



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.-Kans.)

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DOLE ENDORSES FAIR HOUSING AMENDMENTS ACT

WASHINGTON -- Saying that "in 1979, housing discrimination remains a major problem for blacks and other minorities," Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kan.) today gave his support to the Fair Housing Amendments Act (S. 506), which would give the federal government increased enforcement authority in housing discrimination cases.

The bill, introduced by Sen. Charles McC. Mathias (R-Md.), revises Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which prohibits discrimination in housing. Under existing law, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is charged with a leading role in ensuring that Title VIII is implemented, yet it is provided with no enforcement authority except the responsibility to conciliate. S. 506 would give HUD the power to seek cease and desist orders in court and join federal court cases on the side of individual complainants.

"It has been 11 years since the Fair Housing Act was signed on April 11, 1968, guaranteeing freedom from discrimination in housing for all Americans," Dole said. "Yet in 1979 housing discrimination remains a major problem for blacks and other minorities.

"Fair housing is more than a right; it is the law. And that law needs some teeth in it. The government now has the power to try to talk the disputing parties in discrimination suits into an agreement, but it lacks the power to make an agreement stick. I feel these amendments will help do just that. Although progress has been made in housing desegregation, greater strides have to be taken before housing discrimination and segregation are eliminated."

S. 506 empowers HUD to investigate complaints, conduct hearings, and issue remedial orders, including temporary or preliminary relief. Judicial review of these orders would be available at the appellate level. The bill also provides that the secretary of HUD and the aggrieved person may choose between the administrative and judicial forums. To ensure that access to the courts is not unduly restricted, the bill also makes significant procedural changes.

"Several important provisions of the bill make it clear that Title VIII is intended to reach redlining practices, in which lenders deny mortgage loans because of the racial or ethnic composition of the neighborhood in which the dwelling is located," Dole said.

The amendments would also permit handicapped individuals to have the same protection as that afforded to the other protected classes in Title VIII.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Justice Department and HUD are supporting S. 506.