

BOB DOLE



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FINANCE COMMITTEE APPROVES CHILD SUPPORT IMPROVEMENTS

WASHINGTON -- Kansas Senator Bob Dole announced Friday that his Senate Finance Committee has unanimously approved a bill which would significantly improve the federal Child Support Enforcement Program.

Through the new legislation, states would be encouraged to strengthen the welfare portion of the child support program and place greater emphasis on the non-welfare caseload. The bill represents a commitment of \$150 million by the federal government to the Child Support Enforcement Program over the next five years.

"For many women, late or never received support checks mean the difference between remaining independent of the welfare system, or being forced to accept public support," Senator Dole said.

The amendments agreed to today provide tools for the states to increase collections, including mandatory withholding from wages of past-due child support, the interception of state and federal income tax refunds which are then offset for amounts of past-due support and the placement of liens against property when support is delinquent.

The Child Support Enforcement Program was established in 1975 to provide a federal-state system to assist the 8.4 million American women raising children whose fathers are absent. The program provides services to locate absent parents, establish paternity and assist in the establishment and collection of child support. The program covers both welfare and non-welfare families.

Senator Dole pointed out that, of the more than 8.4 million women raising children whose fathers are absent, 30 percent are living in poverty. Although most of the women should receive child support payments, obligations have been established on behalf of only four million of them. And, more than one-half of those four million women received only partial payment of child support or no payment at all.

"The Census Bureau estimates that these defaults are cheating children out of nearly \$4 billion a year," Dole said. "Clearly, this lack of child support is a significant factor in the increase in the number of women and children in poverty.

"State programs must be reformed to do a better job of collecting the support that is owed to children and to reduce their administrative overhead," said Dole. "The Reagan Administration and many of us in Congress believe that the program can and should do a better job."