

Bob Dole



NEWS

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, July 28, 1994

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CRIME BILL

DOLE FEARS CONGRESS MAY HAVE FLUNKED MOST IMPORTANT CRIME-FIGHTING CHALLENGE; TOUGH-ON-CRIME PROPOSALS CUT FROM BILL

Earlier this morning, the crime conference completed its deliberations. Unfortunately, it appears that parts of the conference report could have been concocted by a university sociology department, rather than by those concerned with effective law enforcement.

Conferees Resurrected Defeated Stimulus Package

The conferees have apparently resurrected last year's defeated stimulus package by earmarking a staggering \$9 billion for more than 15 so-called "prevention" programs. Midnight Basketball, the Ounce of Prevention Council, "drug courts," the Local Partnership Act, the Model Cities Intensive Grants program--these are just several of the multimillion dollar pork-barrel projects that are masquerading under the anticrime banner.

On Tuesday, Republican conferees successfully earmarked \$3.6 billion for the "Edward Byrne Memorial Grant Program," which provides critical assistance to state and local law enforcement, the very people who are on the front-lines in the war against crime. Yet, a mere 24 hours later, the Democrat conferees reversed this success, stripping the Byrne grant funding and tossing it in to the prevention pork-barrel.

Tough-On-Crime Proposals Didn't Make Final Cut

Unfortunately, several important tough-on-crime proposals that passed the Senate last year also didn't make the final conference cut:

New Federal Rules of Evidence making it easier to prosecute vicious sex offenders. Gone.

Tough mandatory minimum penalties for those who use a gun in the commission of a crime. Gone.

New legal tools designed to assist federal prosecutors in combatting violent gang activity. Gone.

The Terrorist Alien Removal Act, which would have made it easier to deport vicious terrorists who are in our country illegally. Gone.

The mandatory H.I.V.-testing of those charged with sex offenses. Gone.

And a proposal requiring violent criminals to make restitution to their victims. Again, gone.

Perhaps the biggest cut of all, is in the area of prison funding. Although the House of Representatives authorized \$10.5 billion to help the states create more prison space for violent criminals, the conference report takes a far softer approach, reducing the level of prison funding and loosening up the truth-in-sentencing requirements.

And there are gimmicks: more than \$2 billion of the money allegedly allocated for prisons is not financed through the Violent Crime Reduction Trust Fund. So, it's anyone's guess if this funding will ever be appropriated or ever reach the states, where it is needed.

I'll take a close look at the final conference report, but from what I see so far, I'm afraid that Congress may have just flunked its most important crime-fighting challenge.

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* Remarks delivered on the Senate floor, approximately 4:00 PM.