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WASHINGTON, D.C., Oct. 29 -- U.S. Senator Bob Dole (R-Kans.) today cosponsored a bill -- the Consumer Protection Act of 1969 -- to broaden the powers of the Office of Consumer Affairs and make it a permanent office at the White House level.

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"The present temporary office is too narrowly constructed and does not have broad jurisdiction over consumer affairs," Dole said. "What is needed is a permanent and expanded office in the executive branch to represent, protect, speak for and listen to consumers."

The proposed office would coordinate federal consumer programs; receive, evaluate and transmit complaints about practices harmful to consumers; establish offices in major population centers to receive complaints and give assistance, and encourage and coordinate research leading to improved products, services and information.

"The proposed office would be the consumers' eyes and ears," Dole said. "It would be an office which would oversee operations of other federal departments and agencies in order that the interests of the public are considered and safeguarded."