

News Release

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Andrew D. Houghton to Lead Presidentially-appointed Committee; First Private Citizen Chairperson in Agency's 68-year History

Andrew D. Houghton of Hollywood, Florida, was unanimously elected Chairperson of the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled (Committee) at its July 2006 meeting. He was appointed to the Committee by President George W. Bush in March 2003 and reappointed in May 2006, serving as a private citizen representing the interests of nonprofit agency employees with severe disabilities. Mr. Houghton was Vice Chairperson of the Committee from July 2004 to July 2006. His recent election makes him the first private citizen to serve as Chairperson in the Committee's 68-year history.

The Committee is responsible for administering the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Act, a public law that directs the Federal Government to purchase certain products and services furnished by nonprofit agencies employing individuals who are blind or have other severe disabilities. The JWOD Program is the single largest employer of people with disabilities in the United States, providing more than 46,000 job opportunities nationwide. At the same time, the JWOD Program delivers quality product and service solutions to Federal customers, and is an important part of the U.S. military industrial base.

Mr. Houghton's leadership skills and broad experience in the disability arena make him highly qualified to guide the Committee in the fulfillment of its employment mission. In addition to his Committee work, Mr. Houghton was appointed by Florida Governor Jeb Bush to serve on a Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) on Inclusive Community Living, Lifelong Transition, and Employment of Persons with Developmental Disabilities. He was also appointed to the Florida Rehabilitation Council, where he is currently First Vice Chairman. Mr. Houghton's business, Disability Inclusion Solutions, has provided consulting services to clients ranging from the Fortune 500 to nonprofit organizations. His personal accomplishments include the development of domestic and international programs that promote full inclusion for people with disabilities through sports and recreation.

"I am honored to serve as the first private citizen Chairperson of the Committee, and to combine forces with Vice Chairperson Jim Omvig in leading this worthwhile vocational program. I am confident that the Committee members and our dedicated staff will continue to pursue our mission with the highest integrity, a renewed focus on our workforce of people who are blind or severely disabled and a standard of 'best value' for our Federal customers" said Mr. Houghton. "Consistent with my appointment and the President's New Freedom Initiative, I look forward to advancing the Committee's strategic direction and its promotion of economic self-sufficiency through employment."

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