

SENATOR BOB DOLE

REMARKS

AMERICAN SPEECH-LANGUAGE-HEARING ASSOCIATION

APRIL 5, 1991

GOOD MORNING. IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET WITH THIS DISTINGUISHED GROUP OF SPEECH-LANGUAGE-HEARING PROFESSIONALS. I MUST SAY THAT YOU HAVE CHOSEN A VERY EXCITING TIME TO HOLD THE ASHA-PAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING.

[KERRY, ARE WE STILL TALKING P.G. THESE DAYS?] ACROSS THE COUNTRY, AMERICANS ARE CELEBRATING OUR TREMENDOUS VICTORY IN THE PERSIAN GULF. AMERICANS WILL LONG REMEMBER THE BRAVERY OF THE MEN AND WOMEN OF OPERATION DESERT STORM. I BELIEVE THAT OUR COUNTRY CAN ONLY BE AS STRONG ABROAD AS WE ARE AT HOME. AND OUR DUTY TO THOSE WHO RISKED THEIR LIVES FOR FREEDOM, IS TO BUILD A COUNTRY DEDICATED TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL HER CITIZENS.

AND WE TOOK A GREAT STEP TOWARDS THAT GOAL LAST YEAR, WHEN WE PASSED THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA).

I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN INSPIRED BY THE STATE MOTTO OF KANSAS-- "TO THE STARS THROUGH DIFFICULTIES." WELL, FOR DECADES, THE AMERICAN SPEECH-LANGUAGE-HEARING ASSOCIATION HAS DEVOTED ITSELF TO ENSURING THAT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO REACH FOR THE STARS...TO DEVELOP TO THEIR FULLEST

POTENTIAL...AND TO ENTER THE MAINSTREAM OF SOCIETY.

IN FACT, YOU WERE IN SUPPORT OF ADA'S PASSAGE FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, WORKING TO SHAPE AND CRAFT ITS SWEEPING AND HISTORIC PROVISIONS. AS SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS AND AUDIOLOGISTS, YOU STILL HAVE A LARGE ROLE TO PLAY IN THE PROMULGATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FCC REGULATIONS ON TITLE IV.

FOR ADA TO SUCCESSFULLY ENSURE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MAINSTREAM OF AMERICAN SOCIETY, WE MUST MAKE SURE THAT CALLERS UNABLE TO USE VOICE HAVE ACCESS TO RAPID, EFFICIENT NATIONWIDE TELECOMMUNICATIONS RELAY SERVICES. HOPEFULLY, THE ADA WILL TEAR DOWN ANTIQUATED AND UNNECESSARY COMMUNICATION BARRIERS, ENABLING PEOPLE WITH SPEECH AND HEARING IMPAIRMENTS TO BECOME INDEPENDENT CONSUMERS AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY. IT'S AWFULLY DIFFICULT TO GO TO A MOVIE, MAKE AN APPOINTMENT, OR EVEN FIND AND HOLD ONTO A JOB WITHOUT A TELEPHONE LINK TO OTHERS.

EMPLOYMENT IS ALSO CRITICAL TO THE INTEGRATION OF YOUR CONSTITUENCY INTO THE MAINSTREAM. AS YOU MAY KNOW, I FOUNDED THE DOLE FOUNDATION BECAUSE OF MY COMMITMENT TO ENHANCING THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES. WHILE THERE IS NO ONE KEY TO FULL PARTICIPATION IN SOCIETY, AN ACCESSIBLE WORK PLACE AND NON-DISCRIMINATION IN HIRING AND PROMOTIONS ARE VERY IMPORTANT COMPONENTS.

THE ADA IS AN IMPORTANT BEGINNING, GIVING US BOTH A FRAMEWORK AND A MANDATE FROM WHICH TO PROCEED.

HOWEVER, TO REINFORCE THE GOALS OF ADA AND TO MOVE DISABILITY POLICY FORWARD INTO THE NEXT CENTURY, IT IS CRITICAL TO MAINTAIN A UNITED AND SOLID PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE DISABILITY COMMUNITIES AS WELL AS THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS.

WORKING TOGETHER, WE CAN ENSURE THAT EVERY AMERICAN CITIZEN WILL BE PROVIDED THE ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY TO BE A PART OF ALL THAT SOCIETY OFFERS.

THE 102ND CONGRESS HAS A VERY BUSY AGENDA. WE WILL BE EXPLORING A VARIETY OF LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES THAT HAVE BEEN DESIGNED TO UPDATE EXISTING DISABILITY PROGRAMS TO THE REALITIES OF AN ADA WORLD. THE LIST, WHICH IS COMPREHENSIVE, INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING CRITICAL ISSUES: REAUTHORIZATION OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, PERSONAL ATTENDANT SERVICES FOR PEOPLE NEEDING ASSISTANCE WITH ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING, PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS, AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST SPECIAL EDUCATION AND ITS IMPORTANT COMPONENT -- PART H.

IF WE ARE TO FULFILL ADA'S PROMISE, THESE ISSUES, AND MANY OTHERS, NEED SYSTEMATIC EXAMINATION AND CONGRESSIONAL CONSIDERATION. CLEARLY, IF WE ARE GOING TO MAKE OUR DREAM OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES A REALITY, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT DISABILITY INITIATIVES ARE "CUT FROM THE SAME CLOTH" AS ADA.

I THINK IT'S OUTSTANDING THAT THE AMERICAN SPEECH-LANGUAGE-HEARING ASSOCIATION HAS TAKEN A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN THE POLICY PROCESS. OUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOUR EXPERTISE AND SUPPORT--NOW,

**MORE THAN EVER. WITH THE CONTINUED DEDICATION OF YOUR MEMBERS,
I'M CONFIDENT THAT WHEN WE GATHER NEXT YEAR FOR ASHA-PAC'S
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, WE'LL BE ABLE TO SAY THAT COUNTLESS
MORE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES HAVE REACHED FOR THE STARS.**

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.