

Bob Dole

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS



NEWS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

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CRIME BILL: FAMILY BREAKDOWN

MOYNIHAN/DOLE AMENDMENT URGES ANALYSIS OF BREAKDOWN OF TWO-PARENT FAMILY, OUT-OF-WEDLOCK BIRTHS

WASHINGTON -- With an eye towards addressing the link between family breakdown and crime, the U.S. Senate early this morning today adopted a sense of the Senate amendment urging an analysis of the causes of the increase in out-of-wedlock births. The amendment, authored by Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-New York) and Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole (R-Kansas), directs the Secretary of Health and Human Services to prepare the study, and propose remedial measures to confront the breakdown in the two-parent family. The amendment was included in a package of noncontroversial amendments approved to the crime bill. Senator Dole's statement on the amendment follows:

I am pleased to join with my distinguished colleague from New York, Senator Moynihan, in offering this important amendment.

Last week, the Senate took a big step forward in the war against crime. We earmarked \$8.9 billion in funding to help our states and localities put more cops on the beat. We allocated \$6 billion in additional resources to build more prison space. We passed our nation's first federal anti-gang statute. We adopted the Republican truth-in-sentencing proposal, which will encourage the states to upgrade their own criminal laws so that violent criminals are kept behind bars where they belong.

And best of all, we have attempted to pay for these proposals by embracing the federal workforce cuts outlined in the national performance review.

If all these measures are signed into law, they will no doubt take a bite out of crime...in the short-term, that is.

Conscience is Best Deterrent to Crime

For, when all is said and done, the best deterrent to crime is not police, or a police cell, but something called conscience--that little inner voice that says: "no, you better not do that. It's wrong." For generations, people have developed conscience through the church, the schools, and most importantly, through families and the set of values that families have traditionally transmitted to their children.

Unfortunately, the American family today is in tatters. More than two-thirds of all black children, and nearly 25% of all white children, are born to unwed mothers. In some inner-city communities, the illegitimacy rate is a staggering 80%, as

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thousands of children are born each year into a world without fathers and to mothers who are simply unprepared for the responsibilities of motherhood.

Link Between Family Breakdown & Crime

The corrosive impact of family breakdown on inner-city life cannot be underestimated. Not only is there a clear link between family breakdown and poverty, as Senator Moynihan pointed out some 28 years ago, there is also an indisputable link between family breakdown and crime.

President Clinton was right on the mark when he recently suggested on Meet the Press that there was a direct correlation between crime and drugs, on the one hand, and the collapse of the two-parent family, on the other. To find proof of this relationship, we need look no further than our state reformatories, where nearly 70% of the juveniles housed in the reformatories come from homes without fathers.

Acknowledging Social Costs of Illegitimacy

This amendment is important because it is the first time the Senate has gone on record acknowledging the enormous social costs associated with illegitimacy. Our country cannot continue down this path, producing generation after generation of children without families and without values.

This amendment directs the Secretary of Health and Human Services to prepare a report on the possible causes of the breakdown of the two-parent family and propose remedial measures. I look forward to this report, and hopefully, Congress will be able to use it as a basis for legislative action.

Address Root Causes of Crime

Obviously, government is not the nation's nanny. It cannot, and should not be, responsible for raising our nation's children. No government agency can implant personal morality, nor can a Congressional committee build character.

But if we're really serious about addressing the "root causes" of crime, we need to go to the deepest root of all--the family.

My aim here is not to renew the debate over "family values," but rather to emphasize that we ought to "value the family" as an essential ingredient of any long-term approach to the crime epidemic.

Finally, I want to commend my colleague from New York for his foresight in bringing this difficult issue to the attention of the Senate and the American people.

Too often, Senator Moynihan has sounded the illegitimacy alarm in isolation, only to be greeted with either outrage or apathy. Today, in 1993, we ignore this alarm at our own peril.

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