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LEGISLATIVE AGENDA OF BLIND AMERICANS: PRIORITIES FOR THE 112TH CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

The National Federation of the Blind (NFB) is the oldest and largest nationwide organization of blind people in the United States. As the voice of the nation's blind, we represent the collective views of blind people throughout society. All of our leaders and the vast majority of our members are blind, but anyone can participate in our movement. There are an estimated 1.3 million blind people in the United States, and every year approximately 75,000 Americans become blind.

The NFB's three legislative initiatives for 2012 are:

- **The Fair Wages for Workers with Disabilities Act of 2011 (H.R. 3086)**
H.R. 3086 phases out Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, which allows employers to pay disabled workers subminimum wages. This bill will end this exploitative practice, giving disabled Americans equal protection under the law to earn at least the federal minimum wage.
- **The Home Appliance Accessibility Act (HAAA)**
Despite the existence of nonvisual access technology, the overwhelming majority of home appliance manufacturers are selling touch-screen, flat panel, and digital home appliances that are completely inaccessible to the blind. HAAA calls for a study and minimum nonvisual access standard for essential home appliances to protect blind consumers from the growing digital divide that threatens our independence.
- **The Americans with Disabilities Business Opportunity Act (ADBOA)**
Section 8(a) of the Small Business Act allows businesses owned by socially disadvantaged groups to obtain federal contracts. Although two-thirds of Americans with disabilities are unemployed or underemployed, disabled people are currently not presumed to be socially disadvantaged. ADBOA amends Section 8(a) to add disabled Americans to the list of those who are presumed to be socially disadvantaged.

The real problem of blindness is not the loss of eyesight; it is the misunderstanding and lack of information that exist. Given the proper training and opportunity, blindness can be reduced to a physical nuisance. Blind Americans need your help to achieve these goals and reach economic security and full integration into society. Supporting these measures will benefit more than just the blind, as promoting our economic welfare increases the tax base. We urge Congress to hear our demands for equality and support these legislative initiatives.