



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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WASHINGTON, D.C., OCT. 13, 1972 -- The Senate today passed and sent to the President the Vocational Rehabilitation Act (H.R. 8395). The act includes the National Information and Resource Center for the Handicapped provision introduced by Senator Dole.

In a statement on the Senate floor Dole said:

One provision is of particular interest to me, because it embodies a proposal I originated in the 91st Congress and included in S. 41, a bill I introduced in January 1971. It deals with the creation of the National Information and Resource Center for the Handicapped.

It is an unfortunate reality in our country today that information on the facts, facilities and services available to the handicapped is incomplete and fragmentary and often available only through narrow, specialized channels. In many cases existing stores of knowledge and information about programs, research and services which could be of immense benefit to the handicapped simply are not readily available to them, because there is no organized, systematic way of reaching it.

My personal experience and a continuing concern for the problems of the handicapped have led me to see that a basic need exists for a central source, a clearinghouse, to channel the questions and inquiries of the handicapped to the answers they seek. With these thoughts in mind I proposed the creation of the National Information and Resource Center for the Handicapped. Now included by the Vocational Rehabilitation Act within the Office of the Handicapped in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, the Center will provide a point of contact for the handicapped, their families, interested citizens as well as private and professional organizations, city and state officials who need guidance or direction to information which will enable them to deal more effectively with problems faced by the handicapped.

The Center is not intended to duplicate any programs in government or the private sector; rather, the idea is to coordinate knowledge relating to all programs of benefit to the handicapped a small staff will be available to direct inquiries to specialized contacts which have particular knowledge or have had success in working on aspects on any problem:

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I believe this is an innovative, common-sense approach to a basic problem. I am pleased that it has been included in this bill and hope that it can be put into operation at the earliest possible date.

The millions of Americans who belong to the handicapped minority will be the immediate and long-term beneficiaries of the Center's services, but America will be the ultimate beneficiary through increased contribution, well-being, and personal fulfillment of the handicapped.