



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.—Kans.)

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

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CONTACT: BOB WAITE, BILL KATS
202-224-8953, 224-8947

PUBLIC POLL SUPPORTS DOLE STAND ON GUN CONTROL

WASHINGTON -- A new national public opinion survey released yesterday shows that large majorities of the American electorate view "swift, sure and strict punishment as the most effective way to fight crime," and see gun control laws as inherently ineffective in deterring criminal use of firearms.

Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kan.) welcomed the survey results, saying, "I have repeatedly opposed the various ill-conceived gun control proposals that have been brought before the Senate. I have long subscribed to the theory that increased rigidity and severity in our 'gun crime' penalties offers far greater hope for a safer America than any costly and unenforceable licensing, registration, or outright ownership suppression techniques ever could."

Conducted by Decision Making Information of Santa Ana, Calif., the research was based on a scientifically selected sample of registered voters in 1,500 in-home interviews taken during May and June 1978, and in 1,000 telephone interviews.

The poll shows that among the American electorate:

-- 88 percent of registered voters say they have an individual right to keep and bear arms.

-- Gun ownership was acknowledged in 47 percent of voters' households, projected at 45 million gun owners, with 23 percent of the total sample having one or more handguns in the home.

-- Crime is perceived as an increasing threat in the coming decade, with the most feared crimes being crimes of violence committed by criminals, especially murder in the course of another crime and robbery-mugging. So-called "crimes of passion" -- murder by a relative or friend -- are of little concern, ranking with "white collar crimes" of fraud, embezzlement-forgery.

-- 93 percent favor strict mandatory penalties for criminal use of firearms in commission of crime. According to the results, "The electorate clearly sees steps to increase or hasten the punishment suffered by criminals, especially violent criminals, as the best way to fight crime."

-- 54 percent see no need for more laws governing the possession and use of firearms.

-- 57 percent feel that more gun control laws would fail to reduce crime.

-- 83 percent oppose a ban on handguns. 72 percent say that domestic shootings do not justify a handgun ban. Over 80 percent reject the argument that banning handguns would prevent assassination attempts on public officials.

-- 88 percent agree that "registration of handguns will not prevent criminals from acquiring or using them for illegal purposes," and 61 percent oppose the federal government spending massive sums for a registration system.