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NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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SENATE SAYS NO TO DOCTOR DRAFT; ADOPTS BEALL-DOLE SUBSTITUTE

WASHINGTON, D.C.--The Senate today overwhelmingly adopted, 70-18, a Beall-Dole substitute and rejected a measure that would have, in effect, drafted every medical student and required him or her to serve in an arbitrarily assigned area. The substitute proposal would guarantee that 25% of all students entering medical school would be doing so in anticipation of establishing their practice in an area of their choice--which would also be one in need of their service.

Arguing for rejection of the "doctor draft" and acceptance of the substitute, Senator Dole told the Senate "adoption of this substitute is our only hope of avoiding what will surely become the federal domination of American medical schools." The "doctor draft" bill, introduced by Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Mass) as a variation on a theme first articulated on Capitol Hill by Congressman William R. Roy (D-Kans), would have required mandatory service in arbitrarily assigned areas, federal government control of licensing standards and absolute authority to regulate certification and residency. Dole characterized the provisions as being the "first step towards socialized medicine."

Dole, who has previously sponsored legislation such as the Physician Shortage Area Scholarship Program to aid rural doctor shortage areas, said his substitute "will encourage the voluntary practice in underserved areas, while at the same time providing an environment which would encourage a physician to stay on in the community. Our program will result in 3,750 doctors a year who want to serve in underserved areas--young doctors who have an incentive to stay in the area--rather than doctors who are being forced to serve in an area for two years." The Kansas Senator said under the Kennedy bill, the majority of National Health Service Personnel would probably be "assigned to HEW Units, federal institutions, and even military facilities--and not to rural communities."

"While proponents of the bill tried to argue that it was not a doctor draft at all, but simply an agreement between the individual and the government to serve in an assigned area for two years upon graduation, there was no getting around the fact that the agreement they were talking about was the same as that entered into by one being drafted into the military," Dole commented. "I personally worked for an end to that draft and am not about to sanction this one under the guise of its being an overnight solution to our health care problems."

"Although similar measures in the House have a somewhat different approach by channeling all aid to medical schools through the student," Dole continued, "the end effect would be the same. That is, 90% of all students who wanted to attend Medical school would be forced to accept a scholarship, thereby compelling them to enter into a comparable service agreement."