

FROM: THE OFFICE OF U.S. SENATOR BOB DOLE
NEW SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510
(202) 225-8946

290

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON, D.C., JULY 29, 1971 -- U.S. Senator Bob Dole today joined in co-sponsoring legislation to enable the two professional basketball leagues to join together in a single league.

The Kansas Senator said that a joining of the American Basketball Association and the National Basketball Association are involved in a disastrous annual player bidding war for graduating college talent.

Each of at least five teams this past season paid out more in salaries than its entire gross revenues and in the past two seasons more than half of the teams in each league operated at a loss the Senator said.

Even though these bidding practices are ruinous, Dole said, it would be suicide for either league to unilaterally abandon them.

Joint action by the two leagues is now inhibited by anti-trust law. In 1966, Congress granted the two professional football leagues minimum authority to merge.

Dole said that while the interests of the clubs and players are basic and important, they are not paramount. Major concern is the interest of the millions of fans who have made basketball the sport enjoying the widest geographic distribution of any professional sport. They want it continued, and on a desirable foundation, Dole said.