

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FRIDAY, AUGUST 10, 1984

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DOLE SPONSORS ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR WIC PROGRAM

WASHINGTON — Kansas Senator Bob Dole today hailed Senate approval of his amendment for additional funding for the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), by an overwhelming vote of 83-4.

"As Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Nutrition, I was pleased to sponsor an amendment which adds an additional \$29 million in funds for the WIC Program for fiscal year 1985," Dole said. "This amendment represents a very modest increase in WIC, which I consider to be the most effective federal nutrition program. Total funding of \$1.5 billion provides enough funding to maintain a participation level of 3.08 million women, infants and children. This was the caseload level of the month of May 1984, which is up from the FY 1983 year-end participation level of 2.96 million."

"Evaluation studies indicate the WIC Program has been cost effective in both health and dollar terms. A major study at the Harvard School of Public Health found that each \$1 spend in the prenatal component of WIC saves \$3 in hospitalization costs due to the reduced number of low birthweight infants requiring expensive neonatal care," said Dole.

"More than any other federal nutrition program, WIC has earned its reputation as a bi-partisan favorite. WIC has a very strong performance record, and its benefits are targetted to an especially vulnerable segment of our low-income population," said Dole. "This program is a true nutrition program, whose benefits are tailored to meet the special nutrition needs of the recipients it serves — unlike the Food Stamp Program, in which benefits are not tied to any nutritional standards."

"WIC's great track record is underscored by the fact that, at a time when other federal nutrition programs were undergoing significant spending reductions, the WIC Program was allowed to expand. The number of WIC Program participants has grown from 1.9 million in FY 1980 to 3 million in FY 1985, during the Reagan Administration. Funding has similarly increased from \$708 million in FY 1980, to \$1.360 billion this current fiscal year," said Dole.

"I believe this additional \$29 million will be well spent, since the program now only serves about one-third of the potential eligible population."