

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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NEW REVIEW OF DISABILITY BENEFICIARIES WINS DOLE APPROVAL

WASHINGTON -- Senator Robert Dole (R.-Kan.) today praised the Administration's new plan to modify the way disability insurance beneficiaries are reviewed to determine their continuing eligibility for benefits as "a major step toward humanizing the disability determination process."

"I applaud the Administration's plan to overturn a long-standing practice in the way people receiving disability insurance benefits are reviewed," Dole said. "For years, people have dealt with a faceless bureaucracy. Seriously disabled people receive written forms notifying them of their upcoming review, and even notifying them of a decision to terminate their benefits -- without ever having face-to-face contact with a decision-maker."

"On October 1," Senator Dole continued, "that inequity will change. The Administration will introduce face-to-face interviews between the people under review and their district office representatives. The review will be serious and thorough: Beneficiaries will be provided the assistance they need to complete the required paperwork at this necessarily difficult time. Also, terrible mistakes can be avoided. The Social Security Administration will be able to quickly halt reviews in cases of serious disabilities where further investigation would be clearly inappropriate."

According to Senator Dole, "Secretary Schweiker and Commissioner Svahn should be commended for this important and timely step forward. They have shown a real willingness to work with Congress and to make administrative changes that respond to bipartisan concerns over the disability review process. I am confident that we will continue to work closely, as we have in the past several weeks, to find mutually satisfactory solutions to the problem of weeding ineligible out of the DI program without jeopardizing the welfare of the truly disabled."