

ADDRESS, GOVERNOR'S COMMITTEE TO  
PROMOTE EMPLOYMENT OF THE HANDICAPPED

BALTIMORE

April 20, 1960

It is gratifying to me, as Governor of the State, to see the young people of Maryland displaying so much interest in a subject which is close to my heart—the employment of handicapped men and women.

The committee which I appointed to handle this important problem in Maryland has done a splendid job in persuading businessmen and other employers that it is to their advantage to hire handicapped persons. This poster contest is just one of many projects the committee has sponsored to promote a good idea—the idea that the employment of these people not only improves the lot of the handicapped themselves but contributes to the general welfare of the State.

My role here today is to present prizes to the students who were adjudged winners in the 1960 essay and poster contests. To each of you individually, I extend my commendation for your accomplishment.

It is a pleasure to welcome the parents and the teachers of these students at these ceremonies.

Returning once more to this subject of the employment of handicapped persons, the greatest job we have performed in this area has been to remove certain prejudices in the minds of employers and to convince them that men and women with physical handicaps have both the will and the capacity to become useful citizens. Normal employment is the first goal a handicapped person must reach in the somewhat difficult journey he must take to become a completely productive, and therefore a happy, citizen.

In spite of all the gains we have made in the field, we know that many jobs which these people are capable of holding are closed to them because of their disability. We need hardly expect an employer to hire a person because of his disability. What we have to do is convince him that he should consider the abilities, and not the disabilities of a prospective employee.

Handicapped persons have demonstrated convincingly that, if properly placed and assigned, they can produce just as much, and in many cases even more, than employees without disabilities. Studies have been made which have showed that impaired employees frequently look better than their unimpaired coworkers in such things as absenteeism