

**NEWS
SERVICE**

AMERICAN COUNCIL OF THE BLIND

1211 Connecticut Avenue, N.W. • Suite 506 • Washington, D.C. 20036
Telephone: (202) 833-1251

For more information contact:
J. Scott Marshall
Director of Governmental Affairs
(202) 833-1251

September 11, 1984

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A Decade of Progress in Jeopardy

"Unless the Senate acts quickly to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1984 (S.2568) the progress disabled people have made in the past ten years could grind to a halt," says Oral Miller, National Representative of the American Council of the Blind. Since 1974 when Section 504, the Civil Rights Act for disabled people, was passed, blind, visually impaired and people with other handicaps have made remarkable progress. Since Section 504 became law, the number of blind college students has more than doubled. Colleges and vocational schools have trained blind and visually impaired engineers, mechanics, teachers, physical therapists, mathematicians, and biologists, just to name a few. Extra curricular activities, athletics and social activities are more available. More importantly, Section 504 has broadened employment opportunities for disabled people in organizations such as schools and social service agencies--by prohibiting recipients of federal funds from discriminating against qualified handicapped workers. Social services, health care, transportation and housing are also more available to people with disabilities.

--more--

Add one

Section 504

Senate action is urgently needed to keep this momentum--to direct those who implement and enforce Section 504 not to use the Grove City College Supreme Court decision as a justification for closing opportunities to disabled students and adults. The Grove City College decision applied to Section 504 means that only discrimination in the particular part of a college or other organization that gets federal funds is prohibited. Miller said, "It means that if the only federal dollars a college gets are from student financial aid, the college must give blind students an equal chance to compete for financial assistance, but could refuse to allow those blind students who are admitted to use the gym, work on campus, live in the dorm, or take chemistry classes." The Civil Rights Act of 1984 would require all of the activities of a recipient of federal funds to be carried out in a nondiscriminatory manner.

The American Council of the Blind, the nation's largest membership organization of blind and visually impaired persons, is comprised of 52 state and regional affiliated organizations and 17 special interest organizations, including the National Alliance of Blind Students.