

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

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DOLE CALLS FOR UNIFORM SMALL AIRCRAFT LIABILITY STANDARDS

Washington, DC -- Citing the skyrocketing cost of product liability insurance and a slump in production and sales of light aircraft, Sen. Bob Dole (R-KS) today called for a uniform standard for general aviation product liability claims.

In testimony before the Senate Commerce Committee's subcommittee on aviation, Dole termed the state of the general aviation industry as "grave", and said the industry is a natural candidate for product liability standards.

"General aviation products are federally regulated in design, production, and maintenance. Pilots and mechanics are regulated through training, licensing, and operating procedures. The air traffic control system, is federally operated and interstate in scope. It would make sense to create a uniform standard whereby everyone would be treated equally under the law," Sen. Dole testified.

In outlining the reasons for a uniform standard for liability claims, Dole stressed the depressed state of the general aviation industry in Kansas - due in part to the effects of skyrocketing insurance premiums.

Sen. Dole testified that while the industry's safety record continues to improve, the industry's product liability insurance bill has climbed an average of 500%-per-company since 1981. Beech Aircraft Company, said Dole, paid more than \$20 million last year to insure itself against product-liability claims.

Dole is a cosponsor of legislation introduced by Sen. Nancy Kassebaum (R-KS) that addresses the problem of general aviation product liability.

"We can't wait another year or two years, to address this problem," said Sen. Dole, "because many of these manufacturers simply will not last that long. I don't know if a consensus can be reached on the overall question of product liability this session, but as it affects general aviation I believe we can and should enact legislation this year."