

Bob Dole



NEWS

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

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CROWN HEIGHTS AMENDMENT

DOLE/D'AMATO RESOLUTION CALLS FOR FEDERAL CIVIL RIGHTS PROBE OF YANKEL ROSENBAUM MURDER

Washington -- Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole made the following statement in joining Senator Alfonse D'Amato (R-NY) in offering a Sense of the Senate resolution that the Justice Department should undertake a civil rights investigation into the August 1991 murder of Yankel Rosenbaum in the Crown Heights section of New York City.

On August 19, 1991, Yankel Rosenbaum, a young rabbinical student from Australia, happened to be at the wrong place at the wrong time.

Caught in the maelstrom of the Crown Heights riots, Rosenbaum was chased down by a bloodthirsty mob, and then stabbed repeatedly while his assailants shouted "Kill the Jew! Kill the Jew!"

One person was charged with the Rosenbaum murder, but was subsequently acquitted. Since the acquittal, no other suspect has been brought to trial for this vicious crime. The killers remain free.

Issue Affects All Americans

Now, there are those who will say that the murder of Yankel Rosenbaum, though tragic, is a local issue, affecting only the citizens of Crown Heights and New York City.

But what befell Yankel Rosenbaum that August day in 1991 extends far beyond Brooklyn and the five boroughs of New York. All Americans of goodwill are shocked and saddened when they learn that a young man could come to our country to study, only to be murdered solely because of his ethnicity and religious beliefs.

Yankel Rosenbaum was killed because he happened to be a Jew.

Letter to Reno

This past Monday, I sent a letter to Attorney General Reno urging her to initiate a federal civil rights investigation into the Rosenbaum murder and the circumstances in Crown Heights that created the environment in which it occurred. It is my hope that the Attorney General will heed this request and move forward promptly with an investigation.

My Distinguished Colleague from New York, Senator D'Amato, has already written to the Attorney General on this matter. During the past two years, Senator D'Amato has worked tirelessly on behalf of the citizens of Crown Heights, and he has been a leader in ensuring that the Rosenbaum murder gets the national attention it deserves.

Amendment About Justice, Not Politics

Let me just add that my request for a federal investigation is in no way motivated by politics, as some cynics might suggest, nor is it an effort to influence the outcome of the upcoming mayoral election in New York. The request boils down to a simple principle-- justice. And justice can only be achieved if we get a full-accounting of the Yankel Rosenbaum tragedy. The American people and the Rosenbaum family have been patient. After more than two years of waiting, they deserve--finally--to get some answers.

As a follow-up to my letter to Attorney General Reno, I am now joining with Senator D'Amato in offering an amendment expressing the Sense of the Senate that the Justice Department should undertake a civil rights investigation into the Rosenbaum murder and the Crown Heights riots.

This "Sense of the Senate" amendment is straightforward, and should be supported by members from both sides of the aisle.

Let me repeat: This amendment is not about politics or race. It's not about Democrats and Republicans. It's not about black versus white, or Jew versus Gentile.

This amendment forces us to confront the truth about Crown Heights, whatever that truth may be, so that justice can be served...and ultimately rendered.

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