

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MARCH 25, 1975

Office of the White House Press Secretary
-----THE WHITE HOUSEMEMORANDUM FOR: HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS
AND AGENCIES

The Federal Government firmly advocates equal employment opportunities for all Americans. In this context, I pledge my Administration to the employment and full utilization of handicapped persons in staffing the Federal service. Let the emphasis rest upon the individual's ability rather than his or her disability. The handicapped have proved that they are efficient, effective, and productive workers. They can advance the Government's service to its citizens.

Since World War II, Federal jobs have been opened to more than a quarter million of our citizens who, though handicapped, have nonetheless been qualified to serve. They have served well.

The Federal Government has a strong commitment to:

- assist the physically impaired, including the disabled veteran, who are not occupationally handicapped when assigned the right job;
- consider the mentally restored whose only handicap is that they once suffered an emotional illness; and
- employ the mentally retarded who can demonstrate ability to perform certain tasks required in all organizations.

Now, under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, that policy has been given new force and meaning for handicapped citizens. Under these laws you are charged with developing comprehensive affirmative action plans for the hiring, placement, and advancement of handicapped individuals and disabled veterans in each Federal department and agency. I urge you to carry out these plans to the fullest extent so that our fellow citizens can learn from your example.

GERALD R. FORD