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NEWS

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, July 21, 1994

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CRIME CONFERENCE REPORT

PRISON CELL, NOT PORK BARREL, MOST EFFECTIVE CRIME-STOPPER

Although violent crime is America's number-one concern, the jury's still out on whether Congress is up to the crime-fighting challenge.

Although the crime conference has been delayed...and delayed...and then delayed some more...it appears the conferees are trying to resurrect last year's defeated stimulus package, pouring billions and billions of dollars into a hodgepodge of at least 15 so-called "prevention" programs.

Examine Fine Print of "Prevention" Programs

If you read the fine print of these programs, here's what you might find:

The \$2 billion Local Partnership Act would favor cities with high unemployment rates and high per capita tax rates. So, if you're a city, like Wichita, Kansas, that has managed to keep its economic house in order, you're out of luck.

Another program, the Ounce of Prevention Council, would "advise" the Secretary of Health and Human Services on how to administer and coordinate all the other "prevention" programs established by the Crime Bill. In other words: a program to coordinate programs.

\$40 million would be devoted to "midnight sports leagues" run by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Each player in the league would be required to attend employment counseling, job training, and other educational classes "to be held in conjunction with league sports games at or near the site of the games." Perhaps H.U.D. officials will be called into service as referees.

The "model cities intensive grant" program, with a \$900 million price-tag, would address a whole range of urban problems, including the "deterioration or lack of public facilities" and "inadequate public services such as public transportation."

\$80 million would be spent on "community-based justice grants for prosecutors." This new program envisions prosecutors working side-by-side with social workers in order to "focus on the offender, not simply the specific offense," and to impose "individualized sanctions" such as "conflict resolution, treatment, and counselling" for young people who have committed violent crimes.

And let's not forget the "employment-and-skills crime prevention" program, which would spend \$900 million of taxpayer funds on such activities as "apprenticeship programs linking work and learning," "entrepreneurial and microenterprise development," "transportation links to jobs in the labor market area," and "job placement and related case management, followup and other supportive services."

Worthwhile programs? Who knows? But I do know they don't belong in legislation that calls itself a crime bill.

Incarceration Most Effective Crime-Stopper

These days, there are almost as many theories on how to stop violent crime as there are criminals. But, when all is said and done, no one can dispute that the most effective deterrent to crime is not the pork barrel, but the prison cell. A violent criminal, kept behind bars, can't terrorize a single law-abiding citizen. Not one.

So, if--and when--the crime conference resumes, it's critical for the conferees not to shortchange the American people. The American people aren't interested in "crime pork." They're interested in crime control. And the best way to achieve this goal is to give the states and the cities the resources to

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