

Bob Dole



NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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BASEBALL STRIKE

PLAY BALL! DOLE OFFERS OFFICES

AS FORUM FOR NEGOTIATIONS

Today is day 168 of the baseball strike...a strike that prematurely ended one of the most exciting seasons in recent memory and prevented World Series play, for the first time in 90 years.

Of course, the real victims of the strike are not the owners or the players, but the fans...the millions of Americans who have loyally supported their home teams, rooted on their favorite players, and filled up the bleachers in ballparks across America.

Like most Americans, I have little interest in learning about salary caps or baseball media markets. Nor have I kept abreast of the offers and counter-offers that have been floated across the bargaining table, only to end up in the rejection file.

Like most Americans, my interests lie elsewhere...not with the "economics" of baseball, but with the "game" of baseball...a game that I grew up with as a child and as a young man...and a game I continue to cherish today.

Of course, the baseball strike is not an issue of national security; without baseball, our shores will remain safe from foreign invasion. No American lives are at risk.

But what is at risk is the integrity of one of our great national institutions. Spring training in March. Opening day in April. July's All-Star Game. The August division races. The September playoffs. And the World Series in October. When baseball is disrupted, so too is the rhythm of American life.

Dole Offers Historic Capitol Bargaining Setting

I have had the opportunity to discuss the strike with Bill Usery, a former Secretary of Labor and the mediator appointed by President Clinton. Mr. Usery has indicated to me that this dispute ought to be resolved where it started--at the bargaining table. I agree. And that's why today I am publicly offering the use of my own office and its conference room as the forum for the next round of negotiations.

Over the years, many, many legislative compromises have been crafted in room S-230 of the Capitol, one of the most historic settings in all of Washington. Some of the toughest, most stubborn, legislative knots have been untangled in these offices. And perhaps, just perhaps, some of the "compromise magic" can wear off on the baseball negotiators. We'll lock the doors. We'll supply plenty of pencils and writing pads. We've got good computer software. And you can count on an unlimited supply of black coffee, too.

Need Good Old-Fashioned Bargaining, Not Legislation

I have no doubt that the baseball strike could be resolved in a matter of days--perhaps hours--if only there was the will to do so. We don't need legislation. We don't need Congress. But what we do need is some good old-fashioned, brass-knuckled bargaining...bargaining that's real, that's tough, that gets the job done.

Fans Most Important

With that said, let me just add this cautionary note: if the players and owners are unable to find common ground--and find it soon so that the 1995 baseball season can begin on time in April--then we will have to find some way to empower those who are the most important element in the baseball equation: the fans themselves...because no one--player, owner, manager, stockholder--has the right to tarnish what truly belongs to the American people...the game of baseball, America's pastime.

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** Remarks delivered on Senate floor, approximately 11:50 am.