

REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE
SUNFLOWER FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

TOWN HOUSE
FAIRFAX ROOM
10:30 OR 11:00 A.M.
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1971

KANSAS PROGRAMS SET STANDARDS FOR OTHERS

IT IS INDEED A PLEASURE TO BE ABLE TO SHARE A FEW MINUTES WITH YOU TODAY DURING THIS MEMORABLE OCCASION OF YOUR ANNUAL STATE CONVENTION. THE CAPABILITIES AND INTERESTS OF THE SUNFLOWER FEDERATION OF THE BLIND UNDERLINE THE REASON WHY KANSAS IS KNOWN NATIONALLY AS ONE OF THE BETTER STATES WITH SERVICES FOR THE BLIND.

I AM NO STRANGER TO THIS AREA OF PRIME CONCERN TO YOU. TWENTY-SIX YEARS AGO I BECAME A MEMBER OF AN OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD, FREQUENTLY UNDERESTIMATED, AND WHOLLY INVOLUNTARY MINORITY GROUP -- THE HANDICAPPED.

REALIZATION OF POTENTIAL

MEMBERSHIP IN THIS MINORITY HAS MEANT MANY THINGS TO ME. HOWEVER, ONE POINT OF SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE HAS BEEN AN APPRECIATION OF THE IMMENSE POTENTIAL FOR CONTRIBUTION TO OUR SOCIETY WHICH THE HANDICAPPED POSSESS. ALONG WITH THIS GREAT POTENTIAL THERE IS ALSO A

GREAT NEED, A NEED FOR THE UNDERSTANDING -- OF THE PROBLEMS WHICH THE HANDICAPPED FACE -- OF THE ASSISTANCE THEY REQUIRE TO FULFILL THEIR POTENTIAL -- AND OF PRIORITIES FOR THE LIMITED RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO ATTAIN THIS GOAL.

THESE IDEAS I EXPRESSED IN MY FIRST SPEECH AS A SENATOR ON APRIL 14, 1969, THE ANNIVERSARY OF MY WAR TIME WOUNDS.

TASK FORCE PROPOSALS

AS A PART OF MY MAIDEN SENATE SPEECH, I PROPOSED THE FORMATION OF A PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCE ON THE HANDICAPPED TO REVIEW EFFORTS ON BOTH THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS, ON A BROAD BASIS, AND FURNISH SUGGESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS ON THE MOST CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN TO THE HANDICAPPED. I WAS HIGHLY GRATIFIED WHEN THE PRESIDENT APPOINTED TWO TASK FORCES; ONE TO STUDY THE PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED, ONE THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED. THE TASK FORCE ON THE PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED WAS COMPOSED OF 13 HIGHLY DEDICATED AND WIDELY EXPERIENCED INDIVIDUALS FROM STATE GOVERNMENTS, INDUSTRY, AND PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS. THE REPORT WHICH WAS DEVELOPED EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR A NATIONAL COMMITMENT, FOR BETTER COORDINATION, GREATER PUBLIC INFORMATION AND REPORTING ACTIVITIES, GREATER FOCUS ON THE HANDICAPPED CHILD, AND THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A BETTER ENVIRONMENT FOR THE HANDICAPPED. MORE SPECIFICALLY, THE

PRESIDENT'S TASK FORCE ON THE PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED CALLED FOR A JOINT COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES TO COORDINATE THE ADVOCACY AND REVIEW FUNCTIONS OF NATIONAL COMMITTEES AND GROUPS PRESENTLY WORKING IN THE AREAS OF PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HANDICAPS. UNFORTUNATELY, NO ACTION HAS BEEN TAKEN TO PUT THIS RECOMMENDATION INTO PRACTICE.

REHABILITATION INCREASED

ACTION IN BEHALF OF THE BLIND HAS, HOWEVER, BEEN TAKING PLACE ON OTHER FRONTS BOTH NATIONALLY AND LOCALLY. IN FISCAL YEAR 1971, 291,272 PERSONS WERE REHABILITATED. OF THESE, APPROXIMATELY 7,555 WERE BLIND. IN FISCAL YEAR 1970, 266,975 PERSONS WERE REHABILITATED, OF WHICH 7,364 WERE BLIND. MORE SPECIFICALLY IN KANSAS LAST YEAR 364 BLIND PERSONS WERE SERVED AND 112 WERE REHABILITATED.

NOTEWORTHY ACHIEVEMENTS IN KANSAS

MUCH TO THE BENEFIT OF OUR FINE STATE, THE KANSAS SERVICES FOR THE BLIND, PART OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE, HAS LONG BEEN RECOGNIZED AS ONE OF THE BETTER PROGRAMS SERVING THE BLIND. PARTICULARLY OUTSTANDING HAS BEEN THE KANSAS REHABILITATION CENTER FOR THE BLIND AT TOPEKA. THE REHABILITATION CENTER HAS LONG ENJOYED A PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MENNINGER FOUNDATION. LAST YEAR THE CENTER EXPERIENCED ITS MOST PRODUCTIVE YEAR IN HISTORY IN TERMS OF NEW CLIENTS ADMITTED AND TOTAL CLIENTS SERVED. TO ACCOMMODATE THE ANTICIPATED INCREASE A BUILDING PROJECT WAS INITIATED TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE DORMITORY FACILITIES.

UNDER AN INNOVATION GRANT FROM THE REHABILITATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATION, A PROJECT WAS DEVELOPED AT THE CENTER TO SHARPEN THE ABILITY OF BLIND PERSONS TO LISTEN. THE GRANT PERIOD HAS ENDED AND THE LISTENING PROGRAM INCORPORATED INTO THE ON-GOING PROGRAM OF THE AGENCY.

FISCAL YEAR 1970 SAW THE CASELOAD OF THE BLIND AGENCY INCREASE MORE THAN 22% WITH REHABILITATIONS UP ALMOST 5%. PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS AMONG THE BLIND POPULATION ACCOUNTED FOR 20% OF THE TOTAL. NEW EMPHASIS WAS SUCCESSFULLY PLACED ON PRE-VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND EVALUATION. A SPECIAL TARGET GROUP FOR THE AGENCY HAS BEEN THOSE IN SHELTERED EMPLOYMENT WITH THE END GOAL OF COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT. THE SERVICES FOR THE BLIND HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY SUCCESSFUL WITH SHELTERED WORKSHOPS IN KANSAS CITY AND TOPEKA.

REALIZATION OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY

I AM SURE THAT ALL OF YOU ARE AWARE OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE RANDOLPH-SHEPPARD ACT WHICH ESTABLISHED THE PROGRAM OF GRANTING PREFERENCE TO BLIND PERSONS IN THE OPERATION OF VENDING FACILITIES IN FEDERALLY CONTROLLED BUILDINGS. ONE MAJOR ISSUE IS THE ALLOCATION OF INCOME FROM VENDING MACHINES IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO AND IN COMPETITION WITH A BLIND OPERATED STAND. HEARINGS HAVE BEEN HELD BY THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON HANDICAPPED WORKERS OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND PUBLIC WELFARE, BUT NO REPORT YET ISSUED. MR. TOM NAGLE, THE OUTSTANDING CHIEF OF YOUR WASHINGTON OFFICE, TESTIFIED IN YOUR BEHALF.

NOT ONLY HAS THIS PROGRAM ALLOWED BLIND WOMEN AND MEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME SELF-SUPPORTING, TAXPAYING PRODUCTIVE CITIZENS, BUT IT HAS ALSO PERMITTED MANY INDIVIDUALS THE SATISFACTION OF REALIZING SELF-SUFFICIENCY. RARELY DOES THE PRIVATE SECTOR ADOPT AND FURTHER ENHANCE A FEDERAL PROGRAM, YET TODAY THREE OUT OF EVERY FOUR BLIND VENDING OPERATORS ARE LOCATED IN BUSINESS AND OTHER GOVERNMENT FACILITIES OUTSIDE OF THE FEDERAL ESTABLISHMENT. AND IT HAS BEEN THE DILIGENCE OF THE BLIND CITIZENS WHO HAVE MADE THIS PROGRAM AUTHORIZED BY CONGRESS SO SUCCESSFUL. OF THE THIRTY-TWO STANDS IN KANSAS, ONLY FIVE ARE ON FEDERAL PROPERTY. SEVENTEEN ARE PLACED WITHIN PRIVATELY OWNED BUILDINGS, AND TEN IN STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS. FORTUNATELY THE 1970 KANSAS LEGISLATURE ENACTED A LAW WHICH GIVES VISUALLY HANDICAPPED PERSONS PREFERENCE IN OPERATING VENDING STANDS IN CITY, COUNTY, AND STATE OWNED BUILDINGS.

IRS EMPLOYMENT

KANSAS IS ALSO SUCCESSFULLY INVOLVED IN A FEDERAL PROGRAM WHICH TRAINS INDIVIDUALS AS TAX-PAYER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE DISTRICT OFFICES. DEVELOPED UNDER A SPECIAL GRANT FROM THE SOCIAL AND REHABILITATION SERVICE TO THE ARKANSAS ENTERPRISES FOR THE BLIND AT LITTLE ROCK, THE PROGRAM NOW

HAS GROWN TO THE POINT IT IS SUPPORTED BY THE FEES-FOR-SERVICES COLLECTED FROM STATE REHABILITATION AGENCIES FOR THE BLIND OR GENERAL AGENCIES SERVING THE BLIND.

BOOKS THAT TALK

THERE IS ANOTHER OUTSTANDING FEDERAL PROGRAM WHICH YOU ARE WELL ACQUAINTED WITH THAT I WANT TO MENTION BECAUSE ITS COUNTERPART IN KANSAS IS CONSIDERED ONE OF THE BEST. THE DIVISION OF LIBRARY SERVICES FOR THE BLIND AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED, DIRECTED BY MRS. ELLEN ZABEL, IS USED BY THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS AS A MODEL PROGRAM. TALKING BOOKS AND THE VARIOUS OTHER ASPECTS OF OUR FINE LIBRARY SERVICES OPEN MANY NEW DOORS OF EDUCATION AND ENJOYMENT TO ALMOST 3,000 KANSANS.

MANY OLDER BLIND PERSONS TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS PROGRAM, A POINT OF SIGNIFICANCE WHEN WE CONSIDER THAT ANY TYPE OF SERVICES FOR OUR OLDER BLIND CITIZENS ARE AT BEST MINIMAL. FOR THIS VERY FACT I HAVE JOINED SENATOR RANDOLPH AS A CO-SPONSOR OF HIS BILL TO AMEND THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION ACT TO ASSURE REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR OLDER BLIND PERSONS.

AID TO ELDERLY BLIND

UNFORTUNATELY MOST OLDER BLIND PERSONS ARE NOT UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES TO ASSURE THEM OF ADEQUATE BASIC REHABILITATION SERVICES. EXCEPT FOR THE LIMITED EXTENT TO WHICH THE PRESENT

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION ACT CAN BE USED, NO OTHER FEDERAL PROGRAM COVERS NON-MEDICAL REHABILITATION FOR THESE SENIOR CITIZENS. INCREASED FEDERAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE HAS REINFORCED THE PATTERN OF EXISTING SERVICES TO CHILDREN AND EMPLOYABLE ADULTS, BUT HAS OVER-LOOKED OLDER BLIND CITIZENS. AT THE SAME TIME, OUR STEADILY INCREASING LIFE SPAN AND CHANGING POPULATION PATTERNS HAVE RESULTED IN OLDER PERSONS BECOMING THE LARGEST SINGLE GROUP IN THE BLIND POPULATION. THE NEED OF THESE PERSONS FOR ADEQUATE BASIC REHABILITATION SERVICES TO ALLEVIATE THE HANDICAPPING EFFECTS OF BLINDNESS HAS NOW BECOME CRITICAL.

THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY OF MEETING THIS CRITICAL NEED WILL BE IN PROVIDING FEDERAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE CHanneled THROUGH APPROPRIATE STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES, AS WELL AS INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION, TO PROVIDE DIRECT SERVICES, TRAIN SPECIALIZED PERSONNEL, AND CONDUCT RESEARCH AND DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS.

YOUR SUPPORT APPRECIATED

THE SUPPORT OF YOUR FINE NATIONAL FEDERATION IN BEHALF OF THIS BILL, S. 1030, HAS INDEED BEEN APPRECIATED. NO HEARINGS HAVE YET BEEN SCHEDULED, BUT DUE TO ITS FINE PROVISIONS AND NON-PARTISAN SUPPORT, I LOOK FOR EARLY ENACTMENT. I AM SURE THAT WE ALL REALIZE THAT THE INITIAL 3 YEAR PROGRAM PROPOSED IS SMALL IN SCOPE, BUT THAT IT HAS THE POTENTIAL TO DEMONSTRATE WHAT I BELIEVE TO BE THE MOST EFFECTIVE METHOD OF REACHING AND SERVING A TOO LONG NEGLECTED SEGMENT

OF OUR POPULATION. IT WOULD HELP TO REDUCE THE ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGES AND INEQUALITIES OF BLINDNESS THAT 430,000 AMERICANS ARE LIVING WITH TODAY.

NATIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCE CENTER

ALL OF THESE OUTSTANDING PROGRAMS WHICH I HAVE MENTIONED POSSESS THE SAME GOAL -- A REALIZATION OF THE FULL POTENTIAL OF ALL THE HANDICAPPED. UNFORTUNATELY THERE IS NOT PRESENTLY AVAILABLE A SINGLE SOURCE TO WHICH A DISABLED PERSON CAN TURN AND BE REASONABLY SURE THAT HE CAN GET HIS QUESTIONS ANSWERED OR ROUTED TO THOSE PROGRAMS THAT CAN HELP SOLVE HIS PROBLEM.

IN ORDER TO PROVIDE A POINT OF CONTACT FOR INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS, PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS, PROFESSIONAL GROUPS AND CITY AND STATE OFFICIALS WHO SEEK INFORMATION OR DIRECTION REGARDING THE HANDICAPPED, I PROPOSED A NATIONAL RESOURCE AND INFORMATION CENTER. THE NATIONAL RESPONSE TO MY PROPOSAL FOR THIS CENTER HAS BEEN ENCOURAGING. THE REACTION FROM GOVERNMENT, PRIVATE CITIZENS, AND ORGANIZATIONS IN THIS FIELD WAS OVERWHELMINGLY FAVORABLE. IN THE 91ST CONGRESS THE SENATE PASSED THE BILL TO ESTABLISH THE CENTER, BUT THE HOUSE WAS UNABLE TO COMPLETE ITS ACTION. I HAVE REINTRODUCED THE PROPOSAL THIS YEAR AS SENATE BILL 41, AND CONGRESSMAN CHARLES BENNETT OF FLORIDA HAS INTRODUCED A COMPANION

BILL IN THE HOUSE. H.R. 8395, THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION ACT, ALSO CONTAINS THE EXACT PROVISIONS OF MY ORIGINAL PROPOSAL FOR THE CENTER. I ANTICIPATE EQUALLY ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT IN THE 92ND CONGRESS AND LOOK FOR PASSAGE IN BOTH THE SENATE AND HOUSE.

SUCH LEGISLATION HAS OVERWHELMING SIGNIFICANCE FOR DISABLED PEOPLE, THEIR FAMILIES, AND THE ORGANIZATIONS THAT WORK TO SERVE THEM. IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PRESENTLY AVAILABLE RESOURCES FOR OUR HANDICAPPED CITIZENS, WE MUST BE ON GUARD TO SEE THAT OUR EFFORTS AND MONEY ARE DIRECTED TO THE POINT OF GREATEST NEED. IT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE INFORMATION CENTER TO CONSOLIDATE THE KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION REGARDING SERVICES FOR THE HANDICAPPED. THESE RESOURCES MUST BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE HANDICAPPED IN THE FORM THEY CAN USE AND AT THE TIME THEY MOST NEED THEM. PRESENTLY, THERE IS A CRUCIAL LACK OF COORDINATION AND CENTRALLY AVAILABLE INFORMATION, FOR EXAMPLE, ON INFORMATION ABOUT REHABILITATION FACILITIES AND SERVICES. MUCH THE SAME CAN BE SAID FOR INFORMATION ON EMPLOYMENT, HEALTH CARE, ECONOMIC AID, AND MANY OTHER IMPORTANT AREAS.

WE HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE AND RESOURCES TO RESTORE MANY MORE OF THE MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY DISABLED TO PRODUCTIVE LIVES. THE TRAGEDY LIES IN THE FACT THAT FEW AMERICANS ARE AWARE OF THE CAPABILITIES AND

SERVICES OF MODERN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROGRAMS FOR THE HANDICAPPED. THEY ARE ALSO UNAWARE OF THE HUMAN AND ECONOMIC LOSS THIS IGNORANCE IMPOSES.

IMMEASURABLE BENEFITS

THIS EXISTING CAVITY CAN BE FILLED BY THE INFORMATION CENTER. IT IS AN ANSWER TO A CONCRETE AND WIDELY RECOGNIZED NEED. RATHER THAN DUPLICATE THE FUNCTIONS OF PROGRAMS IN EITHER THE GOVERNMENT OR PRIVATE SECTORS, ITS FUNCTION WILL BE THE COORDINATION OF THE MULTIFARIOUS INFORMATION RELATING TO ALL PROGRAMS TO BENEFIT THE HANDICAPPED. THE MILLIONS OF AMERICANS IN THE HANDICAPPED MINORITY WILL BE THE **DIRECT BENEFICIARIES** OF THE **CENTER'S** SERVICES. AMERICA WILL BE THE ULTIMATE BENEFICIARY THROUGH INCREASED CONTRIBUTION, WELL BEING, AND PERSONAL FULFILLMENT OF THE HANDICAPPED.