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NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.—Kans.)

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FOR RELEASE: MONDAY
MAY 12, 1975

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DOLE INTRODUCES PROPOSAL TO ALLOW BINGO ADVERTISING

WASHINGTON, D.C.--Senator Bob Dole will today introduce legislation to permit Kansas bingo games to be advertised on an even basis with state-conducted lotteries elsewhere. Currently, Federal law prohibits any published information on such activities to be sent through the mails -- in letters, newspapers, or circulars.

"When the new State bingo law took effect on April 1, I think everyone was a little astonished to learn that it was alright to start playing the game -- just so long as they didn't tell anyone about it," the Senator quipped. "Obviously, that can cause the average person to wonder about the logic behind such an incongruity."

Dole explained that the restriction is a carryover from the days when lotteries and similar games of chance, including bingo, were uniformly banned as an invitation to corruption. "Even though state-run sweepstakes and related projects began re-appearing in 1963," he continued, "the law remained unchanged until last year."

"State-conducted lotteries were then officially exempted, but other state-authorized operations like bingo were not," Dole advised. "This was due to a Justice Department fear that undesirable elements might profit as licensees, thereby leading to criminal involvement in gambling."

"I hardly think that concern applies to the Kansas situation, and have so communicated my feelings to the Attorney General. Hopefully, he will agree that our State law provides adequate safeguards against bingo sponsorship by other than legitimate organizations, and give the okay to the bill I am introducing."

"Regardless of the merits of the bingo issue itself, I think the people of Kansas deserve equal application of the law," Dole said. He added that a substantial First Amendment question was posed by the advertisement limitation, and that in any event, Kansas voters had approved legalization of the games last fall by a 70 percent margin.

Dole further noted that his proposal was narrowly drafted to affect only bingo operations, and that presently no more than nine states besides Kansas could benefit from the relaxation in existing criminal code language. Those include Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Montana, New Jersey, Washington and Wisconsin.

The bingo advertisement measure will initially be referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee for its consideration. However, Dole indicated that he was going to solicit the support of Senators from the above-named states having the same problem as Kansas, then seek to attach the bill as an amendment to another piece of legislation on the Senate floor.