

# BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## STATEMENT OF SENATOR BOB DOLE PUBLIC VOICE STUDY ON NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF RURAL POOR

AS CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NUTRITION, I AM PLEASED TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS PRESS CONFERENCE TO RELEASE THE RESULTS OF THE PUBLIC VOICE STUDY ON THE NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF THE RURAL POOR. I COMMEND THIS REPORT FOR BEING MORE OF AN OBJECTIVE ACADEMIC STUDY OF THE NUTRITIONAL AND HEALTH PROBLEMS OF OUR RURAL POPULATION. IT IS UNLIKE PREVIOUS STUDIES, WHICH HAVE BEEN MOSTLY ANECDOTAL OR POLITICAL IN NATURE.

THE DATA UTILIZED IN THIS STUDY ARE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICE'S SECOND HEALTH AND NUTRITION EXAMINATION SURVEY (NHANES II). I WILL LEAVE IT TO THE EXPERTS FROM PUBLIC VOICE TO EXPLAIN THEIR SCIENTIFIC FINDINGS, BUT THE ULTIMATE CONCLUSION IS THAT A SERIOUS PROBLEM OF POVERTY AND MALNUTRITION EXISTS AMONG OUR NATION'S LOW-INCOME PEOPLE RESIDING IN RURAL AREAS AS COMPARED WITH THEIR URBAN COUNTERPARTS.

### TRENDS OF POVERTY AMONG RURAL POOR

IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT THE TIME PERIOD FOR THIS STUDY IS 1979-1983 -- A PERIOD THAT BRIDGES TWO ADMINISTRATIONS WHO PURSUED DIFFERENT POLICY GOALS IN HEALTH AND NUTRITION PROGRAMS. IT IS CLEAR THAT POVERTY HAS BEEN ON THE RISE SINCE THE 1970'S, AND WITH IT THE ACCOMPANYING SIDE EFFECTS OF MALNUTRITION AND POOR HEALTH. HOWEVER, I WANT TO STRESS THAT THIS TREND BEGAN LONG BEFORE PRESIDENT REAGAN CAME TO OFFICE.

IN THE 1960'S, I HAD THE PLEASURE OF SERVING ON THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON NUTRITION WITH SENATOR GEORGE MCGOVERN. YOU MAY RECALL IT WAS A WELL-DOCUMENTED FACT OF LIFE AT THAT TIME THAT SERIOUS HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION EXISTED IN POVERTY POCKETS THROUGHOUT OUR COUNTRY - PARTICULARLY IN RURAL AREAS. WE WERE SHOCKED BY THESE REPORTS, AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE DEMANDED A RESPONSE FROM THEIR GOVERNMENT.

(MORE)



BASED ON THE RESULTS OF THIS PUBLIC VOICE STUDY, WE STILL HAVE A SERIOUS PROBLEM. AND IT IS A PROBLEM THAT TRANSCENDS POLITICS OR POLICIES - WHICH IS WHY BOTH TOM FOLEY AND I HAVE WORKED TOGETHER IN THE PAST AND JOIN THIS EFFORT TODAY.

#### FEDERAL APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM

SINCE THE 1960'S, MORE THAN TEN FEDERAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS HAVE EVOLVED. TODAY, WE ARE SPENDING APPROXIMATELY 20 BILLION DOLLARS ON A WIDE ARRAY OF FOOD PROGRAMS WHICH ARE TARGETED TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO LOW-INCOME AND VULNERABLE SEGMENTS OF OUR POPULATION. THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM PROVIDES THE FOUNDATION FOR THIS NATIONAL APPROACH, WITH OTHER SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS REACHING LOW-INCOME WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN, AND THE ELDERLY.

BACK IN 1979, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SPENT \$6.9 BILLION ON THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM, WHICH THEN SERVED ABOUT 29.5 MILLION PEOPLE ANNUALLY. FOR FISCAL YEAR 1985, ANNUAL PARTICIPATION WAS 36.2 MILLION AT AN ANNUAL COST OF ABOUT \$12.8 BILLION. CLEARLY, INCREASED SPENDING IS NOT THE PROBLEM.

THE PUBLIC VOICE STUDY REVEALS DISTINCT PROBLEMS AND GROWING GAPS IN VITAL AREAS OF NUTRITION AND HEALTH FOR THE RURAL POOR, AS COMPARED TO THE REST OF THE COUNTRY, PARTICULARLY THE URBAN POOR. HOWEVER, WHAT IS FRUSTRATING IS THE UNDERCURRENT OF POVERTY THAT CONTINUES TO EXIST IN RURAL AREAS, DESPITE AN INCREASE IN RESOURCES TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEMS.

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