

provided with a sound and sensible understanding, not only of the restrictions of his disability, but of the possibilities still available to him in spite of his impairment—provided with all this, Mr. Chairman, the blind person, the physically disabled person, is equipped to live a successful, self-dependent, contributory life. Denied all this, Mr. Chairman, untutored in the techniques of independent travel, the blind person is chained to a chair or the arm of his sighted family and friends.

Untrained in the competent use of braille, the blind person is illiterate, and cannot even record a telephone number or read a grocery list.

Denied the chance to share in the educational opportunities available to others, the physically impaired person remains ignorant of the wisdom and the knowledge and the experience of the ages, his intellect is untapped, his abilities and talents undeveloped and his possibilities of living a worthwhile life unrealizable.

Denied a sound and sensible understanding of his impairment, its restrictions and limitations, the problems and perplexities which it imposes upon him, the limitless possibilities of achievement still open to him—denied this philosophic orientation the blind person, the physically disabled person, will stagnate and smother beneath the fallacies and misconceptions of the past—and of the present—and he will become as helpless and as hopeless as he believes he is.

Mr. Chairman, the foregoing are not just exaggerated and overly dramatic phrases, empty of meaning, divested of reality, they are an attempt to make this committee and the Congress understand the plight of the handicapped, the possibilities of the handicapped.

And the descriptions that are given above are an effort to express the experiences of thousands and thousands of blind people, of physically disabled men and women—some of whom live successful, independent lives, while others live dependently; live futile, despairing lives.

Today, Mr. Chairman, properly trained and equipped, the blind person, the physically disabled person, has a more nearly equal chance to function constructively and fully in our society.

Improperly trained, inadequately equipped, or not trained or equipped at all, the blind person, the physically disabled person, is a nonparticipating spectator of life, just as he was 500 years ago.

Mr. Chairman, the National Federation of the Blind vigorously and unequivocally endorses and supports the provisions of H.R. 6230 to strengthen, broaden, and improve federally financed educational programs for handicapped children.

Specifically, Mr. Chairman, we support section 151 of H.R. 6230—which would establish regional resource centers, to provide testing and evaluation services to determine whether a child is really physically or mentally handicapped, to accurately ascertain the nature and the extent of the handicapping condition or conditions, to correctly diagnose the special educational needs of single or multihandicapped children, to develop programs to meet these needs, to further and advance the development of special education programs in the schools, agencies, and institutions in their respective regions.

Is there a need for such regional resource centers, Mr. Chairman?