



# NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.—Kans.)

New Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510 (202) 224-6521

FOR RELEASE UPON RECEIPT CONTACT: JANET ANDERSON

FROM THE NATION'S CAPITOL  
BY SENATOR BOB DOLE

## FOOD STAMPS

During the August Congressional recess, I have been working on a major food stamp reform bill for introduction shortly after Congress reconvenes in September. This legislative activity is prompted by recent stories about abuse of the food stamp program by non-needy families and in other instances, reports of truly needy persons who have been forced to wait up to several weeks to receive assistance. Clearly, both of these situations call for changes in food stamp legislation.

### IDENTIFY PROBLEMS

In an effort to identify the most effective method of remedying these food stamp problems, the Senate last year unanimously passed Senate Resolution 58, a resolution I sponsored, directing the Department of Agriculture to make recommendations for changes in the federal program. The USDA report, issued last month in response to the resolution, unfortunately did not offer many substantive recommendations. It did, however, provide much useful information on rates of participation, the number of eligible persons, costs of the program and its relationship to other public assistance programs. Not surprisingly, the report reveals that the vast majority of food stamp recipients are in the low-income range, with over 90 percent of participating households having incomes below \$7000, and 77 percent having incomes below \$5000.

Still eligibility guidelines for food stamps are lax, and it is apparent that a fundamental restructuring of eligibility criteria is needed to restore public confidence in the program's integrity. My attention will be focused on the certification and application process. The key to effective revision of the entire program lies in simplifying the food stamp application form, thus expediting certification, while at the same time restricting the eligibility criteria so non-needy persons will not be able to qualify.

(more)

Sept. 12

179

EFFECTIVENESS NEEDED

In light of the recession and the projected slow, but steady, economic recovery it is evident that Congress must move quickly to reform the food stamp program so that it effectively serves the needy. And, just as important, we must tighten eligibility criteria to assure that the non-needy do not qualify. It is time Congress acts to insure that the food stamp program meets the nutritional requirements of the poor but does not force the taxpayer to support those capable of helping themselves. The bill we are working on is intended to do just that.

-30-

During the August Congressional recess, I have been working on a major food stamp reform bill for introduction shortly after Congress reconvenes in September. This legislative activity is prompted by recent stories about abuse of the food stamp program by non-needy families and in other instances, reports of truly needy persons who have been forced to wait up to several weeks to receive assistance. Clearly, both of these situations call for changes in food stamp legislation.

IDENTIFY PROBLEMS

In an effort to identify the most effective method of remedying these food stamp problems, the Senate last year unanimously passed Senate Resolution 58, a resolution I sponsored, directing the Department of Agriculture to make recommendations for changes in the federal program. The USDA report, issued last month in response to the resolution, unfortunately did not offer any substantive recommendations. It did, however, provide much useful information on rates of participation, the number of eligible persons, costs of the program and its relationship to other public assistance programs. Not surprisingly, the report reveals that the vast majority of food stamp recipients are in the low-income range, with over 70 percent of participating households having incomes below \$7,000, and 75 percent having incomes below \$5,000.

Still, eligibility guidelines for food stamps are lax, and it is apparent that a fundamental restructuring of eligibility criteria is needed to restore public confidence in the program's integrity. My attention will be focused on the certification and application process. The key to effective revision of the entire program lies in simplifying the food stamp application form, thus expediting certification, while at the same time restricting the eligibility criteria so non-needy persons will not be able to qualify.

(more)