

FROM: OFFICE OF U.S. SENATOR BOB DOLE
NEW SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510
(202) 225-6521

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FOR RELEASE UPON RECEIPT

WASHINGTON, D.C. March 13 -- U.S. Senator Bob Dole (R-Kans.) today said America cannot hope to fulfill the needs of the poor "unless government at all levels, private groups, local citizens and the poor themselves coordinate their efforts".

In a statement issued today, Dole, who returned Wednesday from Ft. Myers, Florida where he and other members of the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs conducted field hearings, said:

"In Florida, as in every other state, there is deprivation among U.S. citizens which approaches conditions in poorer nations in other parts of the world. We cannot tolerate in any state in the nation human suffering because of lack of a decent daily diet.

"In Lee County, Florida, there is a pressing need for improved food programs. Direct distribution of food is satisfactory to many, but others who would be eligible do not receive food because of alleged lack of information about the program.

"Local, state and federal officials as well as community leaders must share the responsibility for the information gap in the food distribution program.

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U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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"The sentiment, expressed repeatedly by some, that the federal government has the sole responsibility for providing food, housing, jobs and education is an oversimplification of the problems. If these problems are to be solved, properly and permanently, maximum cooperation among government at all levels, local groups, citizens and the poor themselves in every community is needed.

"At the federal level, intragovernmental cooperation should be between the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. In addition, the Executive branch can make significant contributions to correct present inadequacies without additional legislation.

Senator Dole emphasized that the problem of malnutrition exists on a nationwide basis and that it is not uniquely a problem in the South. He added that he would convey his impressions to President Nixon and to HEW Secretary Finch.

"In my opinion," Dole stated, "existing programs can be improved to meet the needs. I am fearful that unless quick and appropriate action is taken by the Administration, there will be multiple efforts for additional federal programs.

Dole commended Florida Governor Claude Kirk who was present for all of Tuesday's hearings and who made specific recommendations to the Committee. Unfortunately, the Governor of Florida was not personally notified that the Select Committee would visit his state which is certainly something which should be corrected if further field hearings are held.

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