

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

NATIONAL EMPLOY THE HANDICAPPED WEEK, 1975

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BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

America offers a promise that all its people who are willing and qualified to work shall have an equal opportunity to do so. Elimination of many discriminatory barriers has moved us closer toward the fulfillment of that promise. For our handicapped citizens, however, much more needs to be done.

The barriers facing the handicapped are not so much their own disabilities, but the attitudes of the non-handicapped toward their disabilities.

Those of us who are not handicapped think of what we could not do if we lost an arm or a leg, lost our sight or our voice, or were disabled in some other way. We often forget that the handicapped are thinking of what they can do.

We must learn to think like them -- positively! We must look not at what they cannot do, but at what they can do. We must look beyond the disability to the positive ability.

The disabled can perform a wide range of jobs with skill and efficiency. They do not need special jobs. They need the opportunity to compete, to prove that they can perform.

The Congress has recognized our special responsibility to the handicapped and, by a joint resolution approved August 11, 1945, as amended (36 U.S.C. 155), has asked the President to issue a suitable proclamation.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GERALD R. FORD, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate the week beginning October 5, 1975, as National Employ the Handicapped Week.

I call upon the Governors of the States, mayors and other public officials, and leaders of industry, labor, education, religious, veteran, farm, scientific, professional and other groups to join with the handicapped themselves in making the American people aware of the value and fairness of employing handicapped men and women.

Also, I call upon all employers to review and broaden their policies toward the employment of the handicapped.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fifteenth day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred seventy-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundredth.

GERALD R. FORD

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