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WASHINGTON, D.C., March 10 -- U.S. Senator Bob Dole today urged more Americans to "wade into politics and get your feet wet."

Speaking here at the first annual meeting of the key state leaders of the American Optometric Association, Dole said, "Too many Americans have succumbed or perhaps, drifted, into indifference or pure disrespect for political affairs and politicians."

"Political office holders have been scrutinized, analyzed, ostracized, scandalized and are generally made to feel that perhaps in helping to steer the course of government they have chosen to follow the path of Ali Babba or Captain Kidd," he said.

"We all despise injustice, we detest graft and corruption, we demand law enforcement and responsible, efficient handling of the people's business," he said. "And we all share within ourselves a volcanic political urge, which too often is bottled up, erupting only when a flagrant abuse of political power is brought to our attention."

Urging more interest in governmental affairs and involvement in political parties between major elections as well as at election time and financial contributions "no matter how small they may seem", he said, "By a steady, diligent interest and involvement in politics, we can assure constantly the kind of efficient, effective government we all favor."

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In his speech, Dole pointed out 63 percent of the American people voted in the November 1968 election. Of the 44 million who did not vote but could have, 25 million either did not register to vote or did not vote, while 15 million registered, but did not vote.

Noting Great Britain and Canada have comparable voting systems, he added, "Seventy-four percent of our Canadian neighbors voted in 1965, and 80 percent in 1963, while in Great Britain, 75.9% of the people voted in 1966, and 77.1% voted in 1964."

"The lack of interest in even voting in America is a national shame which transcends and underlies many of our domestic problems and often prohibits effective functioning of government," he said.

"The business of politics and politicians is your business," Dole said. "I urge you to shuck whatever shell of misconception, indifference or disinterest in politics you may wear. Wade in and get your feet wet. You will find politics stimulating and educational. And furthermore, you will gain a personal sense of satisfaction because you will be playing an active part in your nation's destiny."