

President Signs Developmental Disabilities Services Act

Minneapolis – The closing banquet of the NARC Convention was climaxed by the long-awaited news revealed with an air of excitement by U.S. Congressman Clark MacGregor, that President Nixon had finally, on Friday, October 30, signed the Developmental Disabilities Services and Facilities Construction Act of 1970 (s. 2846). Word of this monumental passage was sent to the Convention from the California White House, San Clemente, and received by the delegates with a rousing ovation.

This bill will provide for the first time in the field of developmental disabilities, the basis for a State-Federal partnership comparable to those already developed in such fields as health, mental health and vocational rehabilitation.

Final passage of the bill had been eagerly awaited since April, when the U.S. Senate gave overwhelming approval, sending it by a vote of 69 to 0 to the House of Representatives in July. The House then gave it a resounding 338-0 approval.

The Conference report resolving the differences between the House and Senate versions was passed by both Houses and sent to President Nixon on October 14, 1970.

Authorized Expenditures

The bill authorized federal expenditures of \$60 million for fiscal 1971. The actual level of appropriations (expected to be substantially lower) has not yet been agreed upon congress. Action on the dollar figure is expected to occur after Congress returns in mid-November.

Debt of Gratitude

Both NARC and state and local ARCs owe a substantial debt of gratitude to the members of Congress who introduced and supported this vital legislation. The Senate bill was introduced by Senators Edward M. Kennedy, MA., and Ralph W. Yarborough, TX. The bill was co-sponsored by Senators Harrison Williams, Jr., N.J.; Gaylord Nelson, WI; Thomas Eagleton, MO; Alan Cranston, CA; Philip Hart, MI; and Jacob K. Javits, NY.

The bill was introduced to the House by Congressmen Jarman, Nelson, Skubitz, Carter, Kyros, Preyer, Rhodes, Hastings, Van Deerlin, Blanton, Pickle, Murphy, Dingell, Stuckey, Dwyer, Karth, Rooney, and Satterfield.

It was supported in debate by Congressmen Staggers, Jarman, Paul G. Rogers, Preyer, Nelson, Springer, Wylie, Hall, Dwyer, Don H. Clausen, Divine, Hagars, Pickle, Halpern, Price, Feighan, Ottinger, Vanick, Esch, Madden and Gross.

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