

SENATOR ROBERT MORGAN
FOOTHILLS INDUSTRIES SHELTERED
WORKSHOP DEDICATION
June 23, 1979

I am glad to have the opportunity to speak here, today, at the dedication of the Foothills Industries Sheltered Workshop. Many of you have been working two years and more to get this workshop built, opened and operating, and I am sure that a great many handicapped people will be extremely grateful for this service in the years to come.

This sheltered workshop is a testament to what we Americans can accomplish if we work together.

This workshop would never have been built without the cooperation of the Federal government, the State government, your local governments, as well as private industry and dedicated individual North Carolinians.

I very much appreciate your efforts, for I believe that those of us who are more fortunate have an obligation to help our disadvantaged citizens lead as active, productive, and satisfying a life as possible. And, I believe that we in North Carolina and throughout the nation are doing a better job of

fulfilling this obligation every year. It may seem, on occasion, as if progress is slow, but it is sometimes wise to remember that progress is always being made.

Last year, in the Congress, we rewrote and extended the Vocational Rehabilitation Act. We have committed ourselves to giving the State governments nearly \$900 million in the upcoming year for vocational rehabilitation programs. We established a National Institute of Handicapped Research, and created a new program, to be administered by the

Labor Department, to provide full- and part-time community service jobs for the handicapped.

One area where I have been able to have a significant and direct impact, because of my membership on the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee, has been in increasing the availability of housing for the chronically mentally ill. As you may know, there was a disagreement between the Congress and the Department of Housing and Urban Development on whether the long-term mentally disabled were eligible for elderly and handicapped housing loans. As a result, I took

the lead in getting language added to last year's housing bill making it completely clear that the Congress meant for this group of handicapped people to be counted as handicapped.

Now, I am pleased to be able to inform you that H.U.D. has made \$15 million in housing loans for the mentally ill available to 58 sponsors in 14 states. These loans will lead to the development of housing for some 1,000 chronically, mentally ill. Furthermore, H.U.D. is at present asking for applications for a second round of housing loans totalling \$25 million.

These loans are only being made available to selected States, one of which is North Carolina.

There have been other actions taken in Washington in the last year to help the handicapped, and I cannot possibly mention them all. But I find it encouraging that we are still making progress, that Members of Congress still recognize the importance of continuing to make progress in these areas in spite of tight budgets and many other competing demands. But this would not be possible were it not for the efforts of people like yourself in insuring that the problems

and needs of the handicapped are known, and that something is done to meet them.

Lest you ever get discouraged, I would like to take a brief look at what has been accomplished in the last twenty years. Twenty years ago, about \$1.7 billion was spent on mental-health care in this country. In 1976, nearly \$17 billion was spent. I believe that much of this ten-fold increase in expenditures has been preventive in nature and has led to a reduced demand for other health-care services.

Twenty years ago, large, generally isolated State mental hospitals were the mainstay of our public mental-health-care system. 550,000 people resided in State hospitals, and 75 percent of all mental-health care was provided on an in-patient basis.

Today, the number of people in State hospitals has been reduced to 200,000 and 75 percent of all care is provided on an out-patient basis.

The supply of professionals qualified to help the handicapped, especially the number of psychologists and psychiatrists, has more than doubled.

And, possibly most important, the general public's knowledge, understanding, and sensitivity to these problems and issues has increased immeasurably.

Thus, if your efforts in these areas ever appear to be moving at a glacierlike pace, if nothing seems to be going right, think back to the way it used to be; and, also remember that a short two years ago, this workshop that we are dedicating today, was nothing but a dream.