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Independent Living Project & Association for Rehabilitation

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THANK YOU. IT'S GOOD TO BE HERE TODAY.

AS YOU KNOW, ELECTION DAY IS NEXT WEEK. I WILL RESIST THE TEMPTATION---AND IT ISN'T EASY---TO MAKE SOME PARTISAN POLITICAL COMMENTS.

I WILL SAY THIS: THE 1982 ELECTIONS ARE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT. WHEN I FIRST CAME TO THE SENATE, THE DEMOCRATS CONTROLLED IT. FOR THE LAST TWO YEARS THE REPUBLICANS HAVE BEEN IN CONTROL.

IT MAKES A DIFFERENCE, AS YOU WELL KNOW FROM YOUR CONCERNS ABOUT BUDGET CUTS AND OTHER MATTERS.
So whatever your party, whatever your philosophy, whomever you may support, I urge you to vote.

I will not make any suggestions about how you should vote. When you hear my comments, you might have a vague, lingering suspicion about which way I am leaning.

As Charles Dickens once wrote, these are the best of times and the worst of times.

These are times of real—and sometimes cruel—austerity.
THESE ARE ALSO TIMES OF TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS THAT CAN MAKE LIFE BETTER FOR ALL PEOPLE, INCLUDING THE DISABLED.

TODAY I'D LIKE TO DISCUSS BOTH THE GOOD NEWS AND THE BAD NEWS. LET'S TAKE THE BAD NEWS FIRST.

THE CURRENT ADMINISTRATION HAS PROPOSED MAJOR—AND SOMETIMES UNFORTUNATE—CHANGES IN POLICY RELATING TO THE DISABLED.

WHAT BEGAN AS THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF DISABLED PERSONS HAS BECOME THE NATIONAL YEAR OF DISMANTLING PROGRAMS.
THE LARGEST TAX CUT IN AMERICAN HISTORY, AND THE LARGEST PEACETIME DEFENSE BUILD-UP IN AMERICAN HISTORY, HAVE CREATED THE LARGEST FEDERAL DEFICITS IN HISTORY.

I HAVE SPOKEN OUT ABOUT THE UNFAIRNESS OF A TAX CUT THAT DISPROPORTIONATELY HELPS THE MOST WEALTHY.

THAT TAX CUT, EVEN AFTER THIS YEAR'S TAX BILL, WILL COST THE TREASURY OVER $500 BILLION.
AND I HAVE SUPPORTED A STEADY INCREASE IN DEFENSE SPENDING -- BUT NOT A FIVE YEAR PROGRAM THAT WILL COST A TRILLION AND A HALF DOLLARS.

THAT TAX CUT, AND THAT DEFENSE BUDGET, HAVE CREATED DEFICITS THAT WILL SURPASS $100 BILLION THIS YEAR AND APPROACH $175 BILLION NEXT YEAR.

AND THOSE DEFICITS HAVE FORCED THE ADMINISTRATION TO PROPOSE SUBSTANTIAL BUDGET CUTS, WHICH FORCE MANY DISABLED PERSONS TO PAY THE PRICE.
THE PROBLEM IS EVEN DEEPER THAN IT MAY SEEM.

WHILE PROGRAMS ARE BEING CUT, THE ADMINISTRATION'S NEW FEDERALISM SEeks TO TRANSFER PROGRAMS TO THE STATES.

BUT STATES WOULD BE FORCED TO EXERCISE RESPONSIBILITIES WITHOUT HAVING THE RESOURCES TO PAY FOR THEM.

THEY ARE FACED WITH THEIR OWN CHOICES: EITHER TO RAISE TAXES, OFTEN PROPERTY TAXES OR CUT STATE PROGRAMS, INCLUDING PROGRAMS FOR THE HANDICAPPED, OR BOTH.

TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, THE RANGE OF BUDGET CUTS AFFECT PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO PREVENT PEOPLE FROM BECOMING DISABLED IN THE FIRST PLACE.
I would cite the retreat on job safety, auto safety, and children's vaccinations, to name just three.

As a result, the poor and the disabled find themselves besieged on all fronts.

From child nutrition to burial expense, they are paying a heavy and unfair price.

Let's consider programs that are particularly important to the disabled:

SECTION 504 IS, IN NAME AND EFFECT, A CIVIL RIGHTS PROGRAM FOR DISABLED PERSONS.

IT GIVES THE DISABLED WHAT THEY DESERVE AS AMERICANS AND TAXPAYERS: THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN FEDERALLY FUNDED PROGRAMS AS BENEFICIARIES AND EMPLOYEES.

SINCE THE GOVERNMENT FUNDS A VARIETY OF PROGRAMS -- INCLUDING EDUCATION, JOB TRAINING, AND TRANSPORTATION -- IT IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT THAT THE DISABLED NOT BE EXCLUDED.

PARENTS, DISABLED CHILDREN, AND DISABLED ADULTS SHOULD NOT HAVE TO BARGAIN AND HAGGLE, INCH BY INCH, FOR ACCESS TO FEDERAL PROGRAMS.
THE DISABLED SHOULD BE ACTIVE CITIZENS, WITH THE SAME RIGHTS, AND THE SAME ACCESS, AS ALL AMERICANS.

THIS IS FUNDAMENTAL FAIRNESS AND SIMPLE JUSTICE -- NO MORE, NO LESS.

BUT SIMPLE JUSTICE IS UNDER ATTACK.

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS ARE DRAWING PLANS THAT MAY SUBSTANTIALLY RESTRICT THE RIGHTS THAT SECTION 504 PROTECTS.

THESE PROPOSALS SHOULD BE FORMALLY ANNOUNCED AFTER THE ELECTION.
THROUGH VARIOUS LEAKS, WE HAVE SOME IDEA OF WHAT TO EXPECT AND THE NEWS IS NOT GOOD. WE SHOULD BE CLEAR ABOUT OUR POSITION, NOW:

PROHIBITIONS AGAINST EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION SHOULD NOT BE DELETED. THAT'S NOT FAIRNESS.

SEVERELY DISABLED PERSONS -- THOSE MOST IN NEED -- SHOULD NOT BE EXCLUDED. THAT'S NOT JUSTICE.

REFERENCES TO "EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY" SHOULD NOT BE REMOVED. THAT'S NOT CIVIL RIGHTS.
GAPING LOOPHOLES SHOULD NOT BE OPENED IN ACCESSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS. THAT'S NOT REASONABLE.

AND ENFORCEMENT PROVISIONS SHOULD NOT BE DILUTED BEYOND RECOGNITION AND BEYOND EFFECTIVENESS. THAT'S NOT RESPONSIBLE.

I WANT TO ASSURE YOU THAT I WILL CLOSELY FOLLOW ANY PROPOSALS THAT MIGHT EMERGE.

THE CIVIL RIGHTS FOR THE DISABLED WERE WON AFTER A HARD AND DIFFICULT STRUGGLE THEY MUST NOT BE LOST.
WE ARE SEEING THE GROWTH OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES THAT ARE HAVING A PROFOUND IMPACT ON OUR ECONOMY.

NEW INDUSTRIES ARE BEING BORN, IN COMPUTERS, COMMUNICATIONS, AND ADVANCED ELECTRONICS. FOREIGN COMPETITION IS TOUGH.

OLDER INDUSTRIES ARE BEING CHALLENGED ON ALL FRONTS.

THE RESULT IS THAT SOME STATES -- INCLUDING PARTS OF MONTANA -- FACE NEAR DEPRESSION CONDITIONS.

ONE WAY TO STRENGTHEN OUR ECONOMY IS TO IMPROVE, NOT WEAKEN, EDUCATION.
WE NEED PEOPLE KNOWLEDGEABLE IN MATH AND SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.

EVERY CHILD, INCLUDING AND ESPECIALLY DISABLED CHILDREN, SHOULD HAVE THE CHANCE TO FULFILL THEIR HUMAN POTENTIAL.

THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF UNFILLED TEACHING POSITIONS. THERE IS A NEED FOR MORE JOB TRAINING, AND JOB PLACEMENT.

WE NEED TO STRENGTHEN OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM.

IN PARTICULAR, WE SHOULD NOT MOVE BACKWARDS IN OUR EFFORTS TO EDUCATE DISABLED AMERICANS, WHO HAVE SO MUCH TO CONTRIBUTE.
Since the enactment of P.L. 94-142, large numbers of them have been given a better education.

It has involved hard work.

Hard work by the students, who have overcome their disadvantages.

By the parents, whose love is the greatest gift.

And by professionals, the teachers and therapists, whose dedication and talent have gotten the job done.
BUT DESPITE THIS PROGRESS, THE ADMINISTRATION PROPOSED MAJOR CHANGES IN THE WAY THESE PROGRAMS ARE ADMINISTERED.

THEY WOULD HAVE REDUCED THE COMMITMENT OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO EDUCATE THE HANDICAPPED.

FOR EXAMPLE, THEY PROPOSED ELIMINATING THE REQUIREMENT THAT THE PARENTS OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN CONSENT TO THE EDUCATIONAL PLANS BEING DEVELOPED FOR THEIR KIDS.

AND THEY PROPOSED ELIMINATING THE REQUIREMENT THAT IMPORTANT MEDICAL SERVICES, SUCH AS EYEGlasses OR INSULIN INJECTIONS, BE PROVIDED.
WE ARE SEEING SIGNIFICANT TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS IN MANY FIELDS. IN THE COMING YEARS, THESE TECHNOLOGIES CAN TRULY IMPROVE THE LIVES OF MILLIONS OF DISABLED AMERICANS.

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE HAS EMBARKED ON A SPECIAL PROJECT ON THE HANDICAPPED IN SCIENCE.

THEY HAVE BEEN STUDYING HOW TO MAKE PRODUCTS THAT THE HANDICAPPED CAN USE, AND HOW TO TAP THE SPECIAL SKILLS OF HANDICAPPED SCIENTISTS.

THEY HAVE SOUGHT TO MAKE THE WORKPLACE SAFER AND MORE EFFICIENT. THEY ARE SEARCHING WAYS TO SUPPORT INDEPENDENCE IN THE HOME AS WELL.
LET ME GIVE YOU ONE CONCRETE EXAMPLE OF WHAT IS POSSIBLE.

JAMES CARLISLE IS A LICENSED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT WHO HAS CEREBRAL PALSY, USES A WHEELCHAIR, AND HAS LIMITED MOBILITY IN HIS HANDS.

HIS WORK OUTPUT WAS EXTREMELY SLOW, WHICH HARMED HIS BUSINESS.

HE INSTALLED A SPECIALLY ADAPTED COMPUTER AND WORD PROCESSOR. HE USES A COMPUTER SOFTWARE PACKAGE TO DO ACCOUNTS, PAYROLL, AND BOOKKEEPING WORK.
HIS CREATIVE USE OF TECHNOLOGY
ENABLES HIM TO DO INSTANT UPDATING AND
EXTENSIVE, COMPLICATED CALCULATIONS.

HE HAS DESIGNED HIS OWN TAX DEDUCTION
FORM, DEPRECIATION SCHEDULE, AND WAGE AND
TAX SUMMARY SHEET.

HE MAKES A GOOD LIVING, SERVES HIS
CLIENTS WELL, AND CONTRIBUTES TO OUR
NATIONAL ECONOMY.

HE BELIEVES -- AND I BELIEVE -- THAT
AS COMPUTER PRICES DECLINE AND EMPLOYMENT
OPPORTUNITIES INCREASE, MANY SEVERELY
DISABLED PEOPLE CAN USE THESE TOOLS TO
GREAT ADVANTAGE.
HERE IS A MAN WHO EMBODIES THE ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT, THE DRIVE AND THE CREATIVITY THAT IS SO IMPORTANT.

WE SHOULD LOOK FOR OTHER WAYS.

I HAVE ASKED THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE TO PREPARE A SUMMARY OF THEIR WORK, AND HOW IT MAY APPLY IN MONTANA. I HOPE TO CIRCULATE AND ANALYZE THIS MATERIAL AND SEE WHAT WE COULD POSSIBLY DO.

WE NEED TO FIND WAYS OF EXPANDING, AND DEVELOPING, HUMAN POTENTIAL. WE SHOULD STRIVE FOR THE GREATEST DEGREE OF INDEPENDENCE AND SUCCESS, IN THE HOME, IN THE SCHOOL, IN THE WORKPLACE.
EACH PERSON IS A SPECIAL CASE THAT DESERVES OUR ATTENTION AND SUPPORT.

LAST FOURTH OF JULY, NINE DISABLED AMERICANS CLIMBED THE 14,000 FOOT MOUNT RAINIER.

THEY CELEBRATED AMERICA'S BIRTHDAY BY CLIMBING ONE OF AMERICA'S HIGHEST MOUNTAINS.

FIVE WERE BLIND AND USED BRAILLE MAPS.

ONE VIETNAM VETERAN HAD AN ARTIFICIAL LEG.

ANOTHER WAS EPILEPTIC AND TWO OTHERS WERE DEAF.
ROBERT FROST ONCE WROTE:

"THE WOODS ARE LOVELY, DARK AND DEEP,
BUT WE HAVE PROMISES TO KEEP,
AND MILES TO GO BEFORE WE SLEEP."

TOGETHER, LET'S CLIMB THOSE MOUNTAINS,
AND WALK THOSE MILES, AND MAKE THAT PROMISE REAL.

THANK YOU.