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WASHINGTON, D.C., Feb. 18 -- U.S. Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kans.) cosponsored a proposal today that would abolish lengthy state residence requirements and extend the privilege of absentee voting in presidential elections.

Dole commented that he believes "citizens should be able to vote for the nation's two top executives regardless of where they happen to be or for how long they have been a resident of a particular state at the time of an election." "Unlike state and municipal offices," he explained, "there is no need for residence requirements which are designed to give new residents time to learn local issues."

While 16 states require a full year's residence before voting in presidential elections, Kansas now imposes a six-month waiting period. The remaining states have residence requirements of three months or less.

Other provisions of the measure would prohibit double voting and false registration and authorize the Attorney General to institute court action to ensure compliance with the law.

The Senate measure does require voters to be bona fide residents of the states they vote in, if not voting by absentee ballot. Also, in order to satisfy various states' logistical needs, voters would have to register or otherwise qualify for voting no later than 30 days before the election. It further states that if new residents are unable to register within that time limit, that they be allowed to vote by absentee ballot from their former state if they apply at least seven days before the presidential election.