

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

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DOLE CONGRATULATES NEWLY-ELECTED DISABLED SOVIET LEGISLATOR;
INVITES ILYA ZASLAVSKI TO THE U.S. FOR INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ON
DISABILITY ISSUES

WASHINGTON -- SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER BOB DOLE (R-KS), DISABLED FROM COMBAT WOUNDS SUSTAINED DURING WWII ACTION, TODAY RELEASED A LETTER HE HAS SENT TO A FELLOW DISABLED LAWMAKER - ILYA ZASLAVSKI, A NEWLY ELECTED MEMBER OF THE SOVIET UNION'S NATIONAL LEGISLATURE.

MR. ZASLAVSKI, ELECTED IN MIKHAIL GORBACHEV'S VOTING DISTRICT, LOST BOTH LEGS TO A CHILDHOOD ILLNESS.

"ILYA HAS BATTLED HUGE ODDS TO BECOME ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR AND RESPECTED LEGISLATORS IN MOSCOW", DOLE SAID. "AS I TOLD MR. GORBACHEV WHEN I MET THE GENERAL-SECRETARY IN THE KREMLIN DURING INF TREATY CEREMONIES LAST YEAR, THERE ARE 50 MILLION DISABLED PERSONS WORLD-WIDE - I CAN THINK OF NO BETTER AREA TO SEEK COMMON GROUND THAN THE ISSUES AFFECTING THIS HUGE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY".

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 24, 1989

Mr. Ilya Zaslavski
Member of the National Legislature
Moscow

Dear Mr. Zaslavski:

Congratulations on your election to the Soviet national legislature. We in the United States Senate watched your campaign with great interest, and are hopeful that your election -- and the election of other "new faces" -- portends well for a more open Soviet political system.

You and I have much in common, going beyond membership in our respective national legislatures. As a young man in World War II, I sustained severe injury, from which I still bear disabling scars today; you, too, were disabled in your youth. My own experience has made me acutely aware of the unique challenges faced by millions of disabled people in my country, and the enormous contributions the disabled can make to a society which gives them the opportunity. As a result, I have established the Dole Foundation, which provides job training and placement grants for disabled persons throughout America.

When I visited Moscow last year, to participate in the INF Treaty signing ceremony, I proposed to General Secretary Gorbachev that our countries start a dialogue on disability issues, within the context of the U.N.'s International Decade of the Disabled. Together, I suggested, we could explore techniques on rehabilitation, accommodation, and the elimination of negative stereotypes of the disabled. Perhaps you and I could open the door to that dialogue. Should I visit the Soviet Union, I would certainly want to talk to you about that possibility. I would also suggest that you consider the possibility of leading a team of professionals from the Soviet Union in a visit to America, to meet with me and some of our experts. I know that we could find some common ground, and learn from each other.

In conclusion, let me again offer my congratulations, both on your election and on your good work on behalf of the disabled. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Bob Dole".
BOB DOLE
United States Senate