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FOR RELEASE UPON DELIVERY

WASHINGTON, D.C. April 14 -- U.S. Senator Bob Dole (R-Kans.) today proposed formation of a National Information and Resource Center for the Handicapped.

One year ago today -- in his maiden speech on the Senate floor -- the Kansas Senator proposed that a Presidential Task Force on the Handicapped be named to study the needs of the handicapped. Later that year President Nixon named two task forces, one for the physically handicapped and one for the mentally handicapped.

"These two task forces have just completed their meetings," Dole said on the Senate floor today, "and their upcoming reports should be invaluable in the formulation and administration of programs to aid the handicapped.

"It is my hope that these reports can be combined with the work of the President's Committee on Mental Retardation so that a comprehensive program may be developed. Handicapped individuals frequently suffer combination or multiple handicaps and we cannot achieve optimum results in one area if we do not fully understand the whole field."

Dole said some of the problems the handicapped face are in the areas of employment, availability and access of health care facilities, rehabilitation services and education.

"There is no central place, in or out of government, where the handicapped and people wanting to work with them can get the information they need," Dole continued.

"It is time that Congress provided for the development of an information center where all interested individuals, groups, organizations and city and state officials could obtain this information.

"Here it would be possible for interested groups to pool their knowledge with others, to exchange their experiences, to develop new ways to utilize our expanding technology in providing better living conditions, expanded personal opportunities and more complete realization for the handicapped."