

FLOOR STATEMENT OF SENATOR ROBERT J. DOLE
ON DEAF AWARENESS WEEK
MARCH 8, 1990

MR. PRESIDENT: I AM PLEASED TO JOIN MY
COLLEAGUES IN CELEBRATING "DEAF AWARENESS
WEEK". THE WORLD WITNESSED A REVOLUTIONARY
TURN OF EVENTS AT GALLAUDET UNIVERSITY THAT
SECOND WEEK IN MARCH OF 1988 WHEN STUDENTS,
FACULTY, STAFF

AND FRIENDS JOINED TOGETHER IN A UNITED FRONT TO
INSTALL ITS FIRST DEAF PRESIDENT. THE "DEAF
PRESIDENT NOW" MOVEMENT HAD WORLDWIDE IMPACT
FOR DEAF PEOPLE AS WELL AS OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH
DISABILITIES.

THE MESSAGE WAS SIMPLE YET SPIRITED AND ONE
THAT PERMEATED THIS NATION FOR MONTHS
THEREAFTER -- THAT DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
INDIVIDUALS ARE LIKE EVERYONE ELSE EACH WITH
UNIQUE ABILITIES AND IN CONTROL OF THEIR OWN
DESTINY.

THE DEAF NOW PRESIDENT MOVEMENT HERALDED
A NEW BEGINNING AT GALLAUDET WITH THE
INSTALLATION OF DR. I KING JORDAN AS ITS FIRST DEAF
PRESIDENT. DR. JORDAN LEADS GALLAUDET INTO A NEW
ERA BY THE EXAMPLE HE SETS.

THIS HISTORIC EVENT WAS MADE POSSIBLE
BECAUSE PEOPLE WERE COMMITTED TO A CAUSE THAT
THEY BELIEVED TO BE JUST AND RIGHT. THE RIGHT OF
EVERY

PERSON TO PURSUE THEIR GOALS AND REACH NEW HEIGHTS. THE WORLD SAW THE CAPACITY FOR EXCELLENCE IS NOT RESERVED FOR THOSE WHO CAN HEAR.

UNFORTUNATELY DEAF PEOPLE KNOW FIRST HAND WHAT IT IS LIKE TO BE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST AND SHUNNED FROM THE MAINSTREAM. CONGRESS HAS RESPONDED TO THEIR JUST AND RIGHT MESSAGE WITH SENATE PASSAGE OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES

ACT. I HOPE THE HOUSE WILL SOON FOLLOW IN PASSING
THIS HISTORIC PIECE OF CIVIL RIGHTS LEGISLATION
WHICH WILL BRING THIS LAST AND LARGEST MINORITY
INTO A POSITION OF ACHIEVING EQUAL OPPORTUNITY,
ACCESS, AND FULL PARTICIPATION IN THE AMERICAN
DREAM.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ARE OFTEN LIMITED BY
THE ATTITUDINAL BARRIERS THAT SOCIETY HAS IMPOSED
ON US. IT IS MY HOPE THAT THROUGH "DEAF
AWARENESS WEEK AND PASSAGE OF THE ADA WE CAN
CORRECT THE MISPERCEPTIONS THAT EXIST.

I AM PROUD THAT THIS BODY RECENTLY PASSED
LEGISLATION TO INSURE CLOSED CAPTIONING OF THE
SENATE PROCEEDINGS WHICH I INTRODUCED AND WILL
BE IMPLEMENTED SOON. WE RECOGNIZE THAT THE
KNOWLEDGE

GAINED FROM OBSERVING THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS IN ACTION MAKES FOR A MORE INFORMED AND INVOLVED CITIZENRY. AND THEY BELIEVE AS I DO, THAT AS CITIZENS AND TAXPAYERS, DEAF AND HEARING IMPAIRED AMERICANS ARE AS ENTITLED TO WITNESS THE DEBATES OF THEIR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES AS ANYONE ELSE.

Rev. Gerald Tracone

I'D LIKE TO THANK [^]----- FOR PROVIDING INTERPRETER SERVICES TODAY SO THAT ALL DEAF AND HEARING IMPAIRED CITIZENS CAN EQUALLY PARTICIPATE

IN TODAY'S CELEBRATION AND I'D LIKE TO WELCOME
THOSE PEOPLE IN THE GALLERY WHO ARE HERE TODAY
WITH US TO SHARE AN IMPORTANT TRIBUTE TO A
HISTORICAL EVENT THAT TRULY BROUGHT ABOUT
GREATER AWARENESS OF DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
INDIVIDUALS.

WHAT HAPPENED AT GALLAUDET WAS AN
INSPIRATION TO ALL OF US. WITH DISABILITIES AND A
CHALLENGE THAT SHOULD NEVER BE FORGOTTEN. AS
PRESIDENT I.

KING JORDAN SO ELOQUENTLY STATED "THE ONLY
THING DEAF PEOPLE CAN'T DO IS HEAR" -- WHEN WE
STAND UNITED WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND WE
MUST BE EVER VIGILANT IN OUR EFFORTS TO ENSURE
AN INCLUSIVE AMERICA.