

MEMORANDUM TO SENATOR DOLE

DA: July 21, 1995
FR: Alec Vachon *AV*
RE: SIGN ON TO APPROPS LETTERS RE 1996 PARALYMPICS

Senators Coverdell and Nunn asked if you wish to sign on to letters to the following Approps subcommittees, requesting funds for the 1996 Paralympics (text of various letters attached). Senator Stevens will also be signing this letter.

As you may recall, you are a member of the National Honorary Committee of the 1996 Paralympics--which will be held in Atlanta following the 1996 Olympics. You have signed two other letters to date to help the Paralympics: one to the Postmaster General (w/Mr. Gingrich) re a stamp honoring the games, and another to the Secretary of Commerce (w/Senator Nunn).

<u>Approps Subcommittee</u>	<u>Request</u>
Labor/HHS/Education	\$11.0 million
Transportation	\$1.0 million
Commerce, State, Justice	\$9.2 million
Energy & Water Development	\$0.5 million
Treasury, Postal Service, general Government	\$1.0 million
Total	\$22.7 million

DO YOU WISH TO SIGN THESE APPROPS LETTERS?

YES NO

As you are well aware, Atlanta will host the Xth Paralympic Games, an international celebration of the abilities of people with disabilities, in the summer of 1996. Watching these athletes compete at levels comparable to the Olympics will set to rest any misconceptions about the abilities of people with disabilities to participate in and contribute to our economy and our society. We bring to your attention three requests for a total of \$11 million.

To maximize the educational value of these Games, we respectfully request \$4.5 million from the Department of Education to support the Paralympiad message of "empowerment through individual opportunity." The Games will be the culmination of a comprehensive education and awareness campaign aimed at individuals with disabilities, the nondisabled, and a broad international audience.

We would also bring to your attention a request of \$5 million from the Department of Labor for a disability employment initiative in conjunction with the Games. While the majority of people with disabilities are employable and seek economic independence through work, the rate of unemployment among people with disabilities appears to be frozen at 67 percent. It is the employment and training model the Paralympic Organizing Committee is developing that the committee hopes will begin to turn around the unemployment rate associated with disability. In addition, the model will embody a successful model of cross-ability management structure that can be replicated in the corporate world.

While we recognize that the Social Security Administration's Supplemental Security Income Program (SSI) is under significant financial strain, our hope is that the Subcommittee will provide \$1.5 million for an SSI demonstration program. The program will foster economic independence among people with disabilities through disability sport. The investment of \$1.5 million will lead to far greater savings in demands on SSI benefits.

We sincerely appreciate your consideration of these requests and encourage the Subcommittee to include \$11 million in fiscal 1996 assistance for the Xth Paralympic Games. Please contact either Lydia Verheggen at 4-8047 or Rocky Rief at 4-3521, should you or your staff have any questions.

Transportation

In 1996, Atlanta will be hosting the two largest sporting events in the world. Shortly after the close of the Centennial Summer Olympic Games, 4,000 world class athletes with physical disabilities will compete in the Tenth Paralympic Games. The organizers of the Paralympic Games face unique logistical challenges in planning for the event and are seeking \$1 million support from the Federal Highway Administration in order to maximize independent mobility for Paralympic participants and spectators with physical disabilities.

In addition to the athletes, a large proportion of the million and a half spectators will have some kind of mobility impairment. As the host country, it is imperative that the United States provides an accessible environment for the Paralympic Games. The organizers expect that as a result of the 114 countries represented in the competition, the 1996 Paralympics will be the largest gathering of people with disabilities ever assembled.

One of the unique challenges for organizers of the Paralympic Games will be providing appropriate transportation information to unprecedented number of people with mobility limitations. Federal Highway System support would provide individualized routing information, which identifies potential barriers specific to an individual's impairment. This interactive system will inform participants of times, locations, transportation schedules, and preferred routing options specific to mobility limitations. A wheelchair user, for example, would receive options for transportation free from stairwells or uncut curbs.

On behalf of the Atlanta Paralympic Organizing Committee, I would encourage the Subcommittee on Transportation to consider provision of \$1 million for the development and international demonstration of an individualized routing system during the Paralympic Games. Please contact Lydia Verheggen at 4-8047 or Rocky Rief at 4-3521 should you or your staff have any questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Commerce, State, Justice

As you are well aware, Atlanta will host two major international events in the summer of 1996. The Paralympic Games will open just after the Olympic closing ceremonies. The Xth Paralympiad will feature 4,000 world-class athletes with physical disabilities representing 110 countries and is expected to draw the world's largest gathering ever of people with disabilities in the United States.

The Xth Paralympiad conveys a powerful message of "achievement through individual effort". Under the newly expanded mission of the United States Information Agency, the promotion of exchange and training activities is an essential function of that Agency. Given this new role and the Paralympics commitment to ensuring opportunity, assistance from USIA would ensure the Paralympic message is communicated effectively to participating delegates, officials and spectators.

As the subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, State, and Judiciary prepares legislation for the upcoming fiscal year, we respectfully request consideration from the Subcommittee for \$9,200,000 in fiscal year 1996 for funding to complete the USIA's support of the Xth Paralympiad. These funds will support educational and cultural exchange activities as part of the Paralympiad.

Please contact either Lydia Verheggen at 4-8047 or Rocky Rief at 4-3521, should you or your staff have any questions. We thank you in advance for your consideration and look forward to working with you on this matter.

As you are well aware, Atlanta will host two major international events in the summer of 1996. The Paralympic Games, an international celebration of the abilities of people with disabilities, will open just after the Olympic closing ceremonies. On behalf of the event's organizers, I would request the Subcommittee provide \$500,000 support from the Army Corps of Engineers to assist in the preparation of the sailing venue, using Lake Sidney Lanier as a national model for recreational water access for people with disabilities.

Approximately 4,000 world-class athletes with physical disabilities will compete before an estimated one and a half million spectators during ten days of competition. One of the primary challenges of staging these Olympic-level Games for people with disabilities is the lack of access to the water recreation site. With assistance from the Corps of Engineers, existing facilities at Lake Lanier will be modified to allow sailors and spectators with disabilities to access the marina.

The lack of water recreation facilities accessible to people with disabilities is a nation-wide problem, and a successful model developed for the world's second largest sporting event of 1996 offers a valuable prototype for the nation and future games.

We appreciate your consideration of this request and encourage the Subcommittee to include \$500,000 in fiscal 1996 for accessibility retrofit at Lake Sidney Lanier. Please contact either Lydia Verheggen at 4-8047 or Rocky Rief at 4-3521, should you or your staff have any questions.