

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DOLE URGES CONFEREES TO RETAIN OSHA AMENDMENT TO LABOR-HEW APPROPRIATIONS BILL

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Senator Bob Dole today urged Senate and House Conference Members for the Labor-HEW Appropriations bill to retain his OSHA amendment that provides employers an opportunity to voluntarily come into compliance before they are fined. Nineteen other Senators also signed the letter. Following is the text:

As you know, on June 29, 1977, the Senate adopted the Dole OSHA amendment to the Labor-HEW Appropriations bill by an overwhelming vote (61-27).

This amendment simply says that before an employer is fined for a violation, he must have a chance to fully understand OSHA rules and regulations, and that he must have a chance to come into compliance.

This amendment would require that before penalties are imposed for any first instance violations, OSHA must consult with the employer on possible methods to bring the plant into full compliance. If the employer corrects the violations within a reasonable time, as determined by the Administrator, my amendment would insure that he is not penalized for his efforts. Like the Committee bill, this amendment does not apply to serious or willful violations. Employers who allow these violations to occur will suffer the full consequences of their actions.

The amendment would also have a significant impact on small business. Smaller sized employers have a greater burden in trying to achieve full compliance with the Act. For the smaller employer, economically unable to afford the specialized talents of safety and health consultants, on-site consultation may be the only way to secure assistance in meeting health and safety standards. The current situation where a citation is the only on-site contact an employer may have with OSHA experts merely emphasizes the punitive nature of OSHA rather than its stated goal of achieving greater safety in the workplace for all employees.

The current Administration has recently voiced discontent with the past actions of OSHA, that is, the focus on small, insignificant problems. The Administration has further indicated we need more emphasis on consultation, education, information, and voluntary compliance. I believe my amendment is in line with this intent to make OSHA an effective agency which truly deals with the safety and health of American working men and women.

I strongly believe my amendment is a common sense amendment, and urge you to retain this important provision in the final bill.

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The Conference Committee will begin meeting tomorrow.