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SENATOR BOB DOLE  
AMERICAN PERSONNEL AND GUIDANCE ASSOCIATION  
ANNUAL CONVENTION  
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Rehoboth  
Mary Whit

WHEN I RECEIVED THE INVITATION TO SPEAK AT THIS CONVENTION, I WAS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN THE THEME: "APGA. --- FULFILLING HUMAN SERVICE COMMITMENT." MY ATTENTION WAS FURTHER CAUGHT BY THE FACT THAT YOU LISTED HANDICAPPED AS ONE OF THE FOUR NEGLECTED GROUPS. THE HANDICAPPED ARE SOMETIMES REFERRED TO AS OUR NEXT MINORITY. INDEED, SOCIETY HAS ONLY RECENTLY REALIZED THAT THE HANDICAPPED NEED NOT ALWAYS BE SENT TO INSTITUTIONS AND THAT THERE CAN BE OTHER OPTIONS OPEN TO THEM.

THROUGHOUT HISTORY, THE PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY HANDICAPPED HAVE BEEN THE VICTIMS OF MAN'S INABILITY TO HANDLE THE PROBLEMS THEY REPRESENTED.

IN ANCIENT TIMES THEY WERE SEEN AS BAD OMENS, CURSED BY GOD AND THEREFORE UNDESERVING OF BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS. DURING THE RENAISSANCE, KINGS BEGAN TO PROVIDE LIMITED PROTECTION FOR THE HANDICAPPED IN MATTERS DEALING WITH PROPERTY RIGHTS AND CRIMINAL LAW. IT IS ONLY DURING THE LAST 300 YEARS THAT ATTEMPTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO REHABILITATE THE HANDICAPPED. HOWEVER, MOST OF THESE ATTEMPTS WERE UNSUCCESSFUL. TODAY, WE STILL HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO BEFORE HANDICAPPED INDIVIDUALS ARE REHABILITATED TO THE DEGREE WHERE THEY ARE INTEGRATED INTO SOCIETY.

#### LANDMARK LEGISLATION

IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS, CONGRESS HAS PASSED LEGISLATION HAVING TREMENDOUS IMPACT ON THE HANDICAPPED. OF SPECIAL IMPORTANCE IS THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973. WHEN FULLY IMPLEMENTED, THIS PIECE OF LEGISLATION COULD EFFECTIVELY SERVE AS A BILL OF RIGHTS FOR DISABLED AMERICANS.

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BECAUSE IT OUTLAW DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE HANDICAPPED BY EMPLOYERS UNDER CONTRACT WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OR RECEIVING FEDERAL ASSISTANCE, SCHOOLS, OFFICES, AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES MUST PROVIDE SERVICES TO THE DISABLED.

AS YOU WELL KNOW, THE EDUCATION FOR ALL HANDICAPPED CHILDREN ACT, P.L. 94-142, IS EQUALLY SIGNIFICANT. IT IS BASED ON THE THEORY THAT HANDICAPPED CHILDREN DESERVE A FREE PUBLIC EDUCATION. IN 1975, CONGRESS APPROVED THIS LANDMARK BILL BY OVERWHELMING MARGINS IN BOTH THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. THE SENATE VOTE WAS 87-7; THE HOUSE VOTE 404-7. DESIGNED TO OFFER HANDICAPPED STUDENTS EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES EQUAL TO THEIR NON-DISABLED PEERS, THE BILL HAS RECEIVED WIDE SUPPORT FROM EDUCATORS AND CONSUMER REPRESENTATIVES. IT HAS NOT, HOWEVER, BEEN UNANAMOUSLY ENDORSED.

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THIS SHOULD NOT COME AS A SURPRISE THOUGH, AT THE TIME THAT THIS BILL WAS BEING CONSIDERED, ITS VERY CONCEPT REPRESENTED SUCH A RADICAL BREAK WITH TRADITIONAL THINKING THAT IT AUTOMATICALLY BECAME CONTROVERSIAL. UNDER OLD LAWS, HOWEVER, HANDICAPPED CHILDREN WERE OFTEN SEGREGATED FROM THEIR CONTEMPORARY PEERS AND WERE NOT RECEIVING EITHER THE SOCIAL OR THE SCHOLASTIC SERVICES THAT THEY NEEDED. THE PRESENT LAW IS AT TIMES CRITICIZED FOR PROMISING TOO MUCH TO THE HANDICAPPED STUDENT, AT THE POSSIBLE DETRIMENT OF OTHER STUDENTS. P.L. 94-142 IS AN ATTEMPT TO OFFER EQUAL PROTECTION AND OPPORTUNITIES TO ALL STUDENTS, AND TO CORRECT PAST AND PRESENT INJUSTICES. HAD THERE NOT BEEN AN EXISTING NEED, THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO BILL.

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### NUMBER OF HANDICAPPED

NO ONE KNOWS EXACTLY WHAT PORTION OF THE POPULATION IS DISABLED, NOR HOW MANY PERSONS WILL BE COVERED BY THE HANDICAPPED EDUCATION ACT. ACCORDING TO ESTIMATE, THE NUMBER OF DISABLED AMERICANS HAS BEEN INCREASING. THE 1970 CENSUS SHOWED THAT 1 OF EVERY 11 AMERICAN ADULTS IS DISABLED. THIS REPRESENTS 9% OF THE ADULT POPULATION. MORE RECENT SURVEYS SET THE NUMBER AT 10% TO 11% OF THE POPULATION.

AMONG SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN, AN ESTIMATED 5.7 MILLION HAVE HANDICAPS. THIS REPRESENTS 12% OF THE CHILDREN BETWEEN 6 AND 17. 1 OF EVERY 8 CHILDREN IS VISUALLY OR HEARING IMPAIRED, CRIPPLED, MENTALLY RETARDED, LEARNING DISABLED, OR OTHERWISE HANDICAPPED.

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TODAY'S MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY IS EXTENDING THE LIVES OF A GREATER NUMBER OF DISABLED PERSONS, BUT IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT MODERN MEDICINE DOES ANYONE A SERVICE IF, AT THE SAME TIME, PARTICIPATION IN SOCIETY IS DENIED TO THESE PERSONS.

WE HAVE NEGLECTED DISABLED AMERICANS IN THE SAME WAY THAT WE HAVE DENIED EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES TO OTHER MINORITY GROUPS. BY BEING BENEVOLENTLY AWARE OF THE HELPLESS HANDICAPPED AND TRYING TO HELP AS WE SEE IT FIT, WE ARE GUILTY OF LIMITING THEIR ACHIEVEMENT BECAUSE OF OUR LIMITED EXPECTATIONS. WE MAY BE WELL-INTENTIONED BUT FREQUENTLY DO-GOOD WAYS HAVE DONE NOTHING MORE THAN SLOW DOWN THE DISABLED IN THEIR EFFORTS TO GAIN ENTRY INTO THE REAL WORLD OF REPORT CARDS AND RESUMES, OF TAXES AND TIME-CARDS.

## MAINSTREAMING

SINCE THE RECENT LEGISLATION WAS PASSED, THE DEBATE HAS BEEN MOUNTING AS TO WHETHER OR NOT PLACING OR "MAINSTREAMING" HANDICAPPED CHILDREN INTO THE REGULAR CLASSROOM IS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF ALL STUDENTS. MAINSTREAMING HAS BECOME A DIRTY WORD IN SOME CIRCLES, AS PERSONS FEAR THE HANDICAPPED CHILD WILL BE SIMPLY DUMPED INTO REGULAR CLASSES. SOME PROFESSIONALS OPENLY WORRY THAT MAINSTREAMING HANDICAPPED CHILDREN WILL IN EFFECT BE A STEP BACKWARDS -- BACK TO THE TIME BEFORE SPECIALIZED INSTRUCTION WHEN THE HANDICAPPED WERE PUPILS BUT NOT PARTICIPANTS IN THE REGULAR CLASSROOM.

PARENTS OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN FEAR THEIR CHILD WILL NOT RECEIVE THE SPECIALIZED INSTRUCTION HE REQUIRES; PARENTS OF THE NON-HANDICAPPED CHILD WORRY THEIR CHILD WILL NOT BE SUFFICIENTLY STIMULATED; AND EDUCATORS WORRY ABOUT ARCHITECTURAL MODIFICATIONS, COST, AND TEACHER ABILITY.

CONCERN WITH THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS IS EVIDENT AND QUESTIONS DESERVING ANSWERS ARE BEING RAISED.

APGA LEADERSHIP

I THINK THIS IS WHERE THE APGA CAN TAKE A LEAD ROLE IN HELPING TO MAINSTREAM OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM. AS GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING PROFESSIONALS, YOU CAN BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE NEW LAW AND ITS VARIOUS ASPECTS. FOR INSTANCE, MAINSTREAMING IS ACHIEVED BY GIVING EACH CHILD THE MOST APPROPRIATE EDUCATION IN THE LEAST RESTRICTIVE SURROUNDING.

IT DOES NOT MEAN EVERY CHILD BELONGS IN THE REGULAR CLASSROOM. NOR DOES IT MEAN THAT CHILDREN IN NEED OF A MORE SPECIALIZED EDUCATION THAN THAT PROVIDED IN THE GENERAL EDUCATION SETTING CAN BE IGNORED. MAINSTREAMING IS THE COMBINING OF GENERAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL SKILLS SO THAT ALL CHILDREN CAN HAVE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES. IN MY OPINION, THIS IS THE KEY ELEMENT -- EQUAL OPPORTUNITY.



AS COUNSELORS BECOME MORE COMFORTABLE WITH THE HANDICAPPED EDUCATION ACT, THEY WILL BE ABLE TO OFFER HELP TO PARENTS UNCERTAIN ABOUT THE LAW. COUNSELORS CAN HELP TO BUILD A HOME/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP THROUGH WHICH PARENTS AND TEACHERS CAN WORK TOGETHER IN THE CHILD'S BEST INTEREST.

EARLIER THIS WEEK, MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN SPOKE TO YOU ON THE NEED TO DEVELOP A POLITICAL NETWORK IN SUPPORT OF CHILDREN'S ISSUES. HER YEARS OF PARTICIPATION IN CIVIL RIGHTS ISSUES HAVE MADE HER PARTICULARLY AWARE OF THE NECESSITY OF ORGANIZATION. I ENCOURAGE YOU TO ORGANIZE WITHIN THE APGA ON BEHALF OF HANDICAPPED STUDENTS. AS PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS AND COUNSELORS, YOU HAVE INDICATED YOUR INTEREST AND DEDICATION TO OUR COUNTRY'S YOUNG PEOPLE. BY DOING SO, YOU COMMIT YOURSELF TO SERVING ALL STUDENTS -- HANDICAPPED AS WELL AS NON-HANDICAPPED. IN KEEPING WITH THIS PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY, YOU HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO SEE THAT YOUR HANDICAPPED STUDENTS RECEIVE AN EDUCATION MOST SUITED TO THEIR INDIVIDUAL SKILLS AND NEEDS.

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### CAREER COUNSELING

CAREER COUNSELING IS ANOTHER AREA DESERVING OF YOUR ATTENTION, FOR OFTENTIMES HANDICAPPED STUDENTS ARE UNAWARE OF THE OPTIONS WHICH ARE OFFERED THEM AS A RESULT OF THE LEGISLATION PASSED IN THIS DECADE. CURRENTLY, HANDICAPPED AMERICANS, ON THE AVERAGE, RECEIVE LESS SCHOOLING THAN DO THE NON-HANDICAPPED. BETTER EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES WILL ENABLE MORE HANDICAPPED INDIVIDUALS TO BE TRAINED FOR TECHNICAL AND PROFESSIONAL JOBS FOR WHICH THEY WOULD NOT HAVE QUALIFIED PREVIOUSLY.

THE CAREER EDUCATION INCENTIVE ACT WAS RECENTLY SIGNED INTO LAW, DUE IN PART TO YOUR STRONG LOBBYING EFFORTS. THE SENATE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE HAS REQUESTED FUNDING FOR THIS LAW IN FISCAL YEAR 1979. IF MONEY IS APPROPRIATED, HANDICAPPED STUDENTS ARE EQUALLY ENTITLED TO CAREER COUNSELING.

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YOU PROBABLY KNOW AS WELL AS I DO WHAT SOME OF THE PREJUDICES ARE AGAINST HIRING THE HANDICAPPED. LAST YEAR, AN ARTICLE APPEARED IN THE HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW ON THESE MISCONCEPTIONS. THE ARTICLE CONCLUDED THAT HIRING THE HANDICAPPED MAKES GOOD SENSE WHEN THE ABLE-DISABLED ARE GIVEN JOBS SUITABLE TO THEIR SKILLS. THEY PROVE THEMSELVES TO BE EMPLOYEES WITH SUPERIOR WORK HABITS, LOW ABSENTEEISM, JOB LOYALTY, AND GOOD SAFETY HABITS. ALL OF THESE TRAITS MAKE FOR A PRODUCTIVE WORK FORCE.

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### CONCLUSION

IT IS THEIR COMMON TRAITS RATHER THAN THEIR DIFFERENCES THAT LINK CHILDREN TOGETHER, FOR ALL CHILDREN HAVE SIMILAR BASIC NEEDS. ALL CHILDREN NEED TO FEEL WANTED; ALL CHILDREN NEED TO HAVE RESPONSIBLE ADULTS TO TRUST, WHO WILL HELP THE CHILD LEARN ABOUT HIMSELF AND HIS WORLD; AND FINALLY, ALL CHILDREN NEED TO DEVELOP A POSITIVE SENSE OF SELF-WORTH. IF THESE BASIC, COMMON NEEDS ARE ACCENTUATED, I BELIEVE OTHER NEEDS WILL BE EASIER TO HANDLE.

YOU HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PLAY AN INFLUENTIAL ROLE IN THE MOVEMENT OF HANDICAPPED PERSONS INTO THE MAINSTREAM OF AMERICAN SOCIETY. IF THIS SOUNDS DRAMATIC TO YOU, ASK ANY ONE OF AMERICA'S MILLIONS OF HANDICAPPED CITIZENS HOW IT SOUNDS TO THEM. THE OPPORTUNITY FOR POSITIVE CHANGE IS HERE, AND IT MUST NOT BE LOST. I HOPE YOU WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE AND TO WORK WITH PARENTS, FACULTY, AND PUPILS TO SERVE THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF AMERICA'S STUDENTS.