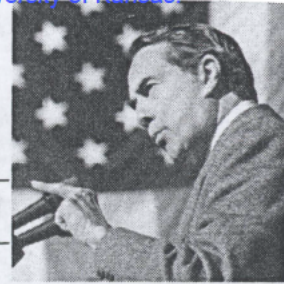


U . S . S E N A T O R F O R K A N S A S

NEWS
FROM:

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TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN LIFE

Dole Proposes Commission to Review Programs for Service Members

WASHINGTON -- Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole today issued the following statement, upon introducing legislation to establish a Commission to review the programs which assist service men and women transitioning from military to civilian life:

Currently, several federal Departments and Agencies offer programs to assist military men and women, veterans and reserve component members in their transition back to civilian life. Offices in the Departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs, Labor, and others, sponsor programs such as education, job-training, job placement and home loans. These are all useful and valuable services. However changes in the labor market and elsewhere are challenging today's veteran readjustment programs. Unemployment rates for recently separated veterans may be as high as 17%, compared with a national average of about 5.7%. This is extremely troubling when one stops to think about the experience, discipline, and work ethic veterans bring to the workplace.

By combining these resources, we can make the existing programs more accessible to a greater number of veterans; we can streamline programs and make them more "user-friendly"; we can minimize overlap and improve cost-effectiveness. That would be a big improvement over the current situation, and would ultimately better serve our service men and women.

Let me repeat, the purpose of this Commission is not to create new programs and make a larger bureaucracy. Rather it is to review the range of existing programs and determine how we can better coordinate our efforts on behalf of veterans. Both the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees, as well as several Veterans Service Organizations support this concept and agree that such a review is both appropriate and timely. There is real opportunity here to repeat the success of General Bradley's 1955 Commission, which made significant improvements in transition programs with fresh concepts and approaches.

Improved Service to Veterans

In my view, establishing this Commission is the first step toward providing more accessible and more practical assistance to service members who are facing fundamental changes in their personal and professional lives. These are brave men and women who committed precious years of their lives to defending their nation. Now they are ready and willing to become productive members of their civilian communities. It is my hope that this legislation will help these very deserving individuals make better use of the opportunities and resources available to them.

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