

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

2213 Dirksen Building, Washington, D.C. 20510

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
MONDAY, OCTOBER 22, 1979

CONTACT: BOB WAITE
(202) 224-8953

DOLE WANTS STATUS REPORT ON SAFETY OF ALL AMTRAK TRACK IN STATE OF KANSAS

WASHINGTON-- Senator Bob Dole (R.-Kansas) today asked Amtrak to answer a series of questions relating to recent accidents in Kansas in order to "restore confidence" in Amtrak's ability to provide safe service to residents of Kansas.

Dole wrote a letter to Amtrak President Allen Boyd expressing concern that, for the second time in less than three weeks, the Southwest Limited has jumped the tracks during its eastbound run through Kansas.

The following is the text of the letter:

Mr. Allen Boyd
President
Amtrak
400 N. Capitol Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Mr. Boyd:

As you know, for the second time in less than three weeks, the Southwest Limited jumped the tracks today during its eastbound run through Kansas.

This most recent accident injured 10 passengers, three of whom remain in local hospitals. The evident cause of the derailment was poor maintenance. The derailment near Lawrence, Kansas, on October 2, which killed two crewmen and injured nearly 70 passengers, was evidently the result of excessive speed.

While these accidents are apparently unrelated in cause, and different in severity, they are bound to disturb the citizens of Kansas and discourage potential passengers from riding Amtrak. This is particularly crucial in my state as Amtrak has cut back its service, attempting to create a solid core in which adequate service can be offered. The questions that the incidents raise must be answered and confidence in Amtrak's safety must be restored.

To that end, I would appreciate your responses to the following questions:

- * What caused the most recent derailment of the Southwest Limited?
- * What is the present status of all track used by Amtrak in Kansas?
- * What's the likelihood of future accidents in Kansas?
- * Most importantly, what can be done to end these derailments, particularly those caused by the poor maintenance of track used by Amtrak?

I ask these questions in hope that we can improve the safety of Amtrak trains and restore the confidence of Kansans in the Amtrak system. I am open to suggestions as to what we in Congress can do to address this problem. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,
BOB DOLE
U.S.S.