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WASHINGTON, D.C., Dec. 19 -- U.S. Senator Bob Dole (R-Kans.) today joined other Senators in calling for hearings on a bill to provide for two separate annual sessions of Congress to consider legislative matters and appropriation bills.

In a letter to U.S. Senator B. Everett Jordan (D-N.C.), chairman of the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, the Senators explained:

"...My primary concern is the effectiveness of our present rules and procedures. This year we are running almost six months behind in passing most appropriation bills. In this regard, I would be hopeful that hearings could be held by your Committee in February or March of next year to consider this and other bills aimed at reforming the rules of the Congress in these important areas..."

The bill (S. 3113), introduced by U.S. Senator Warren Magnuson (D-Wash.) is cosponsored by four other Senators -- Baker (R-Tenn.), Byrd (D-W.Va.), Dole and Mansfield (D-Mont.).

Dole said the bill would also make the calendar year the fiscal year, which now runs from the first of July to the end of June.

"If passed, this bill could be a major step toward making Congress more effective and efficient," Dole said. "Two separate sessions and changing the fiscal year to coincide with our regular calendar year would mark elementary, but significant progress toward some badly-needed Congressional reform."