

REMARKS OF U.S. REPRESENTATIVE JOHN E. FOGARTY,
SECOND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF RHODE ISLAND AT
NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE OF THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE
AND GOVERNORS' COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT OF THE
HANDICAPPED BANQUET AT THE SHERATON BILTMORE
HOTEL, PROVIDENCE, R. I. THURSDAY, JUNE 7, 1962

Governor Notte, General Maas, Mr. Stanzler,
ladies and gentlemen,

It is with pride and pleasure that I accept this plaque from the President's Committee for my support and efforts on behalf of our handicapped citizens. But it is also with a certain reluctance that I accept it, because I know that it symbolizes something so much greater than my own personal efforts in this work. It symbolizes nothing less than a great awakening of the American People to the needs of the handicapped. In all my twenty-two years in Congress, I have seen nothing more remarkable than this increased awareness of the plight of the nearly one in 10 Americans whose activities are limited by some impairment.

And this increased awareness is almost wholly a phenomenon of the past twenty years. To be sure, after World War I there was the dawn of the realization that better prosthetic devices and better employment opportunities were needed for the Doughboys who didn't come marching

home, but came in wheelchairs or on crutches. Also, for more than 40 years the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation has worked with state agencies in developing the Nation's largest rehabilitation program. But it was World War II that first forced all of us to take a new look at the handicapped, because there was a severe shortage of manpower. It was that simple.

It was appropriate that the Civil Service Commission should begin a Government-wide program for selective placement of the handicapped in 1942. It was more than appropriate that the Government -- the employer of so many in the working force -- should begin this placement service. But it was inevitable, in 1942, that this should begin, because the Government was faced with the problem of recruiting thousands of employees to man Federal offices and installations, and it saw in the disabled an untapped reserve of prospective workers, many of whom were already qualified for Government work by education and training.

What was the greatest factor preventing these prospective workers from entering the Government's plants

and offices in great numbers? Basically, it was the widespread prejudice against employing severely disabled people. Bias had to give way to the pressure of the wartime manpower shortage, and the barriers to employment of the handicapped in Government began to come down.

Meanwhile, the same factors were at work outside the Government, and the trend was the same: the lowering of the barriers of prejudice.

Then, in 1945, the emphasis shifted from the negative to the positive: our thinking about the problems of rehabilitation changed drastically. The veterans who returned maimed and disabled, minus limbs, or sight, or hearing, presented physical and psychological rehabilitation problems so numerous and so profound as to require everyone to think anew about their plight. Never before in our history were we so concerned on the national level about rehabilitation. Never were we so willing to support new and expanded programs in an effort to rehabilitate and reintegrate these service men as productive citizens into the civilian economy -- an economy their heroism had preserved.

Many things were done, at that time, which were dramatic new efforts to meet the great challenge before us. The urgent need for rehabilitation for veterans was one of the pressures that caused us in Congress to appropriate large amounts of money for health and welfare programs. At that time the amounts seemed so large because they were unprecedented, but we were trying to discover what needed to be done and how much could be done, in this field. We discovered some shocking things. I recall that some of us were appalled to learn that while satisfactory lower extremity artificial limbs were available for the veteran amputee, there had been no great amount of progress in the development of upper extremity artificial limbs since World War I. I recall that in 1945 the National Research Council established a committee to look into this neglected area.

The President's Committee on Employment of the Physically Handicapped dates from this same era, born of the post-war wave of humanitarian feelings. From 1947 to 1955 this Committee met in Washington, but in 1955

a momentous decision was made to begin a series of regional meetings, in an effort to widen the participation of people and groups who are actively interested in programs for the employment of the physically handicapped.

I have said that this was a momentous decision. What the decision-makers intended to accomplish is admirably illustrated here at this -- the third regional meeting of 1962. Mr. Harold Stanzler is especially to be commended for this fine program. He has organized a conference program of interest to the people who must be reached, and he has communicated to those who have been invited the feeling that their presence is vital to the success of our rehabilitation efforts.

The success of these regional meetings hinges on one thing: they must not be deliberative bodies of experts or specialists in the field of rehabilitation. They must be meetings of action. We have long ago taken thought, all of us, in these matters. We must do all in our power to see that action results from this meeting. I have every confidence that it will, embracing

as it does employers, Governors' committee representatives from the six New England states, and a host of representatives of public and private groups and individuals.

The participants here who represent industry, business, the trades, medical groups, personnel and supervisory groups, industrial insurance and others -- these participants hold the key to job opportunities for the handicapped.

We all recognize that the key to job opportunities for those we are so concerned with tonight is in the hand of one man: the employer. All our efforts at rehabilitation come to nothing unless the individual finally finds himself in an industrial plant, a store, an office, or other gainful employment. All of us know that Bureau of Labor Statistics show that the handicapped person, placed in the right job, is a little more efficient than the able-bodied, is as safe a worker as the able-bodied, and has far fewer disabling injuries on the job than the able-bodied. In short, the handicapped employee is not just as good as, but generally better than, the able-bodied employee -- as the Du Pont company learned, from a nationwide survey of its handicapped employees.

But I think that those of us here tonight are more interested in another set of statistics -- those from the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. For the sixth year in a row, the number of disabled persons rehabilitated and placed in successful employment through Federal and State vocational rehabilitation programs set a new record -- 92,500, for the year ending June 30, 1961. At the same time, the Veterans Administration has been placing more than 100,000 disabled veterans each year, and the State Employment Services have placed more than a quarter of a million handicapped persons in productive jobs each year for several years, now.

This is tremendously encouraging to me. I believe that these are signs -- and only a few of many -- that the whole climate of America is changing, for the handicapped, as the realization spreads across the land that a disabled employee who is rehabilitated and properly placed is a very able employee indeed. I believe that America has gone through its ice age of indifference toward the handicapped; I believe that we are moving into a warmer period, in which their capacities may be used, as never before.

Aside from the humanitarian concepts involved in rehabilitation, what we are doing together in this effort -- and it is always a joint effort -- is sound public action. While serving as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Labor and Health, Education, and Welfare of the House Appropriations Committee I have explored the subject of rehabilitation in the course of my legislative efforts to improve the health of the American people.

While the humanitarian value of rehabilitation is beyond estimate, the economic value can be indicated in terms of monetary returns and productivity. Let us remind everyone that of the 92,500 disabled persons rehabilitated and placed in gainful employment during 1961, one-fifth of them had been receiving public support at a cost of \$18 million of Federal, State and local monies. Let us remind everyone, also, that 75 percent of the total rehabilitants during 1961 were not working when accepted for rehabilitation programs. The remaining 25 percent were working part-time at low wages.

After rehabilitation, however, and subsequent employment, the combined annual wage of these two groups is estimated to be around \$180 million annually. And to the national productivity, these employed handicapped persons will from now on be contributing about 137 million man-hours of work.

The enormous success realized in the rehabilitation of the handicapped is an inspiration to us in Congress. Proposals now before the Congress aim to achieve the maximum number of rehabilitations possible next year under existing legislation by providing adequate Federal funds to match available State funds for basic rehabilitation services. In addition, these proposals call for increased Federal grants for the extension and improvement of State rehabilitation programs. Current 1963 estimates propose that Federal grants for basic rehabilitation services be distributed to the States on an allotment base of \$110 million. This allotment base would permit the full matching of available State funds in New England.

As I see the problem of rehabilitation today, there are two main battlegrounds upon which the cause of the handicapped must be won.

One of these battlegrounds is the local community. Here, I think, the campaign is going well. The handicapped citizen is known in his local community; his problem must be studied there, and its solution found there. It is there that the employer can and must be won over to the advantages of employing the physically handicapped by being educated to accept the fact that it is sound business to do so. Here the representatives of private organizations for the handicapped, educators, the pulpit, civic societies, the press, radio, television, municipal officials and local and State and Federal officials and agencies are welded together in a going, productive National effort. We have an army in the field -- 2,500 coordinators responsible to the Federal government, who are working with other coordinators designated by State governors -- there are 18 coordinators in Rhode Island alone. This campaign must not falter; victories are still to be won.

The other battleground upon which the cause of the handicapped can be won is in the research laboratory. Much of the research in both biological and behavioral sciences holds promise for providing answers that will

move us one step closer to what we may call PREHABILITATION. This word, by the way, is to me characteristic of the forward-looking concept which aims at the prevention of conditions which would ultimately demand rehabilitation. A great deal of this research is being conducted or supported by the Public Health Service through its National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland. The discoveries made possible through this research will be shared by all of you engaged in rehabilitation work, directly or indirectly.

At the Hearings before my Subcommittee in March, I was informed of two major breakthroughs in connection with the mentally retarded. One of these is the discovery that a special diet will prevent mental deficiency in children with phenylketonuria (PKU), an inborn error of metabolism. The other breakthrough is the development of a new blood test to monitor how completely milk and milk products are eliminated from the diets of children with galactosemia.

I am keenly aware that these two forms of mental retardation are rare -- the Children's Bureau found last

year only 25 children with PKU in all the clinics they sponsor, and 25 children out of 4 million births is not many. But I am told that the fact that mental retardation was prevented in those 25 children represents a saving of \$1 billion, over their lifetimes.

As most of you know, I have had a long-continued interest in the problems of the mentally handicapped. I am proud to have had a part in the passing of the National Mental Health Act of 1946 in response to the emerging demand for better health services for our citizens by professionals, educators, civic and religious leaders. The people spoke, and we in Congress listened -- and acted. I was ashamed to discover in 1956 that no Federal funds were specifically allocated for programs to conquer mental retardation; since that time, the funds for this purpose have grown from practically nothing to almost \$20 million.

Of course, mental retardation is only one of the numerous disablers which are costing the taxpayers nearly \$800 million annually. I am concerned with all of these disabling conditions.

I am concerned with the 8 million people in the United States who have defective hearing or speech impediments. I have introduced legislation in previous sessions of Congress to do something for these unfortunates; and, again this session, I introduced into the House of Representatives a bill to make available to individuals suffering speech and hearing specialists required to help them overcome their handicaps. H.R. 10614 would establish a program of grants in aid to accredited public and nonprofit institutions of higher education to assist in covering the cost of courses of graduate training and study leading to the master's or doctor's degree. There are only 2,000 certified speech pathologists and audiologists in this Nation. We need 10 times that many. To meet the educational needs of some 30,000 deaf children requires the training of some 500 teachers every year. We are now training less than one-third that number. Tragically, we know that three-fourths of the people with speech and hearing difficulties could be rehabilitated if we had the audiologists and teachers we need.

The problem of our senior citizens also concerns me deeply. Many of you will recall that I was instrumental in calling a White House Conference in 1961 to consider

the plight of this segment of our population. At the moment we have 17 million Americans 65 years of age or older; we will have about 25 million, in 1980, in this age group. Our senior citizens are overcrowding our hospitals with chronic disability conditions at the expense of the acutely ill. Many of these older people do not need the full range of hospital care. Appropriate surveys show that after adequate rehabilitation some of these aged can return to work--at least part-time work--and thus live independently, again.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have come back to our central theme for this regional meeting: "Uniting to Employ the Handicapped." Rehabilitation without employment opportunities is an empty gesture. But I am encouraged -- and I know all of us here are encouraged -- by the waking up of employers during the past two decades to the fact that the handicapped employee -- once retrained and properly placed -- is no longer a handicapped employee. It has been a team effort -- National, State and Community -- which has taken down the barriers of prejudice which stood behind unrealistic physical standards

for employment and is even now causing a rewriting of the industrial insurance regulations and laws.

Some of you will recall and I am sure all of you will agree with the profound words of Galen, the physician, "employment is Nature's best physician." And, as President Kennedy -- who has himself shown us how to overcome physical handicaps -- has said, we need the talents and skills of the disabled, if our economy is to reach a high level of performance.