

News from Senator

# BOB DOLE



CONTACT: WALT RIKER  
202/224-6521

(R - Kansas) 2213 Dirksen Building, Washington, D.C. 20510  
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STATEMENT OF SENATOR BOB DOLE  
SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE HEARING ON SOCIAL SECURITY -- FEBRUARY 22, 1983

Good morning. Today we continue our hearings on the recommendations of the National Commission on Social Security Reform. Last week we heard from individual members of the National Commission and from the Commissioner of Social Security. This week we will have three full days of hearings to receive testimony from public witnesses, Members of Congress, and the Director of the Office of Personnel Management. A wide range of organizations will be heard that represent opposing views on each of the major provisions recommended by the National Commission.

Public hearings are an important part of the legislative process. And, the fact that the Finance Committee is devoting two weeks to these hearings suggests the importance we place on social security and the recommendations of the National Commission. Certainly we will hear a great deal of criticism of individual provisions in the next three days. This is to be expected, with such a broad proposal dealing with such a vital issue. A number of the proposals are clearly in need of refinement--such as the proposal to tax benefits--and the Commission members recognize that fact. We welcome assistance in that regard.

However, I hope that every witness--and each of my colleagues--will remember that, as a compromise package, the Commission recommendations necessarily require concessions from all of us. Criticism that is not accompanied by a concrete alternative--one that is capable of gaining bi-partisan support--does us very little good. The social security trust funds have reached the point that continued inaction will be fatal to the system. Legislative action will only be possible with bi-partisan consensus.

At this point, I am optimistic about the prospects for early passage of the consensus package. The House has already completed hearings and, today, the Social Security Subcommittee is beginning to mark up legislation. Chairman Rostenkowski and I have agreed to work toward final passage of a bill before the Easter recess. So far, everything is going as scheduled.

With that in mind, I welcome today's witnesses. We will begin with testimony from three groups that have a keen interest in social security reform--the American Association of Retired People, the National Council of Senior Citizens, and the National Council on the Aging. I look forward to hearing your testimony.