

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

SH 141 Hart Building, Washington, D.C. 20510

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, August 15, 1986

CONTACT: BRENT BAHLER
(202) 224-6521

DOLE'S EQUAL ACCESS TO AIRLINES BILL PASSES SENATE

WASHINGTON -- Legislation that provides for equal access to the nation's airlines by handicapped individuals has unanimously passed the Senate, according to Senator Bob Dole (R-KS).

"The action by the Senate today is clearly in the best interests of the 36 million disabled citizens. After all, they need and must have access to public transportation," said Dole.

The legislation, introduced by Sen. Dole, overturns a recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling (*Paralyzed Veterans of America V. Department of Transportation*) which held that Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 "is not applicable" to U.S. commercial air carriers because the carriers do not receive direct federal assistance.

"It's difficult for me to believe that with the billions of dollars Congress has pumped into our air transportation system, enough evidence of federal assistance wasn't found to protect the rights of the handicapped," said Dole.

"I'm pleased that we were able to work out a compromise that satisfies the airlines and a broad range of organizations to serve the needs of the disabled," Dole added.

Section 504 forbids discrimination against qualified handicapped persons in federally assisted programs or activities. The U.S. Department of Justice argued before the Court that Section 504 did not cover air carriers because they use "indirect" federal assistance such as federally assisted airports or benefit from the federal air traffic control system.

The bill would amend section 404 of the Federal Aviation Act to prohibit discrimination against handicapped individuals in the provision of air transportation.

Action on this legislation will be taken up by the House of Representatives upon their return from the August recess.