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November 16, 1994

Honorable Newt Gingrich
Speaker-Designate
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

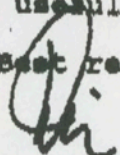
Dear Newt:

Heartiest congratulations are due to you and your colleagues for taking control of the House and Senate for the Republican Party. You have a unique opportunity to put into place an agenda that will confront the priority concerns of every American. All Republicans wish you well in this endeavor.

May I register a dissent, however, from a remark attributed to you in Tuesday's edition of The Washington Post. It was there noted that you intended "to cast a cold eye to the Americans with Disabilities Act and other 'compassionate excesses of the Bush years.'" Perhaps you were misquoted, but it is clear to me, as a parent of a son with disability and as one who worked with leaders in both houses on a bi-partisan basis to secure passage of the ADA, that there is nothing "excessive" about securing the legal rights of 49 million Americans with physical, mental and sensory disabilities.

In my opinion, it would be a tragic mistake for our nation and our party to back away from the commitments of the ADA, generally regarded as the most significant civil rights legislation since the 1960s. I would be pleased to discuss this matter with you and your colleagues further, if that would be useful.

Best regards,


Dick Thornburgh

cc: Honorable Robert Dole

DC-168481.1