

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MAY 15, 1962

FROM THE OFFICE OF CONGRESSMAN BOB DOLE
244 HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

Congressman Bob Dole (R-Kansas) took issue with a United States Department of Agriculture release late last night concerning responsibility for the commitment of Miss Mary K. Jones, an employee of the USDA. Dole stated that Rod Leonard, Assistant to the Secretary, who issued the United States Department of Agriculture's release last night was critical of Senator John J. Williams of Delaware, who made statements on the Floor of the Senate yesterday concerning treatment of Miss Jones. Apparently Mr. Leonard has not taken time to investigate the matter thoroughly for the case of Miss Mary K. Jones and her commitment to D. C. General Hospital is a shocking chapter in the Billie Sol Estes controversy.

Dole concluded, "Late last night I forwarded letters to Honorable Emanuel Celler, Chairman of the Judiciary Committee and the ranking Republican of the Judiciary Committee, Honorable William M. McCulloch; an identical letter to Honorable John L. McMillan, Chairman, District Committee, and Honorable James C. Auchincloss, ranking Republican on that Committee concerning the case of Miss Jones. The complete text of the letter is as follows:

"May 14, 1962 -- While investigating possible involvement of any Federal Department or Agency in the Billie Sol Estes controversy, I learned of the unusual detention of Miss Mary K. Jones, (U.S. Department of Agriculture employee,) at D.C. General Hospital for some 13 days. Miss Jones resides at 1201 South Courthouse Road, Arlington, Virginia, and is employed as a secretary in the office of the Deputy Administrator of Agricultural Stabilization Conservation Service.

As a lawyer, with some knowledge of commitment proceedings, I was surprised to learn the facts and circumstances surrounding her commitment and now call them to your attention as it appears certain revisions in the District Code may be needed. Miss Jones had been a secretary for N. Battle Hales prior to his transfer on April 20, 1962 from a position as Staff Assistant, Office of the Deputy Administrator, ASCS, to another department. Mr. Hales has become a key figure in the Billie Sol Estes controversy and as his secretary, Miss Jones also had certain knowledge concerning office files and records. Though perhaps only coincidental, Hales' transfer to another position, in another building, and her detention at D.C. General Hospital are deserving of serious consideration.

Available records indicate Miss Jones was confined from April 25 until noon of May 7, and further that the only witness appearing at the hearing before the Commission on Mental Health May 7, to testify concerning her condition on April 25, was the arresting officer, Private Robert Selby, 4th Precinct. The specific circumstances surrounding her commitment are vague, however, conversation with her personal physician, Dr. Harold Heiges, today, revealed that he had seen Miss Jones personally on April 24 and though nervous and upset he indicated she was certainly not "psychotic". He stated he did not authorize or order her to be removed from her place of employment to any hospital.

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I personally visited with the arresting officer, Private Selby, concerning her condition and with her attorney, William T. Pace. Mr. Pace recited certain inconsistencies and also that neither Dr. Lee K. Buchanan, Chief of Health, Safety and Welfare Division, Department of Agriculture, or anyone else from the USDA who had seen Miss Jones on April 25 and who may have been responsible for notifying the police and her ultimate commitment were present at the hearing. Statements made by Officer Selby indicated his limited knowledge of her mental condition and considerable doubt in his mind as to her condition. At any rate, Miss Jones, escorted by Selby, two other policemen and Dr. Buchanan, was taken to the 4th Precinct and then to D.C. General Hospital.

Speculation is rife that she was committed because of her knowledge of very important records under her control, but disregarding this and the fact she was Mr. Hales' secretary, it appears her rights were abused. Either the District Code was not followed or it is so loosely drawn as to need sharp revision, in my opinion.

The confinement of Miss Jones for 13 days without a hearing; the fact those responsible for initiating commitment proceedings did not appear at the hearing; the fact she was apparently in normal mental condition all times prior to her commitment and finally that certain unconfirmed reports indicate she was not properly cared for while a patient at the hospital and was subjected to certain indignities, certainly raise many reasonable questions.

At best the commitment of Mary K. Jones, who had told her physician one day earlier that she was nervous and upset because of certain records, is a sad chapter in the Billie Sol Estes controversy and in the interest of Miss Jones, others employed in the Department of Agriculture and in the interest of district citizens generally a full and complete investigation by your committee appears to be justified.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Bob Dole

BOB DOLE, M.C."