

Statement on the Ninth Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act *July 26, 1999*

Today I join citizens across the country in celebrating the ninth anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In the past, many Americans have presumed that disability meant a life of dependence. Now, we recognize that people with disabilities want to, and can lead independent lives and contribute to our Nation's prosperity. Throughout our administration, Vice President Gore and I have endeavored to empower individuals with the tools they need to bring their tremendous energy and talent to the American work force.

My Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities is building on the foundation of the ADA by developing a coordinated and active employment agenda for people with disabilities. We have taken strong action to promote the employment of individuals with disabilities, including implementing new regulations that increase the amount of income that over 250,000 Americans with disabilities can earn while still receiving critical cash and medical benefits, instituting new steps to remove Federal hiring barriers for people with mental illness, and directing the Office of Personnel Management to develop a plan for Federal hiring of people with disabilities. And under the leadership of Tipper Gore, we are beginning to ad-

dress the stigma and discrimination confronted by people with psychiatric disabilities.

I am proud of the actions that this administration has taken to fully integrate Americans with disabilities into the workplace. It is now time for Congress to act. In my State of the Union, I challenged the Congress to pass the bipartisan work incentives improvement act, sponsored by Senators Jeffords, Kennedy, Roth, and Moynihan, which would improve job opportunities for people with disabilities by increasing access to health care and employment services. It was my hope that I could have signed this legislation into law today, but the House has not yet acted on it. I remain committed to enacting this legislation in this Congress.

We should also work together across party lines to enact a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights, provide new tax options to assist individuals with disabilities with their work-related expenses, and double the available funding for assistive technologies that will facilitate employment. We must make this a season of progress, not a season of partisanship. We can achieve this end by passing all three of these critically important initiatives. There would be no better way to celebrate the ninth anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Statement on Vietnam-United States Relations *July 26, 1999*

I am pleased that the Office of the United States Trade Representative and the Vietnamese Trade Ministry reached an understanding in principle on the terms of a broad commercial agreement between the United States and Vietnam. This provisional arrangement is a major step forward for both countries, and I congratulate our American negotiators and those of Vietnam on their work. I will review the agreement carefully and consult further with the Congress and the Government of Vietnam in the hope that we will be able to move on to finalization, formal signature, and the establishment of normal trade relations very soon.

In addition to promoting American commercial interests, enhancing our economic relations with Vietnam will also help advance cooperation with Vietnam on other issues of importance to our Nation. These include obtaining the fullest possible accounting of our missing from the war, encouraging continued progress in the freedom of emigration, and seeking improvements in the human rights situation in Vietnam. Since the United States normalized relations with Vietnam in 1995, we have made steady progress in each of those areas. A bilateral trade agreement with Vietnam constitutes one more positive step in that process.