

THE SPEAKER



WASHINGTON OFFICE:
2428 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BLDG.
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-1006
(202) 225-4501

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

March 14, 1995

The Honorable Marvin T. Runyon
Postmaster General
U.S. Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20260-0010

Dear Marvin:

We are writing on behalf of the millions of Americans who have physical disabilities to request the issuance of a commemorative stamp honoring the 1996 Paralympic Games in Atlanta.

As you know, the Paralympics are the second largest sporting event in the world, and will be held in this country for the first time next year, following the Centennial Summer Olympic Games. The competition of some 4,000 world-class athletes with physical disabilities, the many events surrounding the Paralympic Games, and the enthusiasm of fans throughout the world are expected to inspire the largest gathering of people with disabilities ever assembled.

There is widespread national support in the disability community for a Paralympic commemorative stamp, and we know you already have received a number of requests from individuals and organizations, as well as Members of Congress. We add our wholehearted endorsement as well. We believe the Paralympic Games offer an unparalleled opportunity for the U.S. Postal Service to recognize the considerable abilities of those with disabilities, and to significantly advance understanding and acceptance by all Americans.

We understand that Mr. Andrew Fleming, President of the Atlanta Paralympic Organizing Committee, has requested a meeting with you on this subject. We hope that you will be able to meet with Mr. Fleming if your schedule permits.

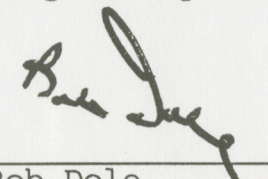
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Thanks for your consideration of a commemorative stamp for the Paralympics. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,



Newt Gingrich
Speaker



Bob Dole
Majority Leader

JOHN W. WARNER, VIRGINIA
WILLIAM S. COHEN, MAINE
JOHN McCAIN, ARIZONA
TRENT LOTT, MISSISSIPPI
DAN COATS, INDIANA
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RICHARD L. REYNARD, STAFF DIRECTOR
ARNOLD L. PUNARO, STAFF DIRECTOR FOR THE MINORITY

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6050

March 17, 1995

The Honorable Ronald Brown
Secretary
Department of Commerce
14th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Mr. Secretary:

As you know, the city of Atlanta will host the Games of the XXVI Olympiad during the summer of 1996. Soon after the conclusion of the Olympic Games, the Games of the X Paralympiad will begin.

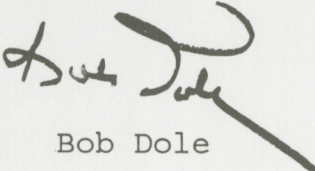
The Atlanta Paralympic Organizing Committee (APOC) is working diligently to ensure that the X Paralympiad, which will involve over 4000 athletes from over 100 countries, surpasses the high expectations that the nation and the world have for the 1996 Games. APOC officials have an ambitious agenda for the 1996 Paralympics, including a trade show for American suppliers of adaptive technology, a trade initiative, a policy congress and a fully accessible interactive communications system.

It has come to our attention that APOC has proposed a partnership with the Department of Commerce to lend support to their trade and communications initiatives. We would encourage you to consider what support the Department of Commerce might lend to this effort.

We are hopeful that you will give the Paralympic proposal careful and sympathetic consideration.

Sincerely,

Sam Nunn



Bob Dole

**Atlanta Paralympic Organizing Committee
and the
U.S. Department of Commerce**

A Proposed Partnership

One of the greatest challenges posed to the Organizing Committee is the need to direct delegates around Atlanta, between venues, and among villages and support facilities. All signage and interactive message centers will have to communicate with representatives of more than 100 nations, many of whom will have special communications needs. The information kiosks planned will allow participants to access reports on venue locales, competition schedules and results, transportation and meal schedules, weather forecasts and other useful information.

The traditional keyboard and screen, however, will have limited value for users with visual impairments, with cerebral palsy, or without full use of arms and hands. APOC will work with the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to develop a voice recognition system with adequate software and hardware that will allow athletes, including the visually impaired and those for whom use of a keyboard is a barrier to gaining information, to move about independently during the Games.

In conjunction with an exposition on the latest developments in assistive technology and services, APOC is working with the International Trade Administration and the Bureau of Export Administration to facilitate export of American goods and services. This international trade initiative will be built around the international government officials and private sector buyers that the Paralympics can attract for both athletic competition and trade purposes.

While the Paralympiad will draw thousands of international visitors, APOC seeks support from the U.S. Travel and Tourism Administration to coordinate bringing target delegations to Atlanta for the Abilities Expo, the Paralympic International Trade Initiative, and the Paralympic Policy Congress.

The first Paralympiad to be held in a country with a comprehensive disability rights law provides the backdrop for APOC's mission to advocate for lowering barriers and promoting empowerment internationally. One objective, therefore, is to bring delegations interested in the policy ramifications of the Paralympiad. A second objective is to facilitate visits from foreign delegations of potential buyers to the 1996 International Abilities Expo.