

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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DOLE INTRODUCES LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE U.S. EDUCATION

Washington, DC -- Calling it an "investment in America's future," Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole has introduced legislation to improve American education by providing incentives for states and local education agencies to implement programs which have proven their success.

"The overall theme is competitiveness in education," said Sen. Dole. "What we want to do is focus on what works in the schools, not just maintaining the status quo." Joining Sen. Dole in sponsoring the legislation are Senators John Danforth (R-MO), Thad Cochran (R-MS), Strom Thurmond (R-SC) and Robert Stafford (R-VT).

The centerpiece of the Dole legislation, called "The Education Competitiveness & Improvement Act of 1987," is a reauthorization of popular programs for elementary and secondary schools. The bill would specifically address the needs of economically disadvantaged students, as well as gifted and talented students.

"This legislation refocuses attention on one of the traditional building blocks of American education - a strong working relationship among student, teacher and parent," said Sen. Dole. "This isn't just another spending proposal from Washington - this is an important investment in America's future. It is a plan that helps bring together the best elements of education on all levels - local, state and federal - to retool our education system for the 21st century."

In the Dole legislation, targeting for chapter one grants would be improved to make certain that available funds go primarily to economically disadvantaged students in order to provide equal education opportunities. A new incentive grant program would be used to reward successful chapter one programs. Further, the bill would require improved coordination and follow-through of children from local Headstart programs into elementary schools.

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Chapter two grants would be used to support innovative or expanded activities in the area of basic skills instruction, educational improvement and special projects. In the Dole-Stafford bill, three-year grants are intended as seed money for innovative programs that have a proven record of success.

Other key provisions in the Dole legislation would:

- * Establish a new program for gifted and talented elementary students, with \$25 million authorized to fund state programs (up to 50-percent of these funds would be targeted toward low-income students).

- * Establish a new program, based on one already used at Ft. Hays State University in Hays, KS, to provide college studies for gifted and talented secondary school students.

- * Extend the "magnet school" program through 1992 at a funding level of \$75 million.

- * Provide \$25 million in grants under the Educational Partnerships Act of 1987 to encourage excellence in education by stimulating joint ventures involving public schools and the private sector, including local businesses and industry and community-based organizations.

- * Target current math and science programs under the Education for Economic Security Act to secondary school programs, which teach advanced courses in science, mathematics, computer instruction, and foreign languages.

- * Reauthorize the National Science Foundation through 1992, and double the funding over the five-year authorization, with \$1.9 billion requested for 1988.

- * Require the President to convene by December 1, 1988 a "White House Conference on Teaching and Competitiveness" to develop recommendations for the improvement of American education and evaluate the progress that has been made.