


MEMORANDUM

Date: June 6, 1994
To: Senator Dole
From: Alec Vachon 
Re: Meeting with John Hager Re Republican Leadership on
Disability Issues

- * In August, I wrote regarding the DNC's outreach to people w/disabilities (attached), and indicated I find out what the RNC was doing. In short, not much -- except re-establishing an Advisory Committee. (In a 1991 memo (attached), Yeutter first proposed this Committee. It accomplished little.)
- * On May 24th I met with John Hager to discuss Republican leadership on disability issues. He has been asked to Chair this Committee -- but has refused until RNC commits staff support. (A young woman assigned this job was fired. Her competent replacement left after several weeks.) John plans to meet with Jeanie Austin on this matter.
- * We discussed 4 reasons why disability is an important and natural Republican issue:
 - Large number of voters. 49 million Americans have a disability; multiplying this number by family members gives a huge pool of people affected by disability. Incidentally, Joyce mentioned to me there were a large number of wheelchair users at the Virginia Republican convention this past weekend.
 - Positive image for Republicans. Republicans are too often attacked as meanspirited on social issues. Disability concern is very popular, and can be an antidote to such perceptions.
 - Republican values. Disability policy has always focused on values important to Republicans -- e.g., employment and financial self-sufficiency, independence, and opportunity.
 - Lost opportunity. If Republicans do not pursue this issue, the Democrats capture this constituency by default.
- * John believes Republicans have not pursued disability leadership for two reasons: First, they don't see its political value. Second, concerns about the reaction of small business.
- * Incidentally, I gave John a copy of your first speech. He was impressed by its discussion of values (dignity, independence, security) rather than specific programs, and its sweeping vision of disability policy. Indeed, this seems the universal response.

- * I suggested to John we find out what the National Policy Forum is doing -- they have been holding hearings around the country on many issues, but doubt they have considered disability.
- * Also, I am interested in being helpful to Hager, subject to your approval and Senate rules. As a practical matter, this would be "light duty," limited to reviewing materials, providing policy guidance, and perhaps attending off-campus meetings.
- * John also sent his best to you and Mrs. Dole.

OK
I read you