



DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1010 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1010

October 8, 2008

The Honorable Gordon England

Message from the Deputy Secretary of Defense

Many thanks to all those participating in the 2nd Annual Department of Defense (DoD) AbilityOne National Disability Employment Awareness Month Recognition Ceremony. This Federal program and the employees we honor today deserve our support and gratitude.

President Bush has made this program a priority during his Administration, and the Department of Defense is proud to be a leader in helping to increase job opportunities for AbilityOne employees. Expanding opportunities with AbilityOne starts with a personal commitment by the Department's senior leadership, and I extend my appreciation to all those who have supported this important program. In the Department, we know that people who are blind or have other severe disabilities are a reliable part of our workforce, and they are capable of meeting or exceeding industry quality standards. Today, AbilityOne Program employees are producing and providing quality goods and services, at competitive prices, to DoD installations around the country.

As the largest customer of the AbilityOne Program, the Department of Defense has a unique opportunity to make a positive difference in the lives of those who are blind or have other severe disabilities. Many of our brave men and women returning home from war with severe injuries have transitioned to employment through the AbilityOne Program. The Department's leadership is committed to providing all Americans with disabilities every opportunity to contribute to our great Nation.

On this 70th Anniversary of the AbilityOne Program, I thank you for your continued support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gordon England", is located in the bottom right area of the page. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

