

Bob Dole

U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS



NEWS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

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CRIME BILL: TROOPS-TO-COPS

DOLE MEASURE ADOPTED TO HELP POLICE FORCES HIRE DISPLACED SOLDIERS AS COPS

WASHINGTON -- The U.S. Senate early this morning adopted an amendment authored by Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole (R-KS), and Senators Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Strom Thurmond (R-SC), to help state and local governments hire as police officers former soldiers displaced by defense cuts. Senator Dole's "troops-to-cops" measure, a version of which was originally included in the Republican anti-crime bill, directs the Attorney General to allocate a portion of the \$8.9 billion already authorized for community policing grants to the hiring of former members of the armed services. The amendment was included in a package of noncontroversial amendments approved to the crime bill. Senator Dole's statement on the amendment follows:

Senate Republicans and President Clinton both understand that putting more cops on the street means more security for the American people.

Unfortunately, new police hires have not kept pace with a violent crime rate that has increased by 500% since 1960. Throughout the 1950s, for example, there were more than 3 police officers for every violent felony that was reported. Today, for every police officer, there are more than 3 violent crimes reported. If we are to win back our security, we must reverse this dangerous trend.

That's why Senate Republicans introduced The Neighborhood Security Act. This comprehensive anticrime legislation authorized, and paid for, \$2 billion in funding to put more men and women on state and local police forces.

Soldiers Have Key Law Enforcement Skills

One of the key proposals contained in The Neighborhood Security Act was a "troops-to-cops" program. The amendment I am offering today with my distinguished colleagues, Senator Hatch and Senator Thurmond, reflects this proposal.

The bottom line is that our fighting men and women have discipline and weapons training--two key skills necessary for effective law enforcement. The talents of these young men and women should not be wasted, but rather should be put to work fighting crime on our state and local police forces.

As a result, this amendment directs the Attorney General to allocate a portion of the \$8.9 billion that has already been authorized for community-policing grants to help state and local governments hire former members of the armed forces who have been involuntarily discharged from the military as a result of the recent cuts in defense spending.

Priority to Communities Hit By Base Closings

In making grants under this troops-to-cops program, the attorney general may give priority to communities that are adversely affected by a recent military base closing.

One of the conditions for receiving grants under the program is an assurance that the new police hires will not displace those officers who are already on the job. In other words, the purpose of the grant is to augment existing police forces, not supplant police officers who are now at work fighting crime.

This is a common sense amendment that will achieve two goals at the same time: it will add another powerful weapon to our arsenal in the war against crime, while giving our veterans another opportunity to serve their country. I am pleased that the full Senate has endorsed the amendment.

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