

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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DOLE FILES AMICUS BRIEF ON VOTING RIGHTS CASE

WASHINGTON -- SENATE MAJORITY LEADER BOB DOLE, R-KANSAS, TODAY JOINED A BIPARTISAN GROUP OF HOUSE AND SENATE MEMBERS IN FILING AN "AMICUS" BRIEF INVOLVING AN INTERPRETATION OF SECTION 2 OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT, WHICH SENATOR DOLE CO-AUTHORED.

In addition to the congressional amicus brief, the Republican National Committee, North Carolina Governor James Martin (R), and the League of Women Voters have or will file briefs in support of the plaintiffs position in *Gingles v. Thornburg*.

Senator Dole said that if the appeal were upheld, it would "in effect undo the compromise in the Voting Rights Act extension we in Congress and the administration agreed upon." If the administration supported the bill that passed the Congress," Dole added. "it is puzzling why it would intervene in this case."

In this case, the plaintiffs argued that North Carolina's 1981 redistricting plan, which continued the use of large, multi-member districts for state legislative seats, violated the Voting Rights Act. Although a three-judge district court panel held unanimously for the plaintiffs, the North Carolina Attorney General appealed and joined by the Justice Department, successfully urged the Supreme Court to accept the appeal. The Justice Department then filed an amicus brief in support of the state's Attorney General, arguing that because black candidates had enjoyed some success under the multi-member districts, the requirements of Section 2 were satisfied. Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act was designed to insure that minority voters have an equal opportunity to participate in elections.

Senator Dole noted that this was not a partisan issue. But he added, "I think too often we Republicans are sort of on the periphery -- we're never really in there when Black Americans need our help and so we thought this was an appropriate case to join."