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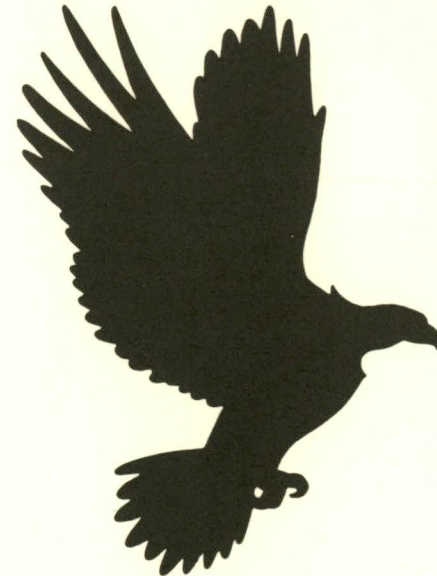
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**TOWARD**

# INDEPENDENCE

An Assessment of Federal Laws and Programs Affecting  
Persons With Disabilities — With Legislative Recommendations



National Council on the Handicapped

The National Council on the Handicapped has been mandated by law to review all Federal statutes pertaining to programs which assist handicapped individuals, and to recommend to the President and to the Congress legislative proposals which encourage the establishment of effective community based services, and which promote the full integration of persons with disabilities in the community, in schools, and in the workplace, and contribute to their independence and dignity.

Pursuant to this mandate, the Council will present its recommendations to the President and to the Congress in a report entitled **Forward Independence**. The special report contains 45 legislative proposals designed to end discrimination against individuals with disabilities, to require that all public and many private facilities and programs be made accessible to disabled persons, and to provide services which will enable persons with disabilities to enjoy a life of quality and participate in the mainstream of society as independent, productive, first class citizens.

The Council wishes to express its profound gratitude to the more than 2,000 disabled and nondisabled authorities representing all of the fifty states and almost all of the major national disability related organizations who donated their time, talents and economic resources to the production of **Forward Independence**. Their contributions are a credit to our democratic process and attest to the mutual commitment of our society to principles of independence and equal opportunities.

*The National Council on the Handicapped  
cordially invites you to attend  
A Reception celebrating the Council's presentation of  
**Forward Independence:**  
An Assessment of Federal Laws and Programs Affecting  
Persons with Disabilities — With Legislative Recommendations*

*to  
the President of the United States  
and to the  
United States Congress*

*Thursday, January 30, 1986  
5:00 pm-7:00 pm  
Room SD-106*

*Senate Dirksen Office Building  
Visitors Entrance*

*6 Street between First and Second Streets, N.E.*

*RSVP: (202) 458-5881  
(202) 458-5882 TDD  
by: January 24, 1986*



International Center for the Disabled  
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# NEWS

CONTACT:

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From: Margot Owens  
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FOR RELEASE: January 30  
After noon

DISABLED AMERICANS LEFT OUT OF MAINSTREAM

WASHINGTON -- Despite the fact that a sizeable majority of disabled Americans believe their life has improved over the decade, most also believe there still remains "a long road ahead" before their potential can be realized in American society, according to a new survey released today.

The study found that 47 percent of disabled Americans said things have gotten "somewhat better" for them, while an additional 25 percent said things had gotten "much better."

The survey was undertaken by ICD-International Center for the Disabled and conducted by the independent national opinion research firm of Louis Harris and Associates, Inc. It was released in conjunction with the National Council on the Handicapped's report, "Toward Independence," which was presented to President Reagan and Congress on January 30.

The survey findings were disclosed at a special briefing for the directors of the National Council on the Handicapped in Washington on January 29 at the Washington Marriot.

Commenting on the findings, Mr. John Wingate, executive director of ICD, said, "We believe the survey is a landmark document and hope its findings will have an enduring value in terms of providing an on-going framework for public policy for disabled Americans."

His views were echoed by Mr. Humphrey Taylor, president of Louis Harris and Associates, Inc., who said, "America can be proud of the tremendous strides made in the last few years to provide a better life for disabled Americans. But we must also recognize that we have only just begun the job of helping these citizens achieve their full potential, enabling them to enter the mainstream of American life."

#### Lifestyles Examined

Looking at a variety of lifestyles issues the survey found that 68 percent of disabled Americans never went to the movies, eight percent went once, 13 percent went two or three times. Nearly 75 percent said they didn't go to a single theater performance, live musical show or sporting event either.

In an effort to determine why disabled Americans don't get around much, approximately 57 percent said they were afraid they would get hurt, sick or be victimized by crime or that they needed someone to help them but such a person wasn't always available.

The survey is based on telephone interviews with 1000 disabled Americans with impairments ranging from blindness and loss of limbs, to deafness, arthritis, heart disease, neurological disorders and other impairments. With respect to economic issues, the survey found that 73 percent of those asked weren't working, and of the 26 percent that were, only 18 percent have a full time job, while eight percent reported having part-time employment.

As for the reasons contributing to their unemployment:

- o 77% said they don't work because their disability or health problem severely limits what they can do.
- o 53% said they needed medical treatment or therapy for their disability or health problem.
- o 43% said employers won't recognize that they are capable of doing a full time job, despite their disabilities.
- o 40% said that they didn't think there was full time work available in their line of work, and if there was, they couldn't find it.
- o 37% said that they didn't have the skills, education or training needed to get a full time job.

When asked whether or not there should be increased efforts by society for education, job training and rehabilitation for disabled people so they can work to support themselves instead of depending on the government, 95 percent of those surveyed said "yes."

"I think what we are seeing here is the disparate effect that Federal legislation has had on the problems of disabled America," said Dr. Nina Hill, project director for the ICD survey and the center's director of clinical services and professional education programs, "While clearly there have been significant strides in both the public and private sectors to enhance the lives of disabled citizens, there are areas with a long way to go -- employment, education and utilization of services stand out as the most prominent areas."

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On the subject of being discriminated against disabled citizens were asked, whether or not they think anti-discrimination laws should also cover disabled people. Seventy-five percent of the 1000 polled said "yes."

Dr. Hill said "the final study report would be available in mid-March and at that time ICD plans to conduct several meetings addressing the major issues confronting disabled Americans today."

# # # #

Remarks of John B. Wingate, Executive Director,

ICD-International Center for the Disabled

Representing ICD-International Center for the Disabled, I am delighted to present to you the national survey entitled "Disabled Americans' Self-Perception, 1986: Bringing Disabled Americans into the Mainstream." The purpose of the survey was to obtain data on disabled people's experiences and attitudes that would provide a clear information framework for the Council's recommendations on public policy for disabled people.

ICD is indeed proud to have made this survey possible with the support of a number of other organizations - the J.M. Foundation, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Ira deCamp Foundation, Equitable Life Assurance Company, and the Hoffman LaRoche Foundation.

The principal survey objectives were to determine the extent to which things have changed for disabled Americans in the past decade; to identify barriers which prevent disabled people from entering the mainstream of American life in work, school, family life, and leisure activities; to closely examine their experience in the labor force, and to find out the ways in which disabled people want to be part of the mainstream, and what can be done to help them achieve greater independence.

We also felt it was important to find out if disabled people know about and use available public and private sector services and if those services have helped their efforts to live in the mainstream.

It should be recognized that this is the first comprehensive nationwide survey of disabled Americans to be undertaken. To date nationwide studies have focused mainly upon demographic data about disabled people rather than the collection of information about their experiences and attitudes. We believe this survey fills the gaps between other works of research and collections of data.

You will see that the survey presents both good news and bad news -- that our work in aiding disabled Americans is unfinished. However, now with the up-to-date knowledge presented in the survey we can better work together to develop blueprints for the public disability policy of the 1990's.

It is my great pleasure to present to you my colleague from ICD, Dr. Nina Hill, who directed the survey effort. Dr. Hill will describe how the survey was designed and constructed.

Thank you very much.

Remarks of Nina M. Hill, Ph.D, Survey Project Director  
Director of Clinical Services and Professional Education  
ICD-International Center for the Disabled

Thank you Mr. Wingate. I was going to get up here and talk scientifically about how the survey was designed and constructed, but I think what needs to be said is why we felt compelled to do this study.

For the past 70 years ICD has worked with over one quarter of a million disabled people, helping them to get jobs, to learn to walk again, to learn to speak, in short to lead full and productive lives.

As we look to the 1990's we will be faced with ever increasing numbers of disabled people seeking our services. These increasing numbers are due in part to the general aging of the population, an increase in the stress of everyday life and the resulting physical and psychological disorders, and the rise in medical technology. These advances enable trauma victims and high risk infants, who would have died only a few short years ago, to live although at times with residual disabilities.

To plan for these future challenges we felt it necessary to step back to examine the progress we have made and chart a course for the future.

Recognizing this need on the national level, the President and Congress charged the National Council on the Handicapped with the task of reviewing all Federal statutes

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pertaining to programs for disabled Americans and to recommend proposals to bring disabled citizens into the mainstream. With this commonality of purpose, ICD contracted with the independent research firm of Louis Harris and Associates to do what had never been done before, to provide disabled people with an opportunity to speak for themselves.

The Harris firm's unparalleled expertise, experience in conducting surveys in social and health related subjects and their sensitivity to the issues that disabled people face contributed to what we believe to be a landmark study. Working together we drew upon ICD's years of experience in the forefront of rehabilitation to construct an information base from which the survey framework, objectives and questionnaire were designed.

Additionally, we sought the advice of a blue ribbon panel of disabled and non-disabled rehabilitation experts from across the nation. Representing the fields of rehabilitation medicine, consumer advocacy, economics, policy making and research their input proved invaluable. We could not have tackled a groundbreaking study of this complexity and breadth without their contributions. I would also like to take this time to thank the members of the Council, who were always there with their advice and support.

In a few moments Humphrey Taylor, President of the Harris firm will describe the survey design and present the major findings.

Briefly, the survey was conducted within the United States in November and December of 1985 among a cross section of 1000 adults who met our definition of disability.

We feel that our data presents a vivid portrait of who the disabled are, their perceptions of change in the past decade, what it means to be disabled, employment opportunities and barriers and evidence of an emerging group consciousness.

It is now my pleasure to introduce Humphrey Taylor.

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For: ICD-International Center for the Disabled  
Disabled Americans: Self-Perceptions - 1986

#### What It Is

The first comprehensive survey of disabled Americans' attitudes and experiences. The survey goes beneath the surface of previous studies' statistics to reveal how the more than 30 million disabled Americans cope with impairments ranging from blindness and loss of limbs, to arthritis, heart disease, deafness, neurological disorders, and other disabilities. The survey paints a vivid portrait of disabled Americans and their view about their lives -- at home, at school, at work, the services they use, opportunities available to them and just how enjoyable their leisure time really is. The landmark survey is the first nationwide look at the effects on disabled citizens of the past decade's statutory reforms in education, employment and other rehabilitation opportunities.

#### How And Why It Was Developed

Congress authorized the creation of a special commission on the disabled to formulate policy recommendations for the 1980s. This commission, formalized as the National Council on the Handicapped, learned that no national survey had ever been undertaken to determine how disabled citizens perceived their lives and opportunities in the workplace and in education -- their place in the American future. In response ICD-The International Center for the Disabled contracted with the independent research firm of Louis Harris and Associates, Inc. to survey 1,000 disabled Americans. The survey results provide a framework for the recommendations on public policy for the disabled that were submitted to President Reagan and Congress on January 30, 1986.

#### Who Was Surveyed

In a random screening of 12,000 American households, 1,000 disabled Americans were interviewed, guaranteeing the survey a national cross section. Additionally, subgroups of people of working age (16 to 55) were over sampled in groups of 200 or more. The purpose of this over sampling was to obtain a balanced view of the experiences and attitudes of the working-age disabled population as compared to the experiences and attitudes of older disabled citizens. In households where some people were not able to speak on the telephone, a family member or "proxy" was chosen by the individual to speak on their behalf.

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## ICD-International Center for the Disabled

### FACT SHEET

ICD-International Center for the Disabled is a world-renowned, comprehensive outpatient rehabilitation facility. The first rehabilitation center in America, it was founded in 1917 as the Red Cross Institute for Crippled and Disabled Men. It provided World War veterans with rehabilitation and the skills needed to re-enter the work force.

For seven decades, ICD has continued to expand its mission and meet new challenges to improve the lives of the disabled. Today ICD provides services to people from all walks of life, conducts research and offers professional education courses. The Center develops model programs which it makes available to other agencies and rehabilitation personnel nationally and internationally.

As a rehabilitation partner of the business community, ICD offers consultation to corporations on the recruitment of disabled employees and also provides rehabilitation and return to work services for employees injured or disabled in the workplace.

ICD serves disabled persons on the sole basis of need, without regard to race, color, religion or ability to pay. More than 5000 people are cared for at ICD annually.



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FOR RELEASE: January 30, 1986  
After Noon

## OBSERVATIONS

The following are observations based on the findings of Disabled Americans: Self-Perceptions - 1986, a landmark national opinion research survey of disabled Americans. The observations are those Mr. Humphrey Taylor, President of Louis Harris and Associates, Inc., and are preliminary in nature.

"Life for disabled Americans has improved dramatically in the last decade. A major reason for the improvement is the laws passed by the federal government. It is difficult to think of any other area where federal legislation has produced such a strong and positive result.

Never the less disabled Americans are still an extraordinarily disadvantaged group. Only a quarter of disabled citizens in the working age population (16 to 64) are working full time. Fully 40 percent never finished high school. Many are afraid to go out because of the dangers that they say they face -- that they will be hurt, victimized by crime or become sick.

Indeed, they go out much less often than able-bodied Americans, and fully 56 percent feel that they are prevented from getting around and socializing.

They are much poorer than their non-disabled counterparts -- fully half of them live in households with annual incomes of \$15,000 or less, and a majority feel that they haven't realized their full potential because of their disabilities.

Disabled Americans are poorer, less well educated, have a more restricted social life and far fewer working opportunities than the rest of America.

However, if one thing distinguishes disabled citizens who have a fuller and more satisfying life from the rest, it is that they work.

The most positive single thing that we could do as a society for disabled Americans would be to find ways of providing more employment.

- more -

Major barriers to employing more disabled Americans include:

- o The lack of readily accessible transport.
- o Their lack of education and marketable skills.
- o A reluctance by many employers to recognize the potential of disabled people followed by a reluctance to make the necessary accommodations to allow them to work.
- o Workplaces and public buildings with steps, regular laboratories and other obstacles.

In summation, America can be proud of the tremendous strides which we have made in the last few years to provide a better life for disabled Americans, but we must also recognize that we have only just begun the job of helping them achieve their full potential and enter the mainstream of American life."

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