

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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DOLE SAYS FRAUD, WASTE AND ABUSE SHOULD BE AT THE TOP OF EVERYONE'S LIST

WASHINGTON -- Finance Committee Chairman Senator Bob Dole (R.-Kan.) commented today, before convening an oversight hearing on the Office of Inspector General, HHS, "When Ronald Reagan ran for President, he spent a lot of time talking about government fraud, waste and abuse. Now it turns out he hasn't only been talking.

"The President has instructed his Inspectors General - they're the government's own watchdogs - to be "mean as junkyard dogs" in going after waste and fraud. And what have they found?

"They found 8,500 medicare recipients still receiving Social Security checks, even though medicare reported them dead and even though many of the relatives of the deceased tried on their own to halt the checks from coming. Cost: \$20 million a year.

"They found more than a thousand persons still receiving black lung benefits after the recipients had either died or were removed from the disability lists. Cost: \$2 million.

"When fraud, waste or abuse occur in a federal program, more often than not the real victims are the elderly, the disabled or the economically disadvantaged. Because every dollar siphoned off from legitimate assistance is one dollar less for those in genuine need. But it's something more than that: by angering or frustrating American taxpayers, fraud, waste and abuse contribute to public cynicism about any government effort at all to aid deserving individuals.

"We are here today to learn what has been done, but more importantly to learn what the Inspector General's office can do.

"In FY 82 the medicare and medicaid programs alone are projected to account for federal expenditures of \$65.4 billion, an increase of 25 percent over actual 1980 expenditures. I am sure all of us would like to avoid unnecessary reductions in needed services. Stopping the flow of dollars that result from fraud, waste or abuse should be at the top of everyone's list."