



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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DOLE SAYS CARTER WENT 'OVERBOARD' IN CRITICISM OF LEGAL COMMUNITY

LOS ANGELES -- Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kan.) said today that President Carter's recent comments on incompetency in the legal profession before the Los Angeles Bar Association "were overboard."

Giving the commencement address to the graduating class of the Southwestern University School of Law, Dole said, "None of us would disagree that there are some bad apples within our profession. Undoubtedly, the same could be said of teachers, businessmen, labor union leaders or whatever. If that was the President's point, it isn't very illuminating. If his point was that all lawyers, or most lawyers, are a pox on society, then I believe he is wrong.

"I would rather see the President focus on streamlining the legal system by reducing the intolerable amount of government paper shuffling. Many lawyers today spend too much of their time grappling with unnecessary federal regulation and filling out long, complicated forms for clients. Much of the increase in the need for legal services is a direct result of government. I think the President can make a contribution by doing everything within his power as Chief Executive to diminish the amount of paperwork and red tape which results in so much legal busywork.

"And lawyers can help the President in this fight. By doing our jobs well and by working with government officials to simplify the law, we can limit the negative impression of attorneys as the beneficiaries of complicated government.

"By the same token, we must not hesitate to challenge government when it steps beyond the bounds of reasonableness. Certainly, government operates more smoothly when lawyers refuse to challenge it. Business operates more smoothly when no one challenges its methods. And anybody's life will be easier when no attorney will assert the right of an adversary. However, the highest calling in a free society isn't making the trains run on time or making sure that government and business operate smoothly.

"I've run across many people throughout our nation who suspect that lawyer-legislators like myself are in cahoots with other lawyers and that we pass bills primarily to keep our friends prosperous at the expense of the average man and woman. While I can assure you that there is not broad-based conspiracy along these lines, I must admit that lawyers have not done enough to simplify the law."