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NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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SENATE TO DEBATE JUNK FOODS, VENDING MACHINES IN SCHOOLS

WASHINGTON, D.C.--Vending machines and junk foods are expected to be topics of heated debate during Senate consideration of the School Lunch Bill in June.

The controversial provision would return to the Secretary of Agriculture the authority to regulate -- in participating schools and service institutions -- the service of foods which would compete with schools meals authorized under the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 and the National School Lunch Act. Senator Bob Dole proposed inclusion of the measure, which was authored by Senator Clifford Case, during the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition's consideration of the School Lunch Bill.

"Since 1972, when the Secretary of Agriculture was stripped of the authority to regulate other food services in participating schools," Dole said, "vending machines have become a familiar sight in school lunch rooms, locker rooms, corridors and study halls." Eighty percent of the foods dispensed by these machines are junk foods -- foods high in sugar, fat, calories, and food additives, but low in nutrients.

"Returning this authority to the Secretary will insure that trained food service personnel will oversee foods available to students. Our intent is not to preclude vending machines, junk foods or revenue for school activities," Dole pointed out, "but to provide more nutritional alternatives, such as fruits, vegetables, nuts and dairy products. It should encourage the use of school food services as an educational laboratory for developing sound food habits and also encourage consumption of basic agricultural products."