

# PRESIDENT VETOES \$2.6-BILLION BILL FOR HANDICAPPED

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Charges Rehabilitation Aid  
Is Part of a Threatened  
Congress Money 'Spree'

## PLAN'S BACKERS ANGRY

House Sponsor Says Nixon  
Closed 'Door in the Face  
of Disabled Americans'  
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WASHINGTON, March 27 — President Nixon vetoed a \$2.6-billion vocational rehabilitation bill today, describing it as part of a threatened "Congressional spending spree" that would dip into "the pocket-books of millions of men and women."

"This bill," said the President in the first veto message of his second term, "is one of several now before the Congress which mask bad legislation beneath alluring labels."

If other such "fiscally irresponsible, badly constructed bills," reach his desk in coming weeks, he said, he will veto them as well. Otherwise, "the big spenders" would mandate an increase of more than \$50-billion a year in Federal spending before June 30, 1975, the President asserted.

"This would force upon us the unacceptable choice of either raising taxes substantially — perhaps as much as 15 per cent in personal income taxes — or inviting a hefty boost in consumer prices and interest rates," he said.

### Senate Passes Bill

Meanwhile, the Senate passed today by a vote of 72 to 19 a bill that challenges the Administration's plans to end several major health programs, among them the Hill-Burton program for hospital construction. If supporters of the measure can hold the vote margin, they will be able to override a Presidential veto.

The President has for weeks been using the specter of a tax increase as a weapon in his fiscal battles with Congress, but today was the first time that he stated a specific rate of increase.

Roy L. Ash, director of the Office of Management and Budget, said that he expected the veto to be sustained by Congress. But on Capitol Hill, there were some signs that the measure's proponents might be able to muster the two-thirds of each house needed to override the veto.

In the Senate, where a vote

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is expected next Tuesday, John G. Tower of Texas, chairman of the Republican Policy Committee, said that he expected roughly 25 votes to sustain, which would not be sufficient.

In the House, the bill was passed by a margin of 318 to 57—ample, if it were repeated, to override. But a less costly White House bill, offered by Representative Earl F. Landgrebe of Indiana, failed by a vote of 166 to 213. If that vote were repeated, the House would sustain the veto.

The bill's backers reacted to the veto with fury. Representative John Brademas, Democrat of Indiana, its sponsor in the House, said that the President's action "slammed the door in the face of disabled Americans."

Senator Alan Cranston, Democrat of California, its Senate sponsor, said that "if the President intended to include people who are crippled, paralyzed or blind" in urging self-reliance in his inaugural, "then the President was not only heartless but budgetarily blind."

A group of 30 organizations for the handicapped declared in a statement that the measure was not a "budget-busting bill." The group accused the President of "attempting to make a partisan issue of legislation that has always been stridently bipartisan" and expressed doubt that Mr. Nixon had seen its messages urging him to sign the legislation.

The organizations for the handicapped pointed out that the bill carried only appropriation authority and not appropriations but Mr. Nixon insisted in his message that it would result in outlays of about \$1-billion above his recommendations in the fiscal years 1973-75.

The President also expressed a wide range of nonfiscal objections to the measure.

He said that it would "divert" vocational rehabilitation into new medical fields, would create "a hodgepodge" of new categorical-grant programs, many of which would overlap; would make efficient management impossible, and would "cruelly raise the hopes of the handicapped in a way that we could never responsibly hope to fulfill."

The organizations attempted, one by one, to refute these arguments in a fact sheet distributed to Congressmen.

Mr. Nixon also argued that this Administration had done well by the handicapped, asserting that 1.2 million people would receive rehabilitation services this year — 50 per cent more, the President said, than four years ago.