

**Growth,  
Opportunity,  
Security:**

*COMMITMENT TO  
PENNSYLVANIA  
HUMAN SERVICES*



*A Statement By*

**RICHARD L. THORNBURGH**

**PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA**

**Wednesday, May 10, 1978**



- a state rid of the destructive influences of organized crime and corruption;
- a state with highways and bridges safe for travel and commerce;
- a state with a first-rate educational system;
- a state whose economy is flourishing, not withering;
- above all, a state in which citizens can plan for the future with hope and confidence.

Too often some of our citizens have been excluded from this vision. Too often handicapped individuals or older people reside on the outskirts of hope. I believe each citizen ought to be able to live in dignity. Each citizen ought to be able to make whatever contribution to society his or her unique talents allow. And each ought to have a productive place in our Commonwealth.

Today this system is almost a non-system. We have a vast, impersonal bureaucracy that shuttles people from one agency to another for different services. For example, our older citizens receive free transit through the Department of Transportation, rent rebates from the Department of Revenue, medical assistance from the Department of Welfare and reside in nursing homes regulated by the Department of Health.

We must end this competition among groups by recognizing the difficulties that one individual

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The promise for handicapped individuals is one of which my wife, Ginny, and I have special knowledge. Our 18-year-old son, Peter, who lives with us, was brain damaged as a result of a car accident some years ago. Through him, I know the problems that handicapped people face. I also know their potential for growth, their potential for independence -- for I have seen it first-hand.

The President's Commission on Mental Health revealed only two weeks ago that more than 2 million Americans suffer from depression and at least 15% of all Americans need some form of mental health treatment. Mental disorders strike anyone -- and we must remove the barriers in society that cause us to ignore or exclude mentally restored citizens from the full flow of community life.

Our older citizens also discover obstacles to fruitful lives. The income of retired citizens is often but a fraction of what it was before they

First, we must destroy the stereotypes that inhibit us from seeing individual people with particular needs. Our tendency to group people into homogeneous categories distorts the reality of the circumstances and potential of each individual. Among the mentally retarded, for example, only five percent are severely or profoundly affected, while eighty-nine percent are classified as mildly retarded.

To assure that hope is not destroyed, we must destroy the self-fulfilling stereotypes that confine people to irredeemable categories. We must treat people as unique and individual, not as homogeneous groups.

Where this isn't possible or desirable, then it is best for people to be able to live in a setting where they are part of a community in which they can participate. But, neither home or community

Our objective must be to insure that a variety of living arrangements are available in which responsible people can make choices as to which best suits their needs.

In October, 1977, the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare ordered schools to provide free appropriate public education for all handicapped children. This year, state government will spend in excess of \$370 million to achieve this goal. We must re-affirm this commitment so that the talents of these people are not wasted or undeveloped.

For instance, many citizens who have suffered from an attack of mental illness, but are now mentally restored, are already educated or trained in skills. But the public needs to be educated to accept the mentally restored back into jobs suitable to those skills.

I will ensure that the Department of Labor



and Industry exerts greater efforts to counsel and place our handicapped citizens in productive jobs. Our efforts will be empty if the growth we encourage, the hope we inspire is not matched by commitment to make full and productive use of that growth and hope.

As we review human service goals, we begin to realize that people are much more alike than different in their basic needs. People want to be treated as individuals. They want loving homes in secure neighborhoods. They want an education that will lead to financial security.

To institute new attitudes and new directions, my first priority as governor in the realm of human services will be to assure that efforts of the various agencies in state government are coordinated and cooperatively undertaken.

Right now, some twelve different state agencies ranging from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Transportation are responsible in one way or another for human services. This chaotic situation is expensive and insensitive to people's needs and must be brought under control.

My first action would not be to create another committee or commission. Rather, I will insist that the highest levels of executive officers, including the Secretaries of Public Welfare, Health, Labor and Industry, Revenue, Community Affairs, Education and Transportation stop the endless bickering over proposals and work together to clean up the bureaucratic mess and cut through the red tape that prolongs problems and prevents solutions.

Further, I will insist on better communication between those serving and those being served. Our citizens should influence the decisions and policies that affect them. And I would insure the many good human service employees have the leadership and skills they need to do their jobs and be responsive to the needs of the people they serve. I will direct that all-out efforts be made to secure safe and suitable living arrangements, to provide the education necessary, and to place people in jobs that will give them the chance to support themselves and contribute to their community.

I speak for attitudes and directions to seize a new vision of our human services. We must see people as whole, not as fragments. We must end stereotypes. We must stress what we have in common, rather than insist upon our differences. We are, after all, a Commonwealth. We have more in common than we often admit and surely we have a wealth of untapped talent only waiting to be encouraged.

I believe we can begin anew with the election

of a governor who understands our people. And I intend to be that kind of governor, a governor of all the people.

I want to see a state that provides opportunity for the handicapped.

I want a state that seeks productive lives for our retarded citizens, providing training and jobs so they can take their rightful place in society.

I want a state that recognizes mental illness is not a stigma, but an illness from which a person can be fully restored.

I want a state that breaks down attitudinal as well as physical barriers for the physically handicapped.

I want a state that assures our elderly have fulfilling lives.

I want a state that is compassionate, concerned and committed to making the lives of each citizen in our Commonwealth, lives filled with opportunity and hope, not disillusionment and despair. As governor, I promise to strive to achieve this vision, to enrich the lives of our citizens and thus, in turn, to enrich our entire state.

RICHARD L. THORNBURGH is the Republican candidate for Governor of Pennsylvania. He served as United States Attorney for Western Pennsylvania from 1969-1975 and thereafter as Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Criminal Division of the United States Department of Justice under President Gerald R. Ford. During his career, he has been involved in a wide variety of civic, public service and governmental endeavors devoted to a better Pennsylvania.



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