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DOLE PLUGS TOY GUNS TO KEEP THEM FROM CRIMINAL HANDS

WASHINGTON -- CRIMINALS WILL HAVE A MUCH TOUGHER TIME TRYING TO USE TOY GUNS IN HOLD-UPS IF A BILL INTRODUCED BY SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER BOB DOLE (R-KS) BECOMES LAW.

ACCORDING TO THE DOLE BILL, MANUFACTURERS OF TOY GUNS THAT ARE 'LOOK-ALIKES' TO THE REAL THING WILL HAVE TO PLACE A BLAZE ORANGE PLUG IN THE BARRELS OF THE GUNS TO HELP IDENTIFY THEM AS TOYS.

"CRIMINALS DON'T NEED ANY HELP IN CARRYING OUT THEIR ACTS OF VIOLENCE. UNFORTUNATELY, TOY GUNS HAVE BECOME SO REALISTIC THAT KIDS TOYS HAVE BECOME SATURDAY NIGHT SPECIALS," SAID DOLE. "BUT WITH A BRIGHT ORANGE PLUG IN THE BARREL, IT WON'T BE SO EASY."

THE DOLE BILL, WHICH HAS BEEN DRAFTED WITH THE COOPERATION OF THE HOBBY INSTITUTE -- AN ORGANIZATION REPRESENTING THOUSANDS OF TOY AND HOBBY MANUFACTURERS -- ALSO HAS THE SUPPORT OF THE HOUSE DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP.

THE ORANGE PLUG WOULD BE REQUIRED BEFORE SUCH AN ITEM COULD BE INTRODUCED IN THE MARKETPLACE. THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE WOULD ENFORCE THE PROVISION.

THE DOLE BILL IS CONSISTENT WITH LAWS IN SEVERAL EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND SIMILAR TO A NUMBER OF LOCAL ORDINANCES IN CALIFORNIA AND OTHER STATES. IN ADDITION TO THE HOBBY INSTITUTE, THE BILL HAS ALSO BEEN MADE AVAILABLE TO THE NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION, WHICH IS NOT EXPECTED TO ACTIVELY OPPOSE THE BILL. HANDGUN, INC., WHICH HAS NOT YET FORMALLY ENDORSED THE LEGISLATION, IS EXPECTED TO DO SO.