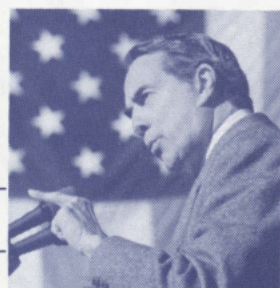


Bob Dole



NEWS

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CRIME BILL UPDATE

DOLE URGES PRESIDENT TO STRENGTHEN CRIME BILL: DOLE SUGGESTS IMPROVEMENTS, REPUBLICANS STAND READY FOR BIPARTISAN EFFORT ON NO-NONSENSE CRIME-FIGHTING PLAN

I was encouraged by last night's White House meeting involving Republican Whip Newt Gingrich and a delegation of House Republicans. Perhaps this is a signal that President Clinton now finally understands that last Thursday's vote was not a "procedural trick" or a politically-inspired attempt to hurt his presidency, but rather a vote to improve the crime bill...to make it stronger, tougher, better.

Meaningful, Tough-On-Crime Improvements Needed

This isn't rocket-science. If the President is serious about passing a tough, no-nonsense crime-fighting plan for America, here are some of the improvements he should support:

One. Increase prison funding to the House level of \$13.5 billion; tighten the language so that prison funds will definitely be used to build new prison cells, rather than half-way houses and other prison "alternatives"; and require truth-in-sentencing for first-time violent offenders.

Two. Cut at least half of the spending on social programs, including the Local Partnership Act, the Model Cities Intensive Grant Program, and the so-called "Yes Grant" Program. When the crime bill left the Senate last November, it had a price-tag of \$22 billion. But, now, nine months later, the conference report authorizes a staggering \$33 billion, a 50% increase. Obviously, somewhere along the way, the crime bill was hijacked by the big-dollar social spenders.

Three. Plug the so-called safety valve provision, which could result in the early release of 10,000 convicted drug offenders....a "get out of jail free card" brought to you by the United States Congress.

Four. No cuts for the FBI or the Drug Enforcement Agency. No "crime" bill should cut staffing at our nation's top law enforcement agencies.

Five. Restore some of the tough provisions adopted last April by the House, including Congresswoman Molinari's proposal on similar-offense evidence in sexual assault cases, and the "Megan Kanka Law," requiring state law enforcement agencies to notify the public when violent sexual predators are living in their communities.

Six. Restore some of the tough provisions adopted by the Senate, including mandatory minimums for those who use a gun in the commission of a crime; mandatory restitution for crime victims; and Senator Simpson's provision requiring the swift deportation of criminal aliens.

And finally, give the states and localities more flexibility over how to use the funding for more cops. I've heard from many police chiefs, including Chief Fred Thomas of Washington, D.C., who have indicated that what is needed most is not more police officers, but better technology. We should provide that flexibility.

Ball is in President's Court

The ball is now in President Clinton's court. He can adopt a one-party strategy, trying to muscle his way up to 218 votes. Or he can continue to do what he started last night.

The President is wise to reach out to Republicans, but political lip-service won't do it alone. The President must publicly support real, meaningful, tough-on-crime improvements to the conference report, so that we can pass a bipartisan bill not with 218 votes, but with 435 votes.

If, however, the President wants to tinker around the edges, making small adjustments here and there to win over 8 or 9 or 10 votes, then he'll be making a big mistake. In the end, that may be a successful strategy for the House, but you can bet it won't be a winner here in the United States Senate.

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*Remarks delivered on the Senate floor, approximately 9:50 AM.