



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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STATEMENT OF SENATOR BOB DOLE

SENATE COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

January 7, 1977

Mr. Chairman, my colleagues on the Rules Committee, I am appearing before you today, along with Senator McGovern, on behalf of the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs.

We are requesting a temporary extension of the Nutrition Committee, because we do not believe that it would serve the best interests of the Senate or the American people to merge the Nutrition Committee with the Committee on Agriculture (and Small Business) at this time. I say this as ranking member of the Agriculture Committee and as a member of the Nutrition Committee.

Since its creation by the Senate in 1968, the Nutrition Committee has provided a unique and valuable forum for issues that would not otherwise have been aired. It has consistently brought to the attention of the Senate issues of overriding national importance. Its first investigation, Hunger in America, brought home to all of us the realization that under-consumption was a domestic -- not just international -- problem. The investigations of the 94th Congress into the relationship between diet and health, and the nutritional needs of the homebound elderly, were also the first of their kind.

These investigations must continue in the 95th Congress and no other committee is as capable of bringing to bear the expertise, dedication and perspective which is needed.

The investigation into the relationship between diet and disease could not, for example, be undertaken as completely or from the same health perspective by the Agriculture Committee. Yet this perspective is absolutely necessary if we are to investigate diet as a risk factor in contraction of diseases that haunt us all.

Mr. Chairman, when the Select Committee on Nutrition was originally created, it was seen as a bridge between the Committee on Agriculture and the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare. By design, 40% of our members come from each Committee. That bridge would still be needed under the reorganization plan, which I generally support. There will still be a need to bring together, on a continuing basis, the perspective and constituency of the Committee on Agriculture and Small Business and the Committee on Human Resources.

At a time when the focus is turning toward preventive health care rather than the continued overemphasis on disease-oriented, curative medicine, we need strong, national leadership. If the Committee is divided or dissolved, our efforts may be diluted and fragmented.

At the present time, our Committee is preparing legislation to provide a focal point for preventive health activities. Unless the Committee's investigations are allowed to continue, public education in nutrition and other preventive health measures will go on receiving only token support.

If we are to put the brakes on skyrocketing health care costs, we must develop a comprehensive, long-term preventive health plan -- and nutrition is the key.

Mr. Chairman, I have concentrated on the area of nutrition and health because I thought this would be more helpful to you than simply listing all the activities of the Committee. I do not mean to imply that the activities of the Committee with regard to problems of the elderly and the poor are now being given less emphasis or that these problems have been solved; they most certainly have not.

Thank you.