



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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WASHINGTON, D.C., MAR. 12, 1973 -- Senator Bob Dole has introduced legislation to eliminate barriers confronting handicapped and elderly persons.

Dole's bill would provide an income tax incentive for buildings with ramps in addition to stairs, larger elevators to accomodate wheelchairs, and restroom facilities modified for the handicapped.

The Senator has long been a proponent of legislation to aid the handicapped. In his statement on the Senate floor, he noted that the majority of public buildings and transportation systems in this country are inaccessible to approximately 44-million people because of certain barriers. Many handicapped or elderly persons are faced with obstacles we consider normal, but to them can be almost insurmountable, such as curbs, steps, and entranceways.

These barriers force certain of the handicapped either to become solely dependent upon others for their mobility or to remain immobile, thus preventing some of them from obtaining an education or making an adequate living.

"It is the intent of this legislation to provide a tax incentive for design modifications. Perhaps the public will become more aware of the obstacles the disabled and elderly are forced to cope with, and hopefully, this will help motivate them to try to eliminate some of these barriers," the Senator said.

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The Senator emphasized the fact that the 44-million disabled persons represent a consumer force that business should keep in mind when trying to decide whether or not to engage in building modifications. If these people were able to move about with greater ease they would undoubtedly become a much more prominent consumer group.

In essence, the proposed legislation will work for the good of all concerned by providing a tax break for those who modify their buildings, and a chance for the handicapped to lead more normal, productive lives.

"If our environment remains adequate only for healthy and "normal" people, the resources of the handicapped may be lost. This could cost our country a great deal in dollar terms, but more important of all in human terms."

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