

News from Senator

# BOB DOLE



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## DOLE CALLS FOR CREATION OF COMMISSION TO REFORM PRIMARY PROCESS

WASHINGTON-- Senator Bob Dole (R-Kansas) today called for the two major political parties to create Reform Study Commissions to examine the existing presidential selection process.

The following is Senator Dole's statement:

"With yesterday's climactic round of primary contests, the American voter has finally come to the end of a four and one-half month marathon that has tested his endurance and, I fear, undermined his interest in the whole political process.

"Clearly, we ought to have learned some lessons from the 1980 presidential nomination contests. If we haven't, then the time has come for us to try. I would like to see each major party create a commission to undertake examination of the existing nomination system, and then submit ideas on how to improve it," said Dole.

Dole added, "That improvement is needed is self-evident.

### A Process Gone Awry

"What I am talking about is far worse than the confusion of "If it's Tuesday, this must be Nebraska." I'm talking about a process of candidate selection gone awry, to the point where long distance running is rewarded over seasoned leadership.

"The media have come to focus intensely on a few early contests, and a premium is placed, not on a candidate's ideas or record of achievement, but on an ill-defined and misleading concept called "momentum".

"Indeed, 1980 may well be remembered as the year when "momentum" finally replaced talent or vision as the criteria by which the media helped select a president. I have no quarrel with the candidates ultimately chosen; I believe that both Governor Reagan and President Carter represent the majority sentiments of their respective parties and would probably have won in any event," Dole said.

### Some Problems - and Some Possible Solutions

"But I worry about a system that stressed fulltime campaigning and discourages serious consideration of those who already hold office, and insist on maintaining a fulltime voting record. I worry about the pre-occupation with intangibles like management and money, to the detriment of competence and background.

"Most of all, I worry that the present system of primaries, strung out across the winter, spring and early summer calendar without form or structure, is not a truly representative way in which to nominate candidates for the nation's highest office," said Dole.

"And I suspect that millions of dissatisfied voters share my concerns. Why else did we witness a sharp falloff of voter interest as the spring ground on, and the media crowned early winners? Would a system of regional primaries serve the people better? Would a national primary be preferable? Or perhaps a mixed system of primaries and state conventions - to be telescoped within a period of 45 - 60 days, rather than the four and a half months separating the Iowa caucuses from yesterday's nine state shootout?

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"While we're looking at the primary system, perhaps we should look at the federal matching fund set-up as well - in short, an exhaustive review of the way America chooses her presidential nominees," Dole continued.

"I do not pretend to have definitive answers. But let us begin with some probing questions. And let us begin now, before we embark on the whole treadmill once again, in 1981 or 1982, whenever the next long distance runner begins campaigning fulltime for the 1984 nominations. We have nothing to lose, except our doubts," said Dole.

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