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News from Senator

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STATEMENT OF SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER BOB DOLE

NATIONAL BARRIER AWARENESS DAY

TODAY IS AN IMPORTANT DAY FOR MORE THAN 36 MILLION AMERICANS. IT IS A DAY TO RECOGNIZE THE MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN WHO REPRESENT A VITAL SEGMENT OF OUR SOCIETY. BUT UNFORTUNATELY, IT IS A GROUP THAT IS OFTENTIMES EXCLUDED FROM SOCIETY...THROUGH NO FAULT OF ITS OWN!

DISABLED AMERICA

I AM TALKING ABOUT 'DISABLED AMERICA', 36 MILLION STRONG. AND I MEAN STRONG: STRONG IN ITS DESIRE TO BE A PRODUCTIVE MEMBER OF SOCIETY, AND STRONG IN THE DETERMINATION TO TEAR DOWN THE BARRIERS THAT STAND IN ITS WAY. BUT WE CAN'T DO IT ALONE.

THAT'S WHY I ASK MY COLLEAGUES -- AND THOSE WHO ARE WATCHING OR LISTENING TO THESE PROCEEDINGS -- TO JOIN ME IN MARKING "NATIONAL BARRIER AWARENESS DAY". IT'S A ONE DAY EVENT THAT I HOPE WILL LEAD TO AN EVERYDAY UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHALLENGES THAT CONFRONT DISABLED AMERICANS. AND I DON'T MEAN THE CHALLENGE OF DISABILITIES: WE CAN DEAL WITH THAT.

I MEAN PHYSICAL CHALLENGES SUCH AS ARCHITECTURAL BARRIERS -- THE SIDEWALKS AND STEPS THAT PREVENT THE DISABLED FROM GETTING TO WORK; AND ATTITUDINAL BARRIERS -- SOCIETY'S PREJUDICES AND INSENSITIVITY THAT SEGREGATE THE DISABLED.

TEAR DOWN THE BARRIERS

TODAY, MANY AMERICANS -- INCLUDING SOME CARING CELEBRITIES -- WILL TAKE PART IN "NATIONAL BARRIER AWARENESS DAY". THEY WILL SPEND THE DAY IN A WHEELCHAIR, OR ON CRUTCHES, OR BLINDFOLDED, OR WHATEVER ELSE IT TAKES TO DISCOVER FIRSTHAND WHAT IT MEANS TO BE DISABLED.

THEY WILL THEN REPORT THEIR EXPERIENCES AT SPECIAL EVENTS IN ALL 50 STATES. ONE SUCH EVENT TAKES PLACE IN WASHINGTON TODAY AT THE L'ENFANT PLAZA LOWES HOTEL, IN THE MONET BALLROOM ON THE SECOND FLOOR, AT 3 P.M.

AS THE EVENT'S HONORARY CHAIRMAN, I INVITE MY COLLEAGUES TO JOIN ME THERE. AND I ASK AMERICA TO JOIN US IN OUR FIGHT TO TEAR DOWN THE BARRIERS. IF WE DO, MORE THAN 36 MILLION AMERICANS WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW THE WORLD THAT 'DISABLED' DOES NOT MEAN UN-ABLE.

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