

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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DOLE AND KASTEN CALL ON WHITE HOUSE TO PROVIDE SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS FOR DEAF TOURISTS

WASHINGTON - SENATORS BOB DOLE (R-KANSAS) AND BOB KASTEN (R-WISCONSIN) TODAY CALLED ON THE WHITE HOUSE TO PROVIDE SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS FOR HEARING IMPAIRED PEOPLE WHO TAKE PUBLIC TOURS OF THE WHITE HOUSE. IN A LETTER TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE WHITE HOUSE VISITORS' OFFICE, THE SENATORS SAID THEY WERE SURPRISED TO LEARN FROM AN INDIVIDUAL WHO REQUESTED A TOUR FOR A GROUP OF DEAF VISITORS THAT INTERPRETERS WERE NOT AVAILABLE. THE LETTER WAS DELIVERED AFTER THE TWO SENATORS PARTICIPATED IN THE CEREMONY AT WHICH PRESIDENT BUSH SIGNED THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT INTO LAW.

"FOR MANY YEARS, MILLIONS OF AMERICANS HAVE ENJOYED ACCESS TO THE WHITE HOUSE BY WAY OF A PLANNED TOUR SPONSORED BY THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE," THE SENATORS WROTE. "WE ARE PLEASED THAT CURRENT WHITE HOUSE POLICY INCLUDES ACCOMMODATIONS FOR VISITORS WITH DISABILITIES. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, THE ACCOMMODATIONS DO NOT INCLUDE INTERPRETER SERVICES FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING PERSONS," DOLE AND KASTEN ADDED.

THE SENATORS ARGUED THAT PROVIDING SUCH SERVICE MAY BE ALREADY REQUIRED UNDER CURRENT LAW, AND THAT MAKING INTERPRETERS AVAILABLE FOR WHITE HOUSE TOURS IS CONSISTENT WITH THE RIGHTS OF PUBLIC ACCESS GUARANTEED BY THE LANDMARK DISABLED RIGHTS LEGISLATION SIGNED TODAY BY THE PRESIDENT.

"IT IS OUR HOPE THAT THE GOALS AND PRINCIPLES UPON WHICH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT IS FOUNDED ARE RECOGNIZED AND PRACTICED BY ALL BRANCHES OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT," THE SENATORS SAID. "WE ARE CERTAIN THAT THE WHITE HOUSE IS COMMITTED TO ENSURING FULL ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL AMERICANS -- INCLUDING OUR SILENT PARTNERS."

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