

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 21, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

NATIONAL EMPLOY THE HANDICAPPED WEEK, 1976

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

As we celebrate the two-hundredth anniversary of our national independence, physically and mentally handicapped Americans are seeking new opportunities to use their talents, abilities and experience. Assisting those of our citizens who are disabled are programs designed to provide equality of opportunity and equality of education. These programs place new emphasis on the needs of those with severe disabilities, and a new and growing consumer movement of and for handicapped persons.

Our forefathers promised independence and made that promise a reality. Disabled people now seek fulfillment of that promise for themselves. We are firm in our resolve to remove those barriers which still prevent handicapped citizens from making their full contribution to the Nation's economic and social health.

Next spring the White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals will serve to stimulate a national assessment of problems facing individuals with handicaps and to develop recommendations to solve those problems.

In order to enlist support for an interest in the employment of otherwise qualified but handicapped persons, the Congress, by joint resolution of August 11, 1945, as amended (36 U.S.C. 155), has called for the designation of the first week in October of each year as National Employ the Handicapped Week and has requested the President to issue a proclamation each year calling for its appropriate observance.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GERALD R. FORD, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate the week beginning October 3, 1976, as National Employ the Handicapped Week, and call upon the people of the United States to observe that week with ceremonies designed to elicit recognition and support for the needs, contributions, and aspirations of those citizens.

I urge the Nation's Governors, Mayors, and all other public officials, as well as leaders in every area of American life, to join with disabled people in active participation in these activities.

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

GERALD R. FORD

#