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WASHINGTON MEMO

by United States Senator Bob Dole

* This week has been designated by Congress and the Kansas State Legislature "National Week of Concern for POWs and MIAs." It is my hope that this special designation will provide a vehicle for thousands of Americans throughout the country to demonstrate their concern for American servicemen who are prisoners of war or who are missing in action in Southeast Asia. Kansans have contributed greatly in helping to focus national and international attention on the plight of our POWs and MIAs, which is an important first step toward improving their conditions and getting them home. Americans as individuals and members of groups, however, must continue their work, as we are just now beginning to see progress.

* President Nixon submitted to Congress last week his proposal for the Transportation Special Revenue Sharing Act of 1971. This proposal means returning Federal tax dollars to states and local communities to invest in transportation systems --- without the usual federal restraints. The Act would appropriate to Kansas a total of \$34,786,000, \$31,750,000 of which would be specified for general transportation use and the remaining \$3,036,000 for urban and mass transit. Existing categorical transportation grants, excluding the Interstate Highway Program, would be consolidated in order to fund the President's Transportation proposal.

President Nixon told Congress he hopes to solve the nation's transportation problems by developing what he terms a "balanced transportation system," one that provides adequate transportation for all people. This "balanced transportation system" concept points up significant needs in our present transportation strategy. For too long we have placed too much emphasis on cars and on highways, and have not devoted enough attention to other modes of transportation.

As the President pointed out, about 94 per cent of all travel in cities is by automobile, but about one quarter of our population does not drive. The old, the very young, the poor and the handicapped, have been poorly served by our transportation system.

* Recently I joined in sponsoring a bill that would establish a National Environmental Laboratory, an agency that through research could provide a unified and systematic approach to problems confronting the protection of our environment. It would complement those public and private agencies presently dealing with various aspects of the environment.

Environmental protection is a top priority need, particularly because of our growing population and increasing material standard of living that place additional burdens on the physical environment.

I expect the Air and Water Pollution Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Public Works to hold hearings on the bill later this spring.

* Another bill to which I recently became a cosponsor would exempt senior citizens from entrance fees for all national parks and federal recreation areas. The Golden Eagle Passport Program, which is so popular among older Americans, has been extended only through December 31, 1971, and at a price of \$10, \$3 higher than in past years. In addition, user and service fees are charged for special facilities and services. Although fees are relatively inexpensive for those with moderate incomes, they add an extra burden to America's 20 million older citizens, many of whom are on small, fixed retirement incomes or social security.