

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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DOLE DECRIES 'MEDIA MEDICINE'

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The following is a statement by Senator Bob Dole (R.-Kansas) on the current health care debate:

"With the introduction of the Carter Administration national health plan, much of Washington seems to be swept up in a furious war of words between the White House and Senator Kennedy. It's a curious debate, more over the fine points of federalized medicine than any fundamental dispute.

"It is also, in my opinion, a waste of time and energy. It may provide bored columnists and commentators with something to do, it may give political pundits some grist for their speculative mills, but it remains irrelevant to the real facts of health insurance and the American economy," said Dole.

NO CHANCE OF PASSAGE

"The reason for this is simple: neither plan has any chance of passage. The President may have a marginal advantage in this confrontation, only because his bill will cost less than half of Senator Kennedy's \$40 billion package. But no budget-minded Congress, tired of deficits and wary of any new bureaucracy and federalization of medicine; is going to approve even the Carter plan.

"The media, preoccupied with a fascination for anything proposed by Senator Kennedy, has failed to make mention of the Dole-Danforth-Domenici health insurance proposal, which plugs gaps in the existing system and removes the threat posed by catastrophic illness. Last year, some seven million American families paid 15 percent or more of their income for health care. That poses enormous liabilities to middle and upper middle income people, as well as those below and near the poverty line," Dole stated.

AVOIDS RED TAPE

"Our plan maximizes participation of the private health care deliverers, and will avoid the creation of any costly and inefficient new morass of federal red tape. It is a workable plan, a feasible plan, and it has a far greater chance of approval from this Congress than any proposal called "comprehensive". The Dole-Danforth-Domenici bill can solve our most pressing health problem, now. Can we afford to sacrifice such a promising initiative so that Democratic candidates or would-be candidates can fight out their private political battles? I think the physical and mental health of our people is more important than the political health of a Democratic Presidential candidate.

"Carter Administration officials are quoted in this morning's Washington Post as acknowledging the need for Republican support if any health insurance proposal is to pass. This is one of the few shrewd analyses to come out of the White House in a long time. But, as usual, it misses the mark," Dole continued.

"The simple fact is that the Republican Party is much more closely attuned to the mood of the American people when it comes to any grandiose new government program. They know from painful experience what happens when the good intentions get attached to their tax bill, when noble motives are transferred to bureaucratic offices for enactment. They know what takes place when government displaces the private sector as a deliverer of anything," said Dole.

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PEOPLE SUSPICIOUS

"And, Mr. President, it is my belief that they share my suspicions of both the Carter and Kennedy plans. They are far more worried about paying their medical bills than who leads in the Gallup Poll.

"The media has chosen to focus on the political aspects of a Kennedy-Carter confrontation on health care, but they are misreading both the Congress and the American people. Our bill is a realistic, responsible approach to health insurance which will command the attention of the Congress and the public, rather than political columnists looking ahead to the 1980 Democratic National Convention," stated Dole.

"The United States Senate is often called the world's greatest deliberative body. And that's precisely what I propose we all do now. Let's deliberate over the merits and flaws of the health proposals before us, including the Long-Ribicoff approach, which has merit. Let's try for a moment or two to put away the siren call of Presidential politics, to keep from hearing the bands and seeing the balloons, and keep in mind what it is we're doing here.

"We're here to confront a serious national problem. We're charged with addressing that problem, in a manner that is cost-efficient and protective of the quality of American health care. I believe the bill I have filed with my colleagues, Senators Danforth and Domenici, will do just that. It is practical, both economically and politically. It can work, and it can pass.

"And that, Mr. President, is the bottom line on the health debate."