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537

FOR RELEASE ON DELIVERY

WASHINGTON, D.C. THURSDAY, SEPT. 17 -- U. S. Senator Bob Dole (R-Kans) today on the Senate Floor strongly urged reform in the Presidential election process.

Dole, along with Senator Tom Eagleton (D-Mo.) and Senator Ted Stevens (R-Alaska), has proposed the "Federal System Plan" to replace the present electoral college adopted by the Founding Fathers of this country.

The "Federal System Plan" would operate as follows:

- 1 -- A candidate obtaining 50 percent or more of the votes cast in the election would be declared President.
- 2 -- A candidate who had won a plurality of the total popular vote would be declared President if he had also won either a plurality in States -- including the District of Columbia - which contain more than 50 percent of all voters participating in the election, or a plurality in more than 50 percent of the States - including the District of Columbia. The second initial qualification is called the "50 percent rule."
- 3 -- If the popular vote winner failed to satisfy one or the other of the 50 percent rule requirements, then the President would be selected on the basis of electoral votes. The presidential candidate with the most popular votes in a particular state would be automatically awarded the state's electoral vote, which would equal the number of Senators and Representatives to which that state is entitled in the Congress. The District of Columbia would be treated as if it had three congressional votes. A candidate with a majority of electoral votes would win.
- 4 -- If no candidate received a majority of the electoral votes the federal system plan would then eliminate all but the two national candidates with the most electoral votes and redistribute the electoral votes to the others. The electoral votes won by third party candidates would be awarded on a state basis to the two national candidates in proportion to their relative share of the popular vote in the respective states. The candidate receiving a majority of the electoral votes following this redistribution would be elected President.

Dole believes that this plan has many advantages over the direct election plan introduced by Senator Birch Bayh (D-Ind.) and enacted in substance by the House of Representatives on September 18, 1969.

Under the direct election plan a candidate could lose the contest in most or conceivably all of the 50 states and the District of Columbia and still win the election by receiving 40.1 percent of the popular vote.

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Another problem exists with the runoff which is a necessary ingredient of the direct-election plan. Dole is concerned that this portion of the plan would lead to the proliferation of political parties.

This would create numbers of "splinter" parties using their votes and influence through running candidates who can toss presidential elections into a runoff situation where the parties could bargain for their own particular demands.

The direct-election plan also raises problems relating to vote recounts and the possibility that fraud committed in isolated precincts throughout the United States might taint an entire national election, Dole said.

The federal system plan would allow recount and fraud problems to be contained and dealt with on the state level.

It would also strengthen the one-man, one-vote principle and the possibility of qualifying by winning states with 50 percent of the votes would be a new and powerful incentive to get out the vote. This would also contribute to the strengthening of the two-party system by requiring the major parties to win the national popular vote and also to win in each state.

Although realizing the vital importance of electoral reform, Dole says, "To change from one set of deficiencies to another would seem an exercise in futurity, as well as perilous tinkering with our Constitutional process."