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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN...*

TALKING POINTS:

CALLING OF THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE

ON HANDICAPPED INDIVIDUALS

NOVEMBER 22, 1975

~~THE~~ PRESIDENT HAS ~~SHEP~~

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON HANDICAPPED
INDIVIDUALS

IT'S A PLEASURE TO WELCOME TO THE WHITE HOUSE TODAY

SENATOR RANDOLPH

SENATOR STAFFORD

SECRETARY MATHEWS

DR. VISCARDI

AND THE DISTINGUISHED LEADERS OF MANY OF THE ORGANIZATIONS
CONCERNED WITH THE HANDICAPPED

I AM HONORED TO ANNOUNCE TODAY THAT THE FIRST
WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON HANDICAPPED INDIVIDUALS WILL
BE HELD NEXT YEAR.

THE TIME HAS COME FOR A COORDINATED, NATIONAL
UNDERTAKING TO ADDRESS THE CONCERNS OF THIS NATION'S
35 MILLION HANDICAPPED CITIZENS -- TO RESPOND TO THEIR
ABILITIES AS WELL AS THEIR DISABILITIES. THIS HISTORIC
WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD IN DECEMBER, 1976 --
A FITTING CLIMAX OF THE BICENTENNIAL YEAR AND THE VALUES
WE SEEK TO REGENERATE.

THE CONFERENCE WILL BRING TOGETHER REPRESENTATIVES
OF MORE THAN 50 GOVERNMENT AGENCIES NOW DEALING WITH
PROBLEMS OF THE HANDICAPPED, ALONG WITH HUNDREDS OF OTHERS
REPRESENTING PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS AND STATE AND LOCAL
GOVERNMENTS.

A 28 MEMBER NATIONAL PLANNING AND ADVISORY
COUNCIL TO THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE HAS BEEN APPOINTED.

THIS MORNING, I AM PLEASED TO NAME DR. HENRY
VISCARDI JR. OF KINGS POINT, LONG ISLAND, AS CHAIRMAN
OF THIS COUNCIL. JACK F. SMITH OF ROCHESTER, NEW YORK,
HAS BEEN APPOINTED AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE PLANNING STAFF.

BOTH OF THESE MEN HAVE EARNED NATIONAL REPUTATIONS
FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING WORK FOR THE HANDICAPPED. BOTH
HAVE OVERCOME DISABILITIES TO DEMONSTRATE GREAT ABILITIES.

I AM PLEASED THAT BOTH DR. VISCARDI AND MR. SMITH ARE WITH US TODAY, AND THAT ALSO IN ATTENDANCE ARE SECRETARY MATTHEWS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE; ~~SENATORS ROBERT DOLE OF KANSAS,~~ ROBERT STAFFORD OF VERMONT AND JENNINGS RANDOLPH OF WEST VIRGINIA; AND REPRESENTATIVES OF EIGHT OF THE KEY ORGANIZATIONS WORKING FOR THE HANDICAPPED.

A MAJOR PURPOSE OF THIS CONFERENCE IS TO
GENERATE A RESPONSIVE NATIONAL AWARENESS OF THE PROBLEMS
FACING THE HANDICAPPED.

CONCERN FOR THE HANDICAPPED IS NOT UNIQUE TO
THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. STATE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS AND
PRIVATE CITIZENS MUST ALSO TURN THEIR ATTENTION TO THE
NEEDS OF THE HANDICAPPED.

ACTION TO ALLEVIATE THESE NEEDS WILL BE ONE
OF THE MAJOR PURPOSES OF THE CONFERENCE. ALONG WITH MY
COLLEAGUES IN THE CONGRESS AND STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS,
I LOOK FORWARD TO RECEIVING THOSE RECOMMENDATIONS.

I WAS DELIGHTED TO LEARN THAT THE NEWLY FORMED
NATIONAL PLANNING AND ADVISORY COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE THAT
AT LEAST HALF OF THE DELEGATES TO THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE
BE HANDICAPPED INDIVIDUALS THEMSELVES .

THIS MAKES VERY GOOD SENSE. THE PROBLEMS
OF THE HANDICAPPED ARE TOO OFTEN LEFT TO PEOPLE WITHOUT
HANDICAPS WHO MAY SOMETIMES LACK PERSONAL EXPERIENCE
WHICH GIVES GREAT INSIGHT.

OF THE 28 MILLION ADULTS WITH PHYSICAL AND MENTAL
HANDICAPS, ONLY 800,000 ARE CURRENTLY EMPLOYED -- AND MANY
OF THESE HAVE JOBS BENEATH THEIR FULL ABILITIES.

THIS NATION'S HANDICAPPED CITIZENS HAVE A
RIGHT TO LIVE SELF-RELIANTLY -- WITH THE SAME DIGNITY AS
ALL OF THEIR FELLOW CITIZENS. TO HELP THEM REALIZE THEIR
FULL CAPACITY AS HUMAN BEINGS, TO HELP THEM ACHIEVE
HIGHER LEVELS OF PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL FULFILLMENT --
THOSE ARE MY GOALS IN CALLING THIS CONFERENCE.

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