

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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DOLE APPLAUDS HOUSE DECISION TO KILL MANDATORY DRAFT REGISTRATION

WASHINGTON -- Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kan.) today applauded action yesterday by the U.S. House of Representatives to defeat a bill that would have required 18-year-old males to register with their local draft boards.

"I'm sure that all the members of the House share my belief that we need a strong national defense and are concerned about the clear difficulties the Selective Service System would now have if it was forced to register recruits in the event of a national emergency," Dole said. "But mandatory registration is only one of several ways to deal with this problem, and I'm glad the House has recognized that fact.

"In attempting to provide our armed forces with the ability to respond to a national emergency we should be careful that we do not destroy individual freedom in the process. Clearly, mandatory registration is one step toward institution of the draft. Mandatory peacetime registration may turn out to be a necessary evil, but until compelling evidence of this is presented, we should exercise extreme caution in reaching a decision on this matter.

"Several of my colleagues and I believe that Congress needs more detailed information on all our possible options before we take further steps to enact peacetime registration. For this reason, we have proposed that the President be directed to conduct a four-month study of the current capability of the United States to mobilize quickly in the event of a national emergency."

Dole introduced a bill to mandate the study earlier this year, and was joined by Sens. Bill Cohen (R-Maine), William Proxmire (D-Wis.) and George McGovern (D-S.D.) as cosponsors.

The study would seek to find:

1. The ability of the Selective Service to provide the manpower needs of the armed forces in the event of a national emergency.
2. The ability of the armed forces to train, house, feed and supply those newly delivered recruits.
3. Proposals for any legislation necessary to allow the armed forces to mobilize as quickly as possible in such an emergency.

"There are good reasons why such a coordinated and centralized study is needed, the most important of which is the array of conflicting information and theories on registration," Dole said. "The issue involved here is not whether the Selective Service can perform adequately in an emergency, but how best to ready them for that possibility. Given the enormous complexities involved in this issue, and given the invasion of privacy which mandatory peacetime draft registration presents, we urge that Congress gain a thorough knowledge of the facts and options before deciding."