

STATEMENT OF ROBERT J. DOLE

Good Morning. It's a pleasure to meet with this distinguished group of rehabilitation and business professionals. You could not have chosen a more exciting or challenging time to visit Washington, D.C.

With a stroke of the pen on July 26, 1990, President George Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), outlawing discrimination against people with disabilities and ensuring that the disabled will have the opportunity to live lives of dignity and independence.

This law is intended to prevent discrimination in employment, public accommodations, transportation, and telecommunications. Most importantly, skilled qualified individuals, regardless of a disability, will become productive, contributing members of society. Tax users will become tax payers, and all Americans will benefit through the ability of an all inclusive work force and a stronger American economy. Many people with disabilities, because of the opportunity to work, will become more active consumers, purchasing the goods and services that they desire and need.

The ADA is an important beginning, giving us both a framework and a mandate from which to proceed. However, to meet the non-discrimination and increased employment goals of ADA, PWI programs must continue to provide critical technical assistance to the business community.

As you are aware, proposed regulations issued by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Justice Department, and the Architectural Transportation Barriers Compliance Board were recently published in the Federal Register. Fortunately, the regulations didn't take more than a decade to promulgate, as is usually the case in the federal bureaucracy. Unfortunately, it appears that the proposed regulations have again raised concerns among members of the small business community.

During consideration of ADA, Congress received similar complaints from small businesses regarding the language of the proposed legislation. Of course, we attempted to take reasonable concerns into account. For example, prior to ADA's final passage, I authored an amendment to establish a program of technical assistance for the business community.

Furthermore, Congress created a business tax credit designed to address any financial burdens resulting from compliance with ADA. This \$5,000 tax credit, coupled with section 190 of the Internal Revenue Code, provides small business with partial relief from monetary hardships.

Although Congress has recognized, and will continue to recognize, the concerns of the business community, it is apparent