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National Employ the Handicapped Week, 1988

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The American creed of opportunity for all has proven rich soil for the growing realization that everyone gains when people with disabilities are employed. Disabled people with jobs contribute to prosperity, take a more active part in their communities, and lead more satisfying lives; and their employers gain productive employees. Since the end of World War II, America has celebrated National Employ the Handicapped Week in recognition of the many achievements of workers with disabilities and of those who employ them. During this week we also reaffirm our desire and determination to continue fostering employment opportunities for Americans who have disabilities.

Each year we remove more barriers that have prevented people with disabilities from taking jobs. New technology, job training and placement programs, an increasingly accessible working environment, and greater public understanding all contribute to disabled people's competitiveness in the job market.

More remains to be done, though, as we seek to ensure enhanced employment opportunities for the disabled. Only one-third of working-age Americans with disabilities are employed, so we must keep on opening up more ways for them to gain job skills and overcome job discrimination and transportation, communication, and physical barriers to employment. We are all enriched immeasurably when everyone who wants to work can and does find employment and every citizen is free to follow the path to full and equal participation in the life of our communities and country.

The Congress, by Joint Resolution approved August 11, 1945, as amended (36 U.S.C. 155), has called for the designation of the first full week in October of each year as "National Employ the Handicapped Week." This special week is a time for all Americans to join together to renew their dedication to meeting the goal of increased opportunities for people with disabilities.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week beginning October 2, 1988, as National Employ the Handicapped Week. I commend and urge all governors, mayors, other public officials, leaders in business and labor, and private citizens to continue to help meet the challenge of ensuring equal employment opportunities and full citizenship rights and privileges for disabled Americans.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this third day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirteenth.

Ronald Reagan