

373

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

FOR RELEASE UPON DELIVERY

WASHINGTON, D.C. March 5 -- "I am deeply concerned that a greater percentage of our citizens do not participate in the most meaningful aspect of self-government -- that of exercising their right to vote," U.S. Senator Bob Dole (R-Kans.) said today.

Dole, in a statement on the Senate floor, said the Voting Rights Act Amendments of 1969 would do much to assure that more citizens vote.

The Kansas Senator said the amendments would ban the use of literacy tests until at least Jan. 1, 1974 and would bar the imposing of residency requirements in Presidential elections.

"With the development of television and radio as mass media, a person no longer needs to know how to read and write in order to be familiar with national issues and to vote intelligently in an election," Dole said.

"It is my firm belief that every adult who is of a sound mind and who has not been convicted of a felony should be free to participate in the electoral process.

"Estimates are that in 1968, five and one-half million people could not vote for President because they failed to meet local residency requirements. This is an unfair and senseless denial of the franchise. A residency requirement for the election for President is not necessary since the issues in the election are nationwide in scope and citizens -- in whatever state they live -- have an opportunity to familiarize themselves with these issues.

"Progress under the 1965 Voting Rights Act has been significant. The amendments would build on our experiences of the past five years in the South. They would consolidate our gains in voting rights in that area and extend to the nation at large the benefits of the 1965 Act."