Growth,
Opportunity,
Security:

COMMITMENT TO
PENNSYLVANIA
HUMAN SERVICES



A Statement By

RICHARD L. THORNBURGH

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have a vision of what our Commonwealth

- 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.

This vision for Pennsylvania encompasses all citizens -- rich and poor, young and old, male and female -- a state in which the rights of all are protected so that the future for each is secure.

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.

I want to see a state government that supports an environment to encourage the creative energies of all. To do less is to deprive society of talents and experience we greatly need. And I want to see those unable to care for themselves cared for equitably. To do less is to divide people into first-class and second-class citizens. It is the role of our human services system to promote growth, opportunity, and security for all our citizens.

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.

Moreover, we find particular needs ministered to by several different agencies. For example, educational programs are administered not only by the Department of Education, but by the Departments of Community Affairs, Labor and Industry, and Public Welfare as well. Finally, we persist in separating people into stereotyped categories for providing services. Thus, we find one group in society competing with another for scarce resources.

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

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encounters are shared by others: the need for adequate health care, the need for suitable living arrangements, the need for educational opportunities, and the need for a productive place in society.

Today, I want to share my vision of the human services we as a state must extend to our citizens, the new attitudes we must cultivate, the new directions we must take

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.

Peter is one of some 365,000 Pennsylvanians who are mentally retarded citizens, 3% of our population. We must give real hope that these citizens can take their rightful places in society. Ginny and I have no more precious dream than one in which Peter finds a job and gains a measure of his own independence and personal fulfillment. I know we share this dream with thousands of other parents in Pennsylvania.

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.

Some 450,000 Pennsylvanians are physically handicapped. They form a vast resource of talent and skill that has not been tapped. Why? Because they frequently encounter unnecessary physical barriers and the subtle hostile attitudes of others blocking them from productive pursuits.

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 retired, making it more difficult to own or retain their own homes and to pursue recreational opportunities.

We can ill afford second-class citizenship of any kind in Pennsylvania. We must pursue fundamental objectives to make fulfilling lives a reality for everyone.

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.

Even among the severely affected, there is a real potential for growth. For example, while Ginny served as President of the Allegheny County Chapter of the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children, she met a young girl named Joyce, a severely retarded and multiply handicapped child totally dependent on others. Ginny helped place Joyce in a foster home. In this new home, Joyce is receiving love and making major gains, including taking her first steps in four years. Had Joyce been shunted aside by society as a hopeless case, then she indeed might have become hopeless.

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.

Second, we must assure that proper living arrangements are available to match each person's needs. I believe the best atmosphere is created in a loving home. And that is where we ought to concentrate -- on enabling individuals to live in their own home and neighborhood.

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 living arrangements are best for everyone. Sometimes specialized institutions may be the most desirable alternative. We should make certain these institutions provide quality care and dignity to the individual and are adequately staffed by competent and compassionate professionals.

There are many ways to achieve our goal of giving people the choice of remaining in their own homes. Many families with handcapped children need supportive services in their homes to keep their families together. And older people face the special problems of being forced from their homes by rising property taxes, especially for education, and inadequate in-home services. The phase-out of our present property tax for education purposes, the acceleration of in-home care and home-making services to solve problems that might otherwise require a nursing home. and the continuation of our commitment to support services to give our older citizens the mobility and nutrition they need will help solve these special problems.

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

Third, we must assure educational opportunities to help people develop according to their abilities. If our handicapped citizens are to grow, they must have an education that prepares them for the future. For any person to assume a productive place in society, he or she must have knowledge and skills.

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.

Fourth, we must find opportunities for productive work. Compassionate care, appropriate living arrangements and education unfairly build false expectations when a person is not allowed to utilize knowledge and skills productively. The dream of finding a place in the mainstream of society and thus gaining dignity and independence will be shattered if we do not provide suitable work.

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.

brought under control.

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

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 employes 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

achieve this vision, to enrich the lives of our citizens and thus, in turn, to enrich our entire state.

and despair. As governor, I promise to strive to

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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