

REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE  
OUTSTANDING HANDICAPPED FEDERAL EMPLOYEES OF 1973 AWARDS  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AUDITORIUM  
WASHINGTON, D. C.  
THURSDAY, APRIL 4, 1974

VICE CHAIRMAN SPAIN, HONORED GUESTS AND AWARDEES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN -- I AM PARTICULARLY PLEASED TO BE A PARTICIPANT IN THIS EVENT TODAY AS MY PERSONAL INTERESTS HAVE LONG BEEN INVOLVED WITH THE EDUCATION AND REHABILITATION OF HANDICAPPED PERSONS.

I MUST SAY THAT I AM AWED BY THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS THAT THESE MEN AND WOMEN WE HONOR TODAY HAVE MANAGED TO RECORD AGAINST TREMENDOUS ODDS.

AMONG THE VERY BEST

IN REVIEWING EACH OF THEIR STORIES, I WAS IMPRESSED BY THE VARIETY OF OCCUPATIONS AND LEVELS OF RESPONSIBILITY ATTAINED BY EACH OF THEM. THEIR HANDICAPS HAVE, AFTER ALL, BEEN OVERCOME AND THE IMPORTANT FACTORS NOW ARE THEIR ABILITIES TO DO THEIR JOBS. SO IT IS WITH THIS CEREMONY THAT WE RECOGNIZE THAT THE HANDICAPPED CAN BE AMONG THE VERY BEST FEDERAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES AVAILABLE.

AS A MEMBER OF THE SENATE, I HAVE INTRODUCED LEGISLATION AFFECTING THE NEEDS OF DISABLED PERSONS FOR MANY YEARS. THEREFORE, I COULD NOT BE MORE PLEASED TO SEE THE PASSAGE OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 AND THE EFFECT IT WILL HAVE ON EMPLOYMENT OF HANDICAPPED INDIVIDUALS.

MAKING PROGRESS

WE CAN VIEW THIS AS A BANNER YEAR AND THE ADVENT OF A BETTER ERA. NO LONGER CAN WE TAKE A BENEVOLENT STANCE IN BRINGING DISABLED PERSONS INTO THE MAINSTREAM OF AMERICAN LIFE. EACH ONE OF OUR HANDI-CAPPED CITIZENS MUST HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE REWARDS AND DIGNITY THAT STEM FROM SELF SUPPORT. THE ACTIONS THAT HAVE BEEN TAKEN BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN ITS PROGRAM TO ASSURE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE HANDICAPPED SHOULD LEAD THE WAY TO ALL EMPLOYERS THROUGHOUT OUR SOCIETY.

I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO REFLECT ON ONE PARTICULAR PHENOMENON. IT IS ONE THAT HISTORICALLY SEEMS TO OCCUR FOLLOWING WARTIME. THAT IS THE PLIGHT OF THE DISABLED VETERAN. NEVER HAS THIS ISSUE BEEN MORE POIGNANT THAN TODAY FOR THOSE MEN AND WOMEN WHO WERE DISABLED AS A RESULT OF INJURIES IN VIET NAM. AND, THIS SITUATION NEED NOT BE. HERE ON THIS STAGE ARE FINE EXAMPLES OF WHY NOT. SEVERAL OF OUR AWARDEES ARE DISABLED VETERANS OF PREVIOUS CONFLICTS. THEY HAVE PROVEN THEIR CAPABILITIES AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE. HOPEFULLY, THEIR EXAMPLES AND THOSE OF THE OTHER MAGNIFICENT PEOPLE WHOM WE ARE HONORING WILL AWAKEN EMPLOYERS ACROSS AMERICA. AWAKEN THEM TO ACTIVELY SEEK OUT AND OFFER THE SAME OPPORTUNITIES TO OUR DISABLED VIET NAM VETERANS.

ELIMINATE BIAS, BARRIERS

THOSE OF YOU IN THE AUDIENCE WHO ARE EMPLOYERS OF HANDICAPPED PERSONS, IN GOVERNMENT OR PRIVATE EMPLOYMENT, ARE TO BE COMMENDED FOR IGNORING THE OLD BIASES AND FOR TAKING A FORWARD LOOK AT CAPABILITY AND NOT DEBILITY -- FOR MAKING THE EXTRA EFFORT TO IDENTIFY JOB OPENINGS -- FOR MODIFYING JOB TASKS AND WORK SITES -- AND FOR ELIMINATING ARCHITECTURAL BARRIERS.

TO THOSE OF YOU WHO WORK WITH THE HANDICAPPED, HELPING THEM TO PREPARE FOR THEIR JOBS, MY CONGRATULATIONS ON THE EXCELLENCE OF YOUR EFFORTS.

TO THE HANDICAPPED PEOPLE IN THE AUDIENCE AND TO THOSE WE HONOR HERE ON THE STAGE, MY THANKS FOR REMINDING ~~THAT~~ ALL OF US THAT WE CAN AND WE SHOULD BE DOING MORE -- A LOT MORE. BECAUSE EACH, IN HIS OR HER OWN WAY, HAS DISPLAYED A COMMITMENT TO BEAR RESPONSIBILITY, TO DO HIS

OWN PART, TO LIVE HIS OWN IDEALS. THIS, SURELY, IS A TRUE REFLECTION  
OF THE STRENGTH OF AMERICA. ALL OF US COULD DO NO BETTER THAN TO  
MEASURE OUR OWN ACHIEVEMENTS BY YOUR YARDSTICKS.