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For Immediate Release

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NATIONAL EMPLOY THE HANDICAPPED WEEK
(October 3 to 9, 1971)

WASHINGTON, D.C., Oct. 4, 1971 --- While saluting the advancements made in rehabilitation and employment of handicapped persons, U.S. Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kans.) said today that Americans "have a distance to go to insure equal opportunities for the handicapped."

"Nearly two-thirds of the severely handicapped live in families with incomes of less than \$5,000 a year, but at the same time, fewer than 30 per cent of the 13 million working-age handicapped receive public assistance," Dole pointed out.

"Far too many of the employed handicapped," Dole said, "remain on the bottom rung of the ladder, just a step above the unemployed handicapped."

"Poor" and "Handicapped" Often Same

Statistics show that the poor person and the handicapped person are frequently the same, Dole said. The Kansas Senator cited Public Health figures revealing that there exists a general ratio of 50 per cent disability for families with incomes of under \$3,000, and a contrasting 10-11 per cent occurrence in those families making \$7,000 or more. "These figures are even more alarming when one realizes that the number of handicapped continues to spiral relentlessly through birth defects, illness, injury and war," Dole said.

Disabled Veterans

"Today there are 245,000 Vietnam veterans receiving disability compensation from the Veterans Administration. Several thousand more will be added to this number as they are discharged from the military," Dole said. He continued:

Advances in medical science and swift evacuation have undoubtedly helped to save our veterans, but, as a consequence, we have a far higher percentage of 100 per cent disabled men returning from Vietnam. Many of these young men with a lifetime ahead of them return with little more than their wounds. Far too many have not completed their education and have neither training nor experience in skilled jobs.

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These young veterans have earned our assistance. Their sacrifices were unquestioned. Our assistance must be unstinting. We must assist the veterans administration in carrying out a complete rehabilitation of these fine men. We must also insure that they are properly placed in good jobs with a good future.

The Kansas Senator urged these priorities today while speaking on the Senate floor in observance of "National Employ the Handicapped Week," which was proclaimed by the President.

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