



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SATURDAY, SEPT. 29, 1973

SENATE ADOPTS DOLE RURAL DOCTOR PLAN

The Senate Friday passed a floor amendment introduced by Senator Bob Dole which encourages the Department of Defense to release physicians and dentists from active duty obligations to practice in rural areas. The amendment, added to the Military Procurement Act, also encourages active duty release for medical professionals to serve in other communities which are experiencing extreme health manpower shortages.

The Dole amendment would require that the Secretary of Defense take into account the comparative needs of both the civilian and military communities before acting on any request submitted by a physician or dentist who wishes to practice in a health manpower shortage area in lieu of active duty military service. Dole said the amendment was not intended to authorize a massive raid on the military physician corps by the civilian community, but merely expressed the sense of Congress that physicians and dentists who have incurred a service obligation to the federal government should be permitted to fulfill that obligation in a manner which helps meet the nation's greatest health care needs whether they exist in the military or civilian sector.

Dole mentioned several requests from military physicians who had requested service in rural Kansas communities in lieu of active service duty. He said that he felt several of the requests had been denied on grounds that did not reflect the merits of the case.

Dole also announced that he will introduce Monday a rural health bill which would created within HEW an Office of Rural Health and provide funds to assist rural health care delivery projects.