

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 14, 1991

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STATEMENT OF SENATOR BOB DOLE ON KANSAS COMMUNITY COLLEGES

WASHINGTON - KANSAS SENATOR BOB DOLE ISSUED THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF LEGISLATION WHICH WOULD CREATE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY POSITION AT THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES:

I AM SUPPORTING THIS BILL BECAUSE COMMUNITY COLLEGES ARE A VITAL COMPONENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN KANSAS AND ACROSS THE NATION. THERE ARE 19 COMMUNITY COLLEGES CURRENTLY OPERATING ACROSS MY HOME STATE OF KANSAS, SERVING NEARLY 70,000 FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME STUDENTS. NEARLY 25 PERCENT OF ALL KANSAS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS GO ON TO ENROLL IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES UPON GRADUATION, TAKING ADVANTAGE OF A WIDE RANGE OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, INCLUDING VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL TRAINING, JOB RETRAINING, AND CREDITS FOR LATER APPLICATION TOWARDS FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS.

AS THE WORKPLACE CONTINUES TO ADAPT TO NEW TECHNOLOGY, WE NEED MORE PEOPLE THAN EVER WHO ARE PROFICIENT IN THEIR TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS. KANSAS COMMUNITY COLLEGES ARE RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGE, OFFERING OVER 80 DIFFERENT VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL PROGRAMS. THESE PROGRAMS INCLUDE DEGREES IN TRADITIONAL FIELDS SUCH AS AGRICULTURE, HEALTH CARE, AND MARKETING AND BUSINESS, AS WELL AS NON-TRADITIONAL AREAS LIKE ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AVIATION TECHNOLOGY, AND ROBOTICS. COMMUNITY COLLEGES ALSO OFFER IMPORTANT ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO ENSURE THAT ALL KANSANS ARE EQUIPPED WITH THE MINIMUM SKILLS NECESSARY TO SUCCEED IN SOCIETY.

IN ADDITION TO THEIR EDUCATIONAL MISSIONS, COMMUNITY COLLEGES PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF KANSAS COMMUNITIES, ESPECIALLY IN THE LESS-POPULATED, RURAL AREAS OF THE STATE. IN KANSAS, COMMUNITY COLLEGES ARE OFTEN ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN ATTRACTING NEW BUSINESSES TO THEIR COMMUNITIES. ADDITIONALLY, COMMUNITY COLLEGES WORK CLOSELY WITH AREA BUSINESSES, PROVIDING JOB RETRAINING PROGRAMS FOR EMPLOYEES AND OFFERING IMPORTANT INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES. ALL OF THESE EFFORTS WILL HELP KANSANS FACE THE INEVITABLE CHANGES WHICH COME WITH OUR EVER-EXPANDING ECONOMY.

I AM SUPPORTING THIS LEGISLATION TO HELP ENSURE THAT COMMUNITY COLLEGES GET THE RECOGNITION THEY DESERVE, BOTH AS EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND AS COMMUNITY LEADERS. AS WE LOOK AHEAD TO THE CONSIDERATION OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT REAUTHORIZATION, I HOPE ALL OF MY COLLEAGUES WILL REMEMBER THE IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY OUR NATION'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES.

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