

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

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DOLE ADDRESSES ANTI-HOUSING BIAS GROUP

PROMISES HELP IN PASSING STRENGTHENED FAIR HOUSING LAW

WASHINGTON -- On the day marking the 15th anniversary of the nation's fair housing law, Senator Robert Dole (R.-Kan.) today pledged his support for strengthening the law's enforcement mechanism. Dole's remarks were made before the National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing, now holding a major conference at the Capital Hilton Hotel. Saying that while the promise of the 1968 law was to "provide for fair housing throughout the nation," Dole said that Congress had "failed to include in the law an enforcement mechanism which would be adequate to fulfill that promise. The result has been that discrimination against minorities and women continues to be persistent and pervasive. This regrettable situation will have to change."

Dole, a key member of the Senate Judiciary Committee which has jurisdiction over the fair housing law, reaffirmed his opposition to amending the law to require that plaintiffs prove an intent to discriminate in fair housing suits, saying that the focus of such a standard is "misplaced" and that it would frustrate enforcement efforts.

Dole also expressed support for expanding the protections of the fair housing law to the handicapped, characterizing such a step as a "crucial link" in efforts to bring the nation's disabled citizens into the mainstream of American life.

The National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing is a non-profit organization established to fight bias in the housing market. It is currently holding its National Fair Housing Conference, designed to "kick off" the upcoming legislative effort to put teeth into the fair housing law. It is a member of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, a broad coalition of 170 organizations representing minorities, labor, women, senior citizens, the disabled, religious, and consumer groups which will be coordinating the effort.

"Through hard work, a spirit of bipartisanship, and a willingness to seek out consensus approaches, we were able to extend a strengthened Voting Rights Act for an unprecedented 25 years. By following the same approach in the upcoming fair housing effort, I am optimistic that we will again succeed," Dole said.