



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.—Kans.)

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DOLE CITES NEED FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ON ISSUES AFFECTING HANDICAPPED INDIVIDUALS

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Senator Bob Dole today delivered a statement in the Senate on the continuing need for increased attention to diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation for handicapped individuals. Citing the World Health Organization, Dole said conservative studies estimate 400 million persons in the world are disabled, or 10% of the population. "The enormity of these figures makes this a problem of critical importance," he observed.

Dole called attention to the fact that the United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed 1981 as the "International Year for Disabled Persons" in an effort to draw attention to the fact that many handicapped persons are not accorded full citizenship rights because of their disability. "Handicapped individuals are entitled to basic rights, which include the right of respect for human dignity; the right to medical, educational, social and vocational rehabilitation; the right to employment opportunities; and the right to protection from discrimination," explained Dole. Dole continued by calling for the United States to support international efforts in the field of rehabilitation, and said that through international cooperation, all countries stand to benefit from the exchange of information.

Dole gave several examples of countries that had successfully worked together on rehabilitation efforts. He concluded by saying, "In the Congress, we take pride in the fact that legislation affecting the handicapped is one of the few non-political issues we deal with. Even in a global setting, disabilities should transcend national differences, for the handicapped have needs, struggles, and goals in common. I firmly believe that a vigorous effort to synchronize rehabilitation efforts should be made, and hope that the U.S. will take the lead in a renewed commitment to the area of international rehabilitation.

Annually, on April 14 -- the anniversary of his injury -- Senator Dole addresses some topic of concern regarding the handicapped. The Senate was not in session on April 14 of this year.