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Mr. Carey says hope to have a report by Thursday

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HR 7100

For Release Upon Delivery

Statement  
by  
Congressman John E. Fogarty  
before the  
Special Subcommittee on Labor  
of the  
House Committee on Education and Labor  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Tuesday, April 27, 1965  
9:45 a.m.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee on Labor:

My deep personal concern for the education of deaf children and young adults and the urgent need for improved educational opportunities for this group brings me here to testify in support of H.R. 7100 which was introduced by me on the floor of the House of Representatives on April 5, 1965.

A similar bill was also introduced by my colleague Mr. Carey. In introducing this bill, Mr. Carey most eloquently illustrates the special need for this institute by saying:

"...on April 8, 1864, Abraham Lincoln signed the charter for Gallaudet College here in the Nation's Capitol. This was the first and still is the only institution providing post-secondary education for deaf young adults. Today, 101 years later, I bring to this 89th Congress, a piece of legislation for further assistance to the young deaf adults of our country. This bill would establish a National Technical Institute for the Deaf, the second post-secondary educational institution in our great country."

The need for the technical institute that has been proposed has been well documented by professional educators in this field. The report submitted to the Office of the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare by his Advisory Committee on Education of the Deaf also points out the need for improved opportunities at the post-secondary level for deaf youth. Discussion groups, as a part of the recent National Workshop on Improved

Vocational Opportunities for the Deaf, sponsored by the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration in October 1964, also identified the need for further technical training opportunities to meet the increasing technological demands of our society. The recent study supported by the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration on Occupational Status of the Young Deaf Adult of New England indicates that approximately five-sixths of our adult deaf are employed in non-skilled jobs, as compared to only one-half of our hearing population. Subsequent to the announcement of this proposed legislation, numerous letters have come in to my office from lay and professional organization leaders and other individuals who wholeheartedly endorse the plan as a most timely piece of legislation.

Dr. Abraham Stahler of the U.S. Department of Labor in his keynote address at the National Workshop on Improved Vocational Opportunities for the Deaf described major occupational trends having implications for the future job opportunities for the deaf. He indicated that there is a steadily increasing demand for workers with higher levels of education and skills, and that the trend is rapidly moving away from unskilled and lesser occupations.

Very few deaf people at present have an opportunity to continue their education beyond what is available to them in State and local school programs. Therefore, most of these people are going to be completely lost in the labor markets of today and even more so tomorrow unless much more education and training is made available to them.

Full utilization of the intellectual potential of the deaf child is seriously impeded by deafness. Only through the use of every educational weapon and all the modern electronic technology available can this potential be brought to fruition.

Most residential schools for the deaf offer programs that provide for the equivalent of an eighth grade education. Very few of the specialized day school programs go beyond this level. Students desiring more than this are expected to enroll in regular high school and other vocational schools for the hearing. Because of the serious communication problem involved, little more than one percent of these children can really communicate well enough to do this.

Considerable pressure is being brought upon Gallaudet College in Washington to accommodate a greater number of students than ever before in its history. Most of those who apply for admission indicate by this effort, their desire for further knowledge and training beyond what they have been able to secure in their own community of State. Since this is the only facility available that can provide such an opportunity, a rejection for admission very much closes the door to any possible further education for them.

It is my understanding that last year over 450 students applied for admission to Gallaudet College. Of these, it was reported, only half were able to be enrolled. The others, now having nowhere else to turn for further education or training, are forced to join the ranks of those who have gone on before to secure whatever kind of employment they can.

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The opportunities that could be offered to this group through an imaginative curriculum in the technical institute that is being considered would open up an entirely different world for these students.

Federal legislation has provided such in recent years to assure the proper upgrading of educational opportunities for all our citizens. The deaf who have the talent and potential, however, are left out of this picture. The establishment of a National Technical Institute for this group would give them the opportunities we have so generously provided for others.