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White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals

Q. The Executive Director of the White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals has criticized the Conference saying that the budget is inadequate, the time to plan too short and the general public awareness insufficient. He is requesting that the time of the conference be changed.

A. The President made public his full support of the White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals when he announced the Conference on November 22. As he said at that time " The time has come for a coordinated undertaking to address the concerns of this Nation's 35 million handicapped citizens to respond to their abilities as well as their disabilities."

The Administration has been working since early this year to plan and initiate the Conference within the limits of the authorizing legislation which mandated that the Conference take place by December 1976 and which authorized \$3.4 million. The planning and budgeting process has been proceeding. The National Planning and Advisory Council has been appointed, and a working staff for the Conference has been established.

December 1976 is not far away, but we believe it can be done and will work forward achieving a successful Conference in December. We are certainly willing, however to discuss this with those that are concerned and if the Congress passes a resolution suggesting that the Conference be held in 1977, we will certainly give full consideration.

As I have said, we are fully behind this Conference and will continue to work for its success.

SCM
12/31/75