

STATEMENT OF SENATOR BOB DOLE

H.R. 12973

MR. DOLE. MR. PRESIDENT, H.R. 12973 CONTAINS PROVISIONS WHICH THE FINANCE COMMITTEE HAS GIVEN CONSIDERATION TO FOR WELL OVER A YEAR. THE PROVISIONS OF THIS BILL REFLECT A CONCERN FOR IMPROVED SOCIAL SERVICES, AS WELL AS A DESIRE TO SEE ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROGRAMS TIGHTENED, IN ORDER TO ASSURE THAT ONLY THE INTENDED RECIPIENTS RECEIVE BENEFITS.

THE PROVISIONS IN THIS BILL COVER A BROAD CATEGORY OF TOPICS, RANGING FROM CHILD CARE, TO EMERGENCY SHELTER FOR ADULTS, TO DETOXIFICATION PROGRAMS, TO COMPUTERIZED INFORMATION SYSTEMS. ALTHOUGH THE SUBJECT MATTER IS BROAD, I BELIEVE THE PROVISIONS ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE MOOD OF CONGRESS AND THE MOOD OF THE COUNTRY REGARDING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE.

CLEARLY, THE UNITED STATES IS A COUNTRY WHICH CAN AFFORD TO TAKE CARE OF ITS NEEDY CITIZENS. GENERALLY, THE AMERICAN PUBLIC IS HAPPY TO OFFER SERVICES TO NEGLECTED, DEPENDENT CHILDREN; TO DRUG ADDICTS AND ALCOHOLICS SEEKING REHABILITATION; AND TO BATTERED ADULTS. IT WOULD BE A GOVERNMENT INSENSITIVE TO THE NEEDS OF HER PEOPLE WHICH DID NOT SEEK TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF THESE PERSONS. REPEATEDLY, THE AMERICAN PUBLIC HAS SHOWN ITS WILLINGNESS TO HELP THE UNFORTUNATE AND TO OFFER EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AS AN ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLE.

HOWEVER, HAND IN HAND WITH THIS CONCERN GOES THE BELIEF THAT ONLY THOSE CITIZENS WHO LEGITIMATELY QUALIFY FOR BENEFITS SHOULD RECEIVE THEM. HENCE, VARIOUS PROVISIONS OF THIS BILL REFLECT THE COMMITTEE'S CONCERN THAT MORE COULD BE DONE TO INSURE THAT ASSISTANCE GOES ONLY TO THOSE SHOWING LEGITIMATE NEED. EMPHASIS IS PLACED ON COMPUTERIZED INFORMATION SYSTEMS TO KEEP MORE ACCURATE ACCOUNT OF INFORMATION. STATES ARE ENCOURAGED TO USE RECORDS OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION AND THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE IN ENFORCING CHILD SUPPORT REGULATIONS. WHEN PARENTS HAVE BEEN ORDERED BY THE COURTS TO MAKE CHILD SUPPORT PAYMENTS, THE COMMITTEE FEELS THEY SHOULD DO SO. VARIOUS PROVISIONS CONTAINED IN H.R. 12973 SHOULD ALLOW STATES TO KEEP TRACK OF THESE SUPPORT PAYMENTS.

IN SUMMARY, WHILE NONE OF THESE PROVISIONS OF H.R. 12973 MAY BE MONUMENTAL BY THEMSELVES, I BELIEVE THAT TOGETHER THEY MAKE SIGNIFICANT, VALID CHANGES IN THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT. I HOPE THAT MY COLLEAGUES WILL APPROVE THESE CHANGES.