

**SOCIOPOLITICAL
ASPECTS OF DISABILITIES**

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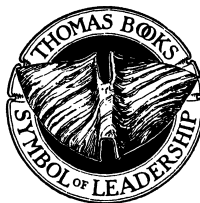
SOCIOPOLITICAL ASPECTS OF DISABILITIES

The Social Perspectives and
Political History of Disabilities
and Rehabilitation in the United States

By

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This book is dedicated to the memory of my brother Cleo L. Bryan, Sr., and to my brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, nieces, nephews, and cousins, all of whom have helped to shape my life.

PREFACE

The social and political landscape of the United States is and has been in the process of changing for a number of years. Various groups, particularly ethnic and racial minority groups, have been demanding equal rights in all aspects of American society. In the United States, achieving equality has been an ongoing challenge for ethnic and racial minorities for over 300 years. Although the documents on which America has used as a foundation proclaim equality for everyone, for some groups of people the promise of equality has yet to be completely realized. People with disabilities, the largest minority group within the United States, can be counted within these groups of people still struggling for the promised equality.

Because of laws and increased involvement of persons with disabilities in advocating for themselves, the social environment has improved and hopefully will continue to improve. Through the efforts of enlightened and concerned lawmakers, laws that prohibit discrimination of persons with disabilities have been passed. In addition, laws that have increased educational opportunities as well as mandatory access to the country's goods and services have been passed. The passage and enactment of these laws mark a significant improvement in the treatment of persons with disabilities. As a result of increased access and educational opportunities, persons with disabilities are better equipped to interact in society. It is hoped that this increased interaction with nondisabled will hasten more positive and realistic attitudes toward persons with disabilities.

This second edition continues the discussion of the evolution of societal attitudes toward persons with disabilities. Moreover, the book addresses some of the concepts society has and continues to have about persons with disabilities. This second edition explains how social attitudes impact social interactions which in turn create a need for political action to correct injustices and/or increase opportunities for persons with disabilities. This second edition attempts to document some of the most relevant social and political histories of persons with disabilities in the United States. A major objective of the second edition is to document some of the historical events and actions which have produced the current state of affairs for persons with disabilities.

Although considerable progress has been made in the relationships of the nondisabled and persons with disabilities, there remains considerable room for improvement. Additionally, it is the hope of this author that various disability groups, and organizations concerned with the needs of persons with disabilities and more importantly persons with disabilities will again join together to increase societal awareness of needs that persons with disabilities have. Some of the needs are, but not limited to, increased access to goods and services; more opportunities for gainful employment; better access to the political process at local, state and national levels; more accessible public transportation, and improved educational opportunities.

W.V.B.

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**SOCIOPOLITICAL
ASPECTS OF DISABILITIES**

Part One

SOCIAL ASPECTS OF DISABILITIES

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ASPECTS OF DISABILITIES

OUTLINE

- Introduction
- Independent Living Center Movement
- Social Political Cooperation
- Conclusion

OBJECTIVES

- To introduce the concept of social and political aspects of disabilities.
 - To demonstrate how social issues can create concern and action which leads to political action.
 - To demonstrate how persons with disabilities and their advocates have used the political system to attain civil rights.
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INTRODUCTION

Considerable scientific and medical progress has been made with regard to identifying conditions which may lead to persons becoming disabled. Likewise with the study of the composition of many human genes there is considerable promise that many more conditions which cause disabilities will be discovered, thus leading to elimination of many disabilities. Regardless of the reality of these promising efforts the fact is as long as humans exist there will be disabilities. Accidents will occur and new diseases will appear which will