

REMARKS OF SENATOR ROBERT J. DOLE
TO BE INCLUDED IN THE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL SPEECH
FEBRUARY 28, 1991

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. People with disabilities will become more active consumers, purchasing the goods and services that they desire and need.

As you may be aware, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Justice Department and the Architectural Transportation Barriers Compliance Board have published their proposed regulations in the Federal Register. Throughout Congressional consideration of the ADA, I was very concerned about the legislation's impact on small businesses. Now that the law has been signed and the first regulations issued, I have not forgotten the concerns and fears of our business community.

The proposed regulations have been comprehensive and far reaching. But I am here today to pledge that the onus of this historic law will not rest on your shoulders. For example, prior to ADA's final passage, I authored an amendment to establish a program of technical assistance for the business community. Last session, Congress appropriated funds in order to ensure that businesses would know their obligations and their rights under this new law.

In addition to technical assistance, Congress also created a business tax credit targeted to address financial burdens resulting from ADA accommodations. This \$5,000 tax credit, coupled with Section 190 of the Internal Revenue Code, provides small business with partial relief from monetary obligations.

You have valid concerns that I and other members of Congress recognize. However, ADA presents us with both a challenge and an unprecedented opportunity. In the short term, some businesses may spend some money to accommodate new employees or customers with disabilities. But, in the long term, businesses will benefit from loyal, qualified employees and new customers with money to burn.

Chairman Evan Kemp
April 11, 1991
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I am especially pleased that EEOC has discovered Kreonite, one of Kansas' outstanding resources. As you know, Kreonite is a small business in Wichita that employs approximately 228 workers, 26 of whom are workers with disabilities. Kreonite is an example of a small business which is proactive in hiring people with disabilities for sound business reasons and which has embraced the goals of the ADA.

As part of your technical assistance program, I understand that EEOC plans to produce a video that tells the Kreonite story and disseminate the film to the business community. I believe that such technical assistance will show the small business community what some of their colleagues have done in terms of hiring persons with disabilities.

ADA presents our nation with both a challenge and an unprecedented opportunity. In the short term, some businesses may make expenditures to accommodate new employees and customers with disabilities. In the long term, however, businesses will benefit from dependable, qualified employees as well as an influx of new customers.

I hope that we can continue to work together to make ADA's vision of a more productive America a reality. If I can be of assistance in relation to the Kreonite video or in any other way, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

BOB DOLE
United States Senate

BD/aw