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NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.—Kans.)

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WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1974

DOLE CRITICIZES G.I. BILL DELAY IN VIEW OF AMNESTY

Washington, D.C. -- Senator Bob Dole today learned that the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee has informally reached agreement on major provisions for a Vietnam veterans education bill.

"An improved Vietnam veterans education bill is more than a year overdue," Senator Dole said, "and it is absolutely essential that we take immediate steps toward enactment of a better G.I. Bill. It is especially ironic that draft dodgers and deserters have been given amnesty while veterans who served honorably are struggling to obtain an adequate education."

The major provisions of the G.I. Bill agreement as indicated to Dole are a 20 percent increase in monthly assistance allowance (from \$220 per month to \$260 per month for single veterans), an educational loan provision permitting veterans to borrow up to \$500 per year from the Veterans Administration, extension of entitlement from 36 to 45 months, and an increase in monthly assistance retroactive to September 1, 1974. The Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee will meet tomorrow to confirm this agreement in an executive session.

This action was prompted by the refusal of the House of Representatives to pass a conference report previously agreed to by the Senate on improved veterans education benefits. Senator Dole has repeatedly urged the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee in letters and informal contacts to report a veterans education bill to the Senate.

Dole urged Senator Vance Hartke, Chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, in a letter on September 14 and again yesterday to report to the Senate an education bill including all provisions originally passed by the Senate in June, including tuition payments. Dole was joined in the letter of yesterday by a bipartisan group of 24 other Senators. The letter states in part "We are aware that some have argued that the original conference report might be 'inflationary'. We must point out, however, that Vietnam veterans have already paid their dues...as a result of the long delays which have prevented proposed increases from being enacted sooner."