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OVERLAND PARK, Kans., Oct. 17 -- Praising Kansas for its leadership in aiding the handicapped, U.S. Senator Bob Dole (R-Kans.) said here today that Kansans are in the forefront of helping the handicapped to become more self-sufficient and contributing members of society."

Dole spoke before the Kansas Association for Mental Health, Inc. here.

"I am proud," he said, "of the fact our state is recognized nationally for its positive, progressive attitudes and actions in meeting the problems of the handicapped in rehabilitation, special education, and health care, to name a few."

Dole noted this week two Kansans were named to special White House task forces. Mrs. Ross Beach, Hays, was named to the President's Committee on Mental Retardation and Dr. Karl Menninger, chairman of the board of the Menninger Foundation, Topeka, was appointed member of a new President's Task Force on Prisoner Rehabilitation.

Dole, who proposed formation of a task force on the overall problems of the handicapped, said the recent Presidential appointment of a Task Force on the Physically Handicapped is a "step in the right direction and a recognition that the problems of the handicapped merit top-level attention"

"I am hopeful the President will soon announce organization of a similar task force on the mentally handicapped," he said. "We in American have a long way to go to assure each individual with handicaps can become as active and useful as his capacities will allow."