

Bob Dole



NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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WELFARE REFORM

WELFARE REFORM REACHES SENATE FLOOR: **DOLE OUTLINES PRINCIPLES OF "WORK OPPORTUNITY ACT"**

There's an old saying that "everybody talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it."

For the past several years, that saying could also apply to welfare reform. Everyone talked about it, but nobody did anything about it.

That will all change Monday, when the Senate begins debating welfare reform.

There is a true national consensus to transform welfare from a program that doesn't work into one that does. It is my intention that once the Senate begins to talk about welfare reform, we will continue until we actually have done something about it.

And when all the talking is done, I believe we will pass legislation that will transform welfare from a failed system into one that succeeds in providing work, hope, and opportunity to Americans in need.

At the center of our debate will be the legislation introduced this week by 33 Senate Republicans, including the entire Senate Republican leadership. I am also very proud that our legislation has the support of a majority of America's governors.

Return Authority to States

Our bill is based on three conservative principles.

First and foremost: welfare reform should be designed and run by those closest to the problem--the states. We believe this is the key to true conservative reform. This Congress has dedicated itself to restoring the 10th Amendment to the Constitution, and to getting the federal government out of the mandate business. States should not have to play a game of "Mother May I" with the federal government when it comes to welfare.

Real Work Requirement

Second: welfare programs should include a real work requirement, which--in no uncertain terms--requires able-bodied welfare recipients to find a job--rather than to stay at home, or to stay in a training program forever. And make no mistake about it, our legislation contains real work requirements.

Restrain Welfare Spending

And third: no program with an unlimited budget will ever be made to work effectively and efficiently. Therefore, we must put a cap on welfare spending.

We will be discussing those principles in greater detail during the debate.

I believe the entire Senate--Republicans and Democrats--begins this debate united in many ways. We begin united in the knowledge that our current welfare system is broke. And we begin united in a commitment to fix it.

That's not to say we won't have our disagreements. There are some tough decisions to be made. And I expect there will be a number of close votes during this debate. But by remembering what unites us, I am confident that we will pass a bill with wide, bipartisan support.

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* Remarks delivered on Senate floor, approximately 5:15 p.m.