



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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HOUSE INACTION DELAYING VETERANS BENEFITS INEXCUSABLE, SAYS DOLE

Washington D.C. -- Seeking to reassure student veterans whose education assistance checks have been delayed by a Senate-House impasse on the legislation to fund them, Senator Bob Dole said this week-end he was "optimistic the House would get back to work on the bill Monday in spite of their dismal track record this past week."

Passage of the \$15 billion supplemental appropriations bill has been held up by failure of the House and Senate to agree to a compromise on a railroad improvement program funded in the Senate's version of the legislation, but not in the House'. Included in the bill is a \$425 million appropriation for Veterans GI bill educational benefits. The House of Representatives recessed Friday without making any further efforts to resolve the impasse, leaving the bill -- and an estimated 300,000 student veterans -- in what Dole characterized as a "legislative limbo."

Dole said the House' failure to act during the latter half of the past week was "inexcusable."

Citing past, well-publicized instances when the Veterans Administration had failed to get checks out on time, Dole said, "members of Congress' had been quick to criticize the administrative failure. But those protests," he added, "ring hollow now, given the casual, business-as-usual attitude the Democrat House leadership appears to be taking toward this bill. There are veterans in Kansas, and all over the country whose checks are already a week over-due -- they were scheduled to be mailed out on June 2nd -- and the House is doing exactly what some members had criticised the VA for in the past, namely nothing."

The delay is estimated to involve roughly 25 percent of all student veterans receiving GI bill benefits. Dole said there is no question but that the checks will eventually be sent. When they will be sent, and how much further delay will be encountered depends on the speed with which Congress can finalize the bill.