

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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DOLE INTRODUCES FOOD STAMP LEGISLATION

WASHINGTON -- Senator Bob Dole (R-Kan.) today announced the introduction of legislation to make changes in the food stamp program, which is up for re-authorization this year.

"Although I generally support the Administration's proposals, there were certain provisions with which I disagreed," Dole said. "I am not, for example, in favor of reducing a family's food stamp allotment if they have children who are eligible for a free school lunch. This kind of situation has been perceived as an overlap of benefits, but I don't see it that way.

"The Thrifty Food Plan on which the food stamp program is based has been proven to be inadequate in terms of providing nutrition benefits to recipients. Other nutrition programs have served to complement the potential shortcomings of the food stamp program by focusing on especially vulnerable segments of our population -- pregnant women and infants, the elderly, and school-age children. These programs all work together to fulfill an existing need within our society.

"Aside from the nutritional aspect, such a proposal would be extremely complex to administer and would primarily hurt low-income families with several children, who may be among the poorest of the poor.

"Due to our experience with the cap on the program in recent years, I think that it is time we did something to eliminate such an artificial restraint on program spending. I think the other provisions in this piece of legislation go about attempting to restrain program growth in more constructive ways.

"Taking into consideration the uncertain economic factors that exist in our country today, we need to leave as much flexibility as possible to insure that needy individuals within our society receive the assistance they deserve in a timely fashion.

"It is my hope in introducing this legislation to underline my continuing commitment to the basic goals and concepts of the food stamp program."

Although the Dole legislation primarily focuses on elimination of the cap and overlap language, he said he was considering other changes in food stamp legislation. Among these are substitute provisions to add savings in order to meet the Administration's budget goals. Also under consideration is an increase in the benefit reduction rate, although Dole said he would prefer other options.