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WASHINGTON, D.C., May 1 -- U.S. Senator Bob Dole (R-Kans.) today said when a handicapped person who can work is not employed, "the taxpayer may pay as much as \$3500. a year to support him on the welfare rolls."

Speaking to over 3,000 persons attending the annual meeting of the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped here, Dole added, "The result to the handicapped person himself is more dependency and despair. The leisure most of us crave becomes a curse."

"Often when a handicapped person is able to work full- or part-time, there are few jobs or inadequate training programs in his locale," Dole said. "Many employers are hesitant to hire a handicapped person, ignoring statistics that show he is often a better and more dependable worker."

"The tragedy is that abilities of a person are overlooked because of disabilities which may bear little or no true relation to the job at hand," he added.

"We must do better because we can do better," the Senator said. "It is as hard-nosed economically as it is humanitarian to help our physically, mentally and emotionally handicapped citizens become productive workers, contributing to the nation's economy instead of being eternally dependent upon it."

Calling the handicapped "one of our greatest untapped resources and unmet responsibilities", Dole renewed his appeal for a presidential commission or task force "to recommend ways private and public programs and funds can more effectively and efficiently serve the total needs of the handicapped person at the time and place he most needs help."

The Senator, who devoted his first major Senate speech to the handicapped recently, added, "The goal of a task force or commission, to achieve maximum independence, security and dignity for the individual with handicaps, must encompass the total needs of the handicapped because their problems are more complex than just the specific handicap itself."

Citing education, employment, recreation, architectural barriers, lack of widespread community health care facilities and personnel as several areas requiring review and action, Dole said, "At stake are the lives of our nation's 42 million handicapped persons who, with help and hope, can transform their handicaps from stumbling blocks to building blocks."