive to consumers." It does not identify which consumers would be entitled to recover damages or how a final judgment would be apportioned. There is no mention of the effect of judgments rendered by the FTC on subsequent private litigation where suits are brought after the government's action. These are just a few of the serious problems that come to mind.