



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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DOLE BILL WOULD AID ELDERLY VETERANS AND THEIR WIDOWS

WASHINGTON, D.C.--Calling the measure "long overdue," Senator Bob Dole today introduced a bill that would assist over two million senior citizens "who are suffering greatly from the effects of inflation." Dole's bill would increase annual income limitations for veterans, or their widows, from the Mexican Border period, World War I and subsequent periods of war by \$500, increase by 10% the pension rates payable to such beneficiaries, equalize widows' basic rates with those specified for veterans and provide for automatic cost-of-living increases.

Dole told the Senate that the impact of "spiraling living expenses has been greatest on those with fixed incomes, primarily elderly veterans. While the cost of nearly every item has skyrocketed, the incomes of veterans and their beneficiaries and the widows of veterans have remained at the same level."

"The discrimination against widows should stop immediately," Dole said in explaining his provision that would make the pension for a widow equal to that for a single veteran. Under the present system, the pension for widows is less than two-thirds of that provided for a single veteran. "It costs a widow as much to live as it does a single veteran," Dole pointed out.

By increasing income limitations by \$500, Dole said his bill would "prevent the distress and difficulties that have resulted from pension cuts following Social Security increases." Dole also noted that passage of the bill before January, when another Social Security increase will become effective, would prevent a further reduction in veterans' pensions at that time.

Dole said the provision allowing an automatic cost of living increase would "prevent pensioners from suffering because of slow action by Congress. It would automatically increase pensions every June according to the rise in the cost of living." Dole added that the provision is parallel to a similar measure in the Social Security Act.