



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.—Kans.)

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STATEMENT OF SENATOR BOB DOLE
ON H.R. 9281,
RELATIVE TO THE RETIREMENT OF
CERTAIN LAW ENFORCEMENT AND FIREFIGHTER PERSONNEL
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMPENSATION AND EMPLOYEE BENEFITS
APRIL 24, 1974

Mr. Chairman, I have only a brief statement I wish to make part of the hearings record along with several letters I received from Kansans in support of H.R. 9281.

Numerous Kansans will be affected by provisions of this law including employees at the Federal Penitentiary in Leavenworth, the disciplinary barracks at Fort Leavenworth, and federal firefighters at the various federal reservations across the State. I have received impressive arguments from many of these constituents in support of H.R. 9281.

The primary purpose of this legislation is to provide improved retirement benefits for federal law enforcement and firefighter personnel. The aim of the increased benefits is to help assure that these hazardous and physically demanding jobs whose proper performance all Americans rely on, are performed by relatively young and vigorous persons capable of carrying out the duties required by these professions. By providing a reasonable retirement, the goal of a "young man's service" is met in several ways. First, it enables the older employees to retire when they feel they are no longer able to physically meet the demands of the job. This gives the younger workers the opportunity for more rapid advancement, which along with the better retirement benefits, helps attract highly qualified and ambitious personnel to the federal law enforcement and firefighting professions.

I support the basic aims of this legislation, and am hopeful we can pass and have signed into law a bill that embodies the basic principals outlined in H.R. 9281. Inevitably the vast majority of federal firefighter or federal law enforcement officers who are injured on the job are those in the upper age bracket of the service who are beyond their physical prime. These persons would have retired but could not afford to do so because the retirement benefits were not adequate to support their families. So they stay on to build up a better retirement annuity, yet work in constant fear of the dangers which are multiplied by their age and decreased physical dexterity. This extension of service is definitely not in their best interest or the best interest of the citizens whom they serve and protect.

I feel letters I have received from employees at the Federal Penitentiary best explain the importance of this bill to the federal workers and the public in general. I ask that some of these letters be included in the Record at this point.

I note there is not total agreement among the House, Senate and Civil Service Commission regarding the provisions of H.R. 9281. However, there appears to be a basic feeling among all those concerned that some changes are necessary to assure that federal firefighters and law enforcement benefits serve the best interest of the worker and public at large. I am hopeful that in our deliberations we may develop legislation which closely resembles H.R. 9281 and which can receive quick Congressional and Executive approval and be signed into law in the near future.

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