

Final Report of the
HOUSING FOR HANDICAPPED STUDY COMMITTEE

to the

SIXTY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

of the

STATE OF IOWA

Submitted January, 1971

FINAL REPORT
OF THE
HOUSING FOR HANDICAPPED STUDY COMMITTEE

Senate Concurrent Resolution 135, adopted by the Sixty-third General Assembly, Second Session, directed that all resolutions calling for interim studies by the Legislative Council and by the Legislative Service Bureau which have not been adopted in both Houses be delivered to the President Pro Tempore, on the part of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House, on the part of the House, for consideration by the Legislative Council, which shall determine priorities and authorize such studies.

At its May 7, 1970 meeting, the Legislative Council authorized a study to be conducted in accordance with the provisions of House Concurrent Resolution 118. HCR 118 authorizes a study of the feasibility of establishing a home for the handicapped that would be financed and operated by the state and the need for any additional legislation to aid in coping with the problems of handicapped people.

The Legislative Council named the following members of the General Assembly to serve on the Housing for Handicapped Study Committee:

Representative Don D. Alt, Chairman
Senator Lucas J. DeKoster
Senator Elmer F. Lange
Senator Joan Orr
Representative Leroy S. Miller
Representative Roy A. Miller
Representative John Tapscott

At its first meeting the Committee elected Representative John Tapscott as Vice Chairman. The Committee is concerned with the present need for housing for the handicapped and other problems of handicapped persons.

Chairman Alt invited several individuals to appear before the October 6 meeting of the Committee. Persons who appeared before the Committee include:

Mr. Jerry Starkweather, Director, Iowa Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Education Services, Department of Public Instruction
Mrs. Evelyn Villines, Chairman, Governor's Committee on Hiring the Handicapped

Mr. Rolfe Karlsson, Executive Director, Iowa
Easter Seal Society
Mr. Frank Severino, Director, Mediacenter,
Des Moines, Iowa
Mr. Don Boyer, Executive Director, Handicapped
Village, Clear Lake, Iowa

Some of the basic problems encountered by handicapped persons were presented to the Committee at this meeting. It appears that there is a need for housing for the handicapped. Handicapped persons seeking housing are unable to locate accommodations which are free from architectural barriers. The shortage of housing for the handicapped may be a barrier to the employment of such persons. Many handicapped individuals are capable of supporting themselves, but where a job opportunity is available and adequate housing is not, the handicapped person is unable to take the job. At the present time many handicapped individuals reside with relatives and do not have a job. Another segment of handicapped persons, who are unable to care for themselves and have no relatives, are residents of institutions in the state.

The following recommendations were made to the Committee:

1. Develop adequate housing for the handicapped.
2. Provide an appropriate enforcement authority for chapter 104A, Code 1971.
3. Develop adequate training programs and care facilities for handicapped persons.

The members of the Committee also discovered that there are several positive steps being taken by the state and by private groups to assist handicapped persons. The Iowa Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Public Instruction, has new and expanded facilities which allows the Division to provide dormitory space for handicapped persons in Des Moines. The basic purpose of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is to provide an evaluation service for handicapped persons and to determine the basic skills of such persons which provides information necessary for the Division to place handicapped individuals in jobs throughout the state. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has the facilities and staff to evaluate 16,000 to 17,000 persons per year. Also, a private group is presently planning a one hundred sixty-unit residence for the Des Moines area designed for those handicapped individuals who are capable of caring for themselves. The Federal Housing Administration is also making available housing in Des Moines. These homes are available to the aged, low-income, and handicapped persons.

Handicapped Village at Clear Lake is designed for those handicapped individuals who are unable to adequately support themselves. These people are incapable of competing in the labor market because they are unable to meet the production record of persons who are not handicapped, but such handicapped persons are productive individuals and capable of performing a job. Handicapped Village will provide individualized private housing for handicapped persons. Ground was broken for the facility this fall.

While this report has emphasized the housing needs of handicapped persons who are able to benefit from vocational rehabilitation programs and may seek gainful employment in the labor market, the Committee also heard testimony indicating that those persons who are unable to support themselves and require custodial care also require housing. Presently many of these persons are living in the mental institutions of this state and county homes. County homes and the mental institutions are very inadequate in that the handicapped person is housed in facilities with persons who are mentally deficient or retarded and mentally ill. Placement in these facilities may jeopardize the physical and mental health of the person who is handicapped.

The Committee found that adequate statistical data is not available. The restriction of the resolution to the subject of housing also posed a problem.

The Committee discussed a motion to recommend that the Iowa General Assembly establish a pilot project of cottage-type housing to accommodate between 240 to 250 handicapped persons to be constructed and operated by the Department of Social Services; that the Department of Social Services determine the location and architectural design; that handicapped persons who require assistance be given priority in housing; that a major portion of Aid to the Disabled benefits be paid to the Department of Social Services for housing and services provided in the facility; and that "disabled" be defined as any permanent, physical impairment of such severity that the individual requires assistance from another person in performing the normal activities of daily living. The motion failed by a vote of three affirmative and two negative. Committee rules require four votes to adopt any recommendation.

The Committee requested that a bill be drafted to implement the recommendations of the Governor's Economy Committee with regard to the Governor's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped. The Economy Committee recommended that the title of the Committee on Employment of the Handicapped be broadened to include "Services". The Study Committee recommends that the title also include "Housing". The bill also changes the name of the executive secretary to director as recommended by the Governor's Economy Committee. The Study Committee further recommends that the bill provide for the appointment of a field representative to conduct continuing surveys of housing needs for handicapped persons and the availability of

public and private funds for housing and report his findings and recommendations to the director for reporting to the governor and the general assembly. A copy of Bill No. 1 is attached to the report.

The Committee also recommends that a committee be appointed by the Legislative Council to continue the study during the next interim and that the study include all the needs of the handicapped.