

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1983

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DOLE REINTRODUCES ANTI-SEX BIAS BILL,
WINS ENDORSEMENT OF MAJOR WOMEN'S GROUPS

WASHINGTON -- Senator Robert Dole (R-Kan.) today reintroduced the Sex Discrimination in the U.S. Code Reform Act, a sweeping measure which would remove from the federal code approximately 100 sex-discriminatory provisions. Twenty Senators, primarily Republicans, joined Dole as original cosponsors of the legislation. The bill also has the support of the President.

The Act, which was first introduced this past October, has been endorsed by the National Women's Political Caucus, the League of Women Voters, the Women's Equity Action League, the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, the American Association of University Women, and the National Woman's Party.

Emphasizing that the substantive impact of the bill would be limited because most of the remaining discriminatory provisions are either "obsolete, of extremely limited application, or have already been held unconstitutional," Dole called the bill a "modest, but important and necessary step in our continuing efforts to achieve full equality for women under the law."

Dole added that to achieve true equality, the Congress had to address not only those statutes which explicitly discriminate, but also those which, while neutral on their face, have a discriminatory impact. For example, Dole pointed out the discriminatory aspects of the nation's pension laws required priority attention. Last month, Dole introduced the "Retirement Equity Act" which contains a number of changes to private pension laws, designed to significantly improve the chances that both working and nonworking women will receive pension benefits.

The "Sex Discrimination in the U.S. Code Reform Act" would not amend controversial code sections such as the combat and selective service limitations in the military code.

According to Dole, amendments of a sensitive nature were purposefully omitted to expedite Congressional action on the measure. Examples of the types of discriminatory provisions which the legislation would amend are:

- Certain technical provisions of the Social Security Act and Railroad Retirement Act which still discriminate in the determination of benefits.
- Provisions of the military code which still give preference to male family members in distributing the effects of deceased military personnel.
- Several obsolete provisions, such as a provision of the criminal code which makes it a federal crime to seduce a "female" on an American vessel.

February 15 was selected as the date of reintroduction, to commemorate the birthday of Susan B. Anthony, a pioneer crusader for equal rights for women.