

Memorandum

Date: March 24, 1993

To: Senator Dole

From: Alec Vachon *AV*

Re: Statement on Use of Supplemental Appropriations by
States and Local Communities for ADA Requirements

Attached for your consideration is a statement for the Congressional Record advocating that states and local communities use Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds included in the Supplemental to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. This statement could be either be included as part of a larger message on the Supplemental (if such a statement is to be made) or as a separate statement.

Incidentally, we have received one or two letters recommending this use from Kansas. Also, Congressman Glickman wanted us to sign a joint letter his office drafted advocating this use of CDBG funds, but the Supplemental passed the House before any letter could be approved, and was no longer timely.

I am coordinating this statement with Greg and Kathy.

DO YOU WANT TO PLACE THIS STATEMENT IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD?

YES NO

IF YES,

PART OF LARGER STATEMENT

AS SEPARATE STATEMENT

cc: K. Ormiston
G. Schnacke
D. Stanley

Mr. President: As we complete action on the Supplemental bill, I would like to bring to the attention of my colleagues an opportunity for states and local communities to use some of the appropriated funds to meet their responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The bill contains over \$2.5 billion in additional monies for Community Development Block Grants. As I and others have pointed out, there is great potential for wasteful or frivolous use of funds included in the Supplemental. However, using Community Development Block Grant money to meet the requirements of ADA placed on states and local communities would be a sound and continuing investment. Such use of these funds would also reduce the costs of ADA faced by states and communities, and help fulfill the pledges ADA makes to the millions of Americans with disabilities.

In 1990, Congress passed ADA, legislation which I was proud to support. But we recognized then that ADA might require substantial expenditures by states and local communities to make public buildings and programs accessible to people with disabilities. Of course, not all ADA-required alterations will be costly -- many can be accomplished with creativity and at low cost -- but we should expect at least some will be expensive.

But despite the costs entailed by ADA, Congress believed -- and properly I might add -- that the rights of citizens with disabilities to equal participation in our society and to independence were so fundamental, so long denied, and that these costs were justified.

Nonetheless, we should not, and indeed in good conscience cannot, forget our obligation to help whenever possible with the financial responsibilities Washington places on states and communities, including those entailed by ADA. No one needs to be reminded that taxpayers today are overburdened, and that they have as many good uses for their money as we have.

Moreover, ADA made strong and clear promises to our fellow citizens with disabilities about accessibility to state and local programs. Mr. President, these promises came due on January 26, 1992, when Title II of the ADA became effective. But if states and communities lack the funds to fulfill these promises, we shall have made empty promises to people with disabilities.

And let me point out that inaction today will only put off, and likely increase, the costs to states and local communities of meeting ADA responsibilities.

Mr. President, I will encourage my constituents in Kansas to use Community Development Block Grant monies for ADA-related purposes, and hope my colleagues will do the same with their constituents.