



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.-Kans.)

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KENNEDY HEALTH BILL 'FIRST STEP TOWARDS FEDERAL REGIMENTATION'

DES MOINES, IOWA-- Senator Bob Dole (R.-Kansas) today called Senator Edward M. Kennedy's latest health care plan "a first step toward federal regimentation of not only the insurance industry, but the health care industry as a whole."

Dole, who introduced his own health care bill last month, added that "Senator Kennedy continues to believe that more bureaucracy, not less, is the answer to our problems. His legislation creates another new, highly complex federal and state bureaucracy-- one that is needless for the industry today. His legislation gives the illusion of maintaining the private insurance industry-- but in reality guts their current responsibilities, making them mere intermediaries."

Dole, who was in Des Moines following his announcement for the presidency in Russell, Kansas, earlier in the morning, said that the Kennedy approach "seems to be addressed more to potential constituencies within the Democratic Party, and less to the Congress."

"I don't believe Kennedy's plan has a realistic chance of passage," added Dole.

"The Kennedy approach takes the position that only radical, and what I believe to be disastrous, changes will solve problems in the health care delivery system. The Dole-Domenici-Danforth approach truly builds on the current system, making the most of the positive and significant contribution of private industry, and patching up the gaps that exist," said Dole.

"My study of the draft of the Kennedy bill shows that it provides for the development of a fixed, limited health budget that will ultimately control the availability of health care services. This is a frightening prospect for those of us who do not believe that a fixed price should define what is enough. Health care is too complex and diverse in our society to be so regulated," said Dole.

"Although I have not seen the price tag for this new Kennedy bill, I believe the bureaucracy and regulatory requirements alone will cost the American taxpayer a great deal of money-- unnecessarily-- either directly, through taxes, or indirectly through higher costs for premiums or services."

Congratulates Kennedy

"I must congratulate Senator Kennedy for including in his bill provisions very similar to those in mine for those participating in Medicare. I am particularly pleased to note that he has agreed that the Medicare program should remain, with some limited changes. I was disappointed, however, that he chose to continue limitations on home health care benefits, while we seek to expand those services-- a welcome alternative to institutionalization of the elderly."

Dole predicted his bill-- perhaps in conjunction with a bill introduced by Senator Long (D.-Louisiana)-- will pass the Congress in this session. "Our catastrophic insurance approach is clearly more in tune with the times," said Dole.