

REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HEARING
AND SPEECH AGENCIES
BEL AIR EAST HOTEL
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI
FEBRUARY 21, 1970

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- Dole

WE ARE HERE TODAY BECAUSE OF OUR CONCERN FOR AND INVOLVEMENT WITH ONE OF THE LARGEST MINORITY ELEMENTS IN AMERICAN SOCIETY.

IT IS A MINORITY GROUP WHOSE EXISTENCE AFFECTS EVERY PERSON IN OUR SOCIETY AND THE VERY FIBER OF OUR NATION.

IT IS A GROUP WHICH NO ONE JOINS BY CHOICE -- A GROUP WHOSE REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP ARE NOT BASED ON AGE, SEX, WEALTH, EDUCATION, SKIN COLOR, RELIGIOUS BELIEFS, POLITICAL PARTY, POWER, OR PRESTIGE.

AS A MINORITY, IT HAS ALWAYS KNOWN EXCLUSION -- PERHAPS NOT EXCLUSION FROM THE FRONT OF THE BUS, BUT FROM EVEN CLIMBING ABOARD IT; PERHAPS NOT EXCLUSION FROM PURSUING

-2-

AN ADVANCED EDUCATION, BUT FROM EXPERIENCING ANY FORMAL EDUCATION; PERHAPS NOT EXCLUSION FROM DAY-TO-DAY LIFE, BUT FROM AN ADEQUATE OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP AND CONTRIBUTE TO ONE'S FULLEST CAPACITY.

IT IS A MINORITY, YET A GROUP TO WHICH AT LEAST ONE OUT OF EVERY FIVE AMERICANS BELONGS. THIS MINORITY IS THE 42 MILLION CITIZENS OF OUR NATION WHO ARE PHYSICALLY, MENTALLY, OR EMOTIONALLY HANDICAPPED.

WHO ARE THE HANDICAPPED?

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THEY ARE PERSONS -- MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN--- WHO CANNOT ACHIEVE FULL PHYSICAL, MENTAL, AND SOCIAL POTENTIAL BECAUSE OF DISABILITIES.

ALTHOUGH SOME LIVE IN INSTITUTIONS, MANY MORE LIVE IN THE COMMUNITY. SOME ARE SO SEVERELY DISABLED AS TO BE HOMEBOUND,

-3-

OR EVEN BED-BOUND. BUT OTHERS ARE CAPABLE AND DESIROUS OF TAKING PART IN COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES WHEN THEY HAVE THE ACCESS AND FACILITIES TO DO SO.

THEY INCLUDE THOSE WITH PHYSICAL, MENTAL, AND MULTIPLE DEFICIENCIES, BOTH CONGENITAL AND ADVENTITIOUS.

WHILE MOST AMERICANS DAILY CONVERSE, VIEW THE WORLD AND OTHERWISE EXPERIENCE LIFE AROUND THEM, THERE ARE MEMBERS OF THIS MINORITY WHO LIVE EACH DAY IN DARK, MUTE SILENCE.

WHILE MOST AMERICANS ENJOY FULL-MUSCLED VIGOR AND COORDINATION, THERE ARE MEMBERS OF THIS MINORITY WHO ARE IMMOBILIZED OR SEVERELY RESTRICTED IN THEIR AGILITY OR DEXTERITY.

IN CONTRAST TO MOST AMERICANS THERE ARE MEMBERS OF THIS MINORITY WHOSE ABILITIES TO LEARN AND APPLY WHAT THEY LEARN ARE HINDERED AND WHO HAVE LIMITED CAPACITIES TO COPE WITH THEIR FAMILIES, JOBS, AND PERSONAL AFFAIRS.

-4-

NOT JUST THE HANDICAP

FOR OUR NATION'S 42 MILLION PERSONS WITH HANDICAPS AND THEIR FAMILIES, YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW TAKE ON DIMENSIONS UNKNOWN TO THE LIVES OF MOST AMERICANS, THEIR DAILY CHALLENGE IS TO ADJUST TO AND WORK WITH THEIR DISABILITIES, SO THEY MAY BECOME AS ACTIVE AND USEFUL, AS INDEPENDENT AND SECURED AS POSSIBLE AND ACHIEVE THE FULLEST MEASURE OF INDIVIDUAL DIGNITY.

TOO MANY PERSONS WITH HANDICAPS LEAD LIVES OF LONELINESS AND ~~DISPAIR~~ ^{DESPAIR}. TOO MANY FEEL -- AND ARE -- CUT OFF FROM THE SOCIETY AROUND THEM BY PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL AND ATTITUDINAL BARRIERS ERECTED BOTH BY THEMSELVES AND BY OTHERS. TOO MANY CANNOT FILL EMPTY HOURS IN A SATISFYING, CONSTRUCTIVE MANNER. THE LEISURE MOST OF US CRAVE CAN AND HAS BECOME A CURSE TO MANY OF OUR NATION'S HANDICAPPED.

-5-

OFTEN WHEN A HANDICAPPED PERSON IS ABLE TO WORK FULL OR PART TIME, THERE ARE FEW JOBS OR INADEQUATE TRAINING PROGRAMS IN HIS LOCALE. ALTHOUGH PROGRESS IS BEING MADE, MANY EMPLOYERS ARE HESITANT TO HIRE A HANDICAPPED PERSON, IGNORING STATISTICS THAT SHOW HE IS OFTEN A BETTER AND MORE DEPENDABLE WORKER THAN THOSE WITH FULL ABILITIES. ABILITIES OF A PERSON OFTEN ARE OVERLOOKED BECAUSE OF DISABILITIES WHICH MAY BEAR LITTLE OR NO TRUE RELATION TO THE JOB AT HAND.

OTHER PROBLEMS EXIST IN SECURING THE AVAILABILITY AND ACCESS OF HEALTH CARE PERSONNEL AND FACILITIES AT THE TIME AND PLACE THE INDIVIDUALS WITH HANDICAPS NEED THEM. IN KANSAS MANY HANDICAPPED PERSONS TRAVEL 300 MILES OR MORE TO RECEIVE THE BASIC HEALTH SERVICES THEY REQUIRE.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

EDUCATION PRESENTS DIFFICULTIES FOR MANY PARENTS OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN. ALTHOUGH A CHILD MAY BE EDUCABLE, THERE MAY BE FEW, IF ANY, OPPORTUNITIES IN THE COMMUNITY FOR HIM TO RECEIVE AN EDUCATION. PRIVATE TUTORING, IF AVAILABLE, IS OFTEN TOO EXPENSIVE. SADLY, TO DATE, THE COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN ESTIMATES LESS THAN ONE-THIRD OF THE NATION'S CHILDREN REQUIRING SPECIAL EDUCATION ARE RECEIVING IT.

ONE PARTICULARLY ACUTE PROBLEM HAS ARISEN FROM THE RUBELLA EPIDEMIC OF 1964 AND 1965. A "BULGE" OF HEARING-IMPAIRED CHILDREN IS JUST NOW BEGINNING TO PASS THROUGH THE NATION'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS. AS THESE CHILDREN IN A 1-TO-2-YEAR AGE BRACKET GROW OLDER, THEIR PARTICULAR NEEDS AND DIFFICULTIES WILL BE FELT AT PROGRESSIVE LEVELS OF EDUCATION BUT FOR ONLY ONE OR TWO YEARS

-7-

AT EACH LEVEL. CURRENT RESOURCES OF TEACHERS AND FACILITIES SUITED TO THE EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF RUBELLA CHILDREN ARE INADEQUATE TO PROVIDE FOR THESE CHILDREN AS THEY PASS FROM GRADE TO GRADE.

THE PLIGHT OF THE 15, TO 20,000 HEARING-DEFECTIVE CHILDREN IN THE RUBELLA BULGE ILLUSTRATES THE GENERAL DIFFICULTY WE HAVE IN PROVIDING MEANINGFUL EDUCATION FOR OUR SIX MILLION HANDICAPPED AMERICAN CHILDREN.

NATIONAL COMMITMENT

I AM PROUD TO SAY THERE IS A GENERALLY RECOGNIZED NATIONAL COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING THE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN. BOTH THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS HAVE AWAKENED TO THE TREMENDOUS LONG RUN IMPORTANCE OF STARTING EARLY IN OUR EFFORTS TO INSURE MEANINGFUL LIVES FOR THE YOUNGEST MEMBERS OF THE HANDICAPPED MINORITY.

-8-

WHAT WE HAVE NOW IS A COMMITMENT OF UNDERSTANDING AND PERSONAL EFFORT. WHAT IS NEEDED IS A COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES.

WE IN CONGRESS BEAR A PRIME RESPONSIBILITY FOR FULFILLING THIS COMMITMENT, BUT OUR SUCCESS IN THIS ENDEAVOR REQUIRES SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE FROM BEYOND THE CAPITOL.

ONE VALUABLE SOURCE OF DIRECTION AND ASSISTANCE WILL BE THE TWO PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCES ON THE PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY HANDICAPPED. I HAVE A SPECIAL BELIEF IN THE VALUE OF THESE TASK FORCES, SINCE I SUGGESTED IN MY MAIDEN SENATE SPEECH LAST YEAR THAT A PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION OR SIMILAR BODY BE APPOINTED TO REVIEW THE ENTIRE SPECTRUM OF HANDICAPPED ENDEAVOR. THE GROUP ON THE PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED HAS ALREADY MET, AND WE ARE AWAITING

-9-

ITS REPORT. THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED TASK FORCE IS CURRENTLY MEETING, AND THEIR REPORT WILL BE ISSUED SHORTLY AFTER COMPLETING THEIR STUDIES.

OUTSIDE GOVERNMENT, THE MANY SPECIALIZED AND HIGHLY DEDICATED PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS -- OF WHICH NAHSA IS A PRIME EXAMPLE -- CAN PROVIDE INVALUABLE HELP IN MAKING KNOWN THE BEST IDEAS AND MOST PRESSING NEEDS IN THEIR FIELDS OF PARTICULAR FOCUS. YOU CAN DO THIS IN NUMEROUS WAYS; THROUGH YOUR MANY FINE PUBLICATIONS, APPEARANCES BEFORE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES AND PERSONAL CONTACTS WITH CONGRESSMEN AND SENATORS.

THE LOCAL ORIENTATION OF YOUR ORGANIZATION AND THE SPECIALIZED DIRECTION YOUR EFFORTS HAVE TAKEN OVER THE YEARS GIVE YOU AN UNDERSTANDING AND EXPERTISE THAT CAN BE INVALUABLE TO OUR NATIONAL PROGRESS. THIS LESSON APPLIES TO ALL ORGANIZATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS IN EVERY FIELD OF HANDICAPPED INTEREST.

-10-

INDIVIDUAL CONGRESSMEN AND SENATORS AND THE NATION
NEED YOUR HELP. MOREOVER, A MINORITY OF 42 MILLION AMERICANS
NEED ALL OF US WORKING TOGETHER.