

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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SENATE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ADOPTS DOLE PROPOSAL TO REDUCE STATE ERROR RATES IN FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

WASHINGTON -- Senator Robert Dole (R.-Kan.) today won a significant battle during the ongoing food stamp mark-up in the Senate Agriculture Committee with regard to the approach taken in reducing state error rates in the Food Stamp Program. The Committee approved the Dole plan which would require states to lower their error rates to five percent or less by Fiscal Year 1985.

"Currently, about \$1 billion worth of federal taxpayers' money is lost through state overissuances and payments to ineligible individuals in the Food Stamp Program. This waste amounts to just less than ten percent of total program expenditures, and represents an area of program administration that needs to be addressed," said Dole. "At a time of limited fiscal resources we need to target benefits more effectively to those who depend on them and do something about the actual waste that does occur in government programs -- we have a responsibility to the American taxpayer."

"I am pleased the Committee adopted the provision from my bill because I believe it represents a realistic approach to achieving lower state error rates. Unlike some options, the proposal does not create impossible goals for the states to fulfill, such as a zero rate. The sanctions imposed would be large enough to spur State activity, but not so large that they would deplete the resources needed to improve administration, while retaining the concept of rewarding exceptional State performance."

Summary of Dole Error Rate Proposal:

States would have three years to bring their error rates for overpayments and ineligibility below five percent. In order to avoid sanctions in FY 1983, each State would have to move one-third of the way from its current error rate to a five percent goal, or have an error rate below nine percent. By FY 1984, each State would have to lower its error rate two-thirds of the way from its current error rate to five percent, or have an error rate below seven percent. By FY 1985, all states would be required to have error rates of five percent or less in order to avoid sanction.

According to Dole, the food stamp error standard could become the model for lowering error rates in the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and other federal benefit programs under the jurisdiction of the Finance Committee.