

News Release

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James E. House Appointed by President Bush to Federal Committee that Creates Employment for Americans with Disabilities

James E. House, a native of Wayne County, Goldsboro, N.C., has been appointed by President George W. Bush to serve on the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled (Committee) as the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) representative. Sworn in at the Committee's July 2006 meeting, Mr. House joins a cadre of Federal executives and private citizens who are responsible for administering the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Program. Through this unique socioeconomic initiative, people who are blind or have other severe disabilities are offered employment opportunities by participating nonprofit agencies that deliver products or services through the Federal acquisition system.

Mr. House is the Director, USDA National Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, and notably served in a similar capacity during the George H. W. Bush Administration. In addition to his public service, Mr. House's broad experience includes private sector leadership in the small business community. As a member of a task force composed of trade association representatives, he participated in the drafting of legislation that ultimately enabled the establishment of Offices of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization in most Federal departments. He is a former president of the National Association of African American Business Owners, and was president of a professional services firm in Bowie, Maryland, prior to accepting the appointment to his current USDA position.

In his capacity as a Committee member, Mr. House will represent USDA and its interests, and will be directly involved in determining which products and services purchased by Federal agencies are suitable for fulfillment by JWOD-participating nonprofit agencies employing people who are blind or have other severe disabilities. The Committee is also responsible for all policy related to the JWOD Program, which is the nation's largest employer of people with disabilities. The JWOD Program provides more than 46,000 job opportunities, including some positions stocking shelves at the Seymour-Johnson Air Force Base commissary. Locally, Coastal Enterprises of Jacksonville, NC and Lions Industries for the Blind of Kinston, N.C. are associated with the JWOD Program.

"I am honored to accept the President's appointment to the Committee," said Mr. House. "I look forward to fulfilling my role as the USDA member and to making a contribution to the employment mission of the JWOD Program."

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The Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled is the independent Federal agency that administers the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Program, which creates jobs and training opportunities for persons who are blind or have other severe disabilities. National Industries for the Blind (NIB) and NISH (serving people with a range of disabilities) are two nonprofit organizations designated by the Committee to help Federal agencies and nonprofit organizations that employ persons with severe disabilities participate in the JWOD Program. The Committee's primary means of achieving its employment goal is through facilitating Government purchases of supplies and services from nonprofit agencies employing such individuals.