



Marc Maurer, *President*

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May 25, 2012

The Honorable Patty Murray
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Murray:

I write to thank you for your letter of May 1, 2012, to the Honorable United States Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, in which you were joined by many other senators (copy attached). In it you urged the teaching of Braille to blind children in the United States as an essential element in a free appropriate public education. I appreciate your leadership in bringing this important matter to the Secretary's attention.

I regret that I must write the remainder of this letter because I must bring to your attention what I regard as an unwarranted criticism. I have come into the possession of a writing being circulated for signature by a former professor from Tennessee. (I attach a copy of the writing for your information.)

The author says that this is "an addendum" to your letter. It is outrageous that a former professor should believe that she can create an "addendum" to your letter addressed to a cabinet secretary. You were elected by the people of Washington to represent them in our nation's capital. The other senators who joined with you were also elected by the people of their states. The drafter of this purported "addendum" has been elected only by herself. The writing she drafted may be an irrelevant, pompous attempt at the appearance of scholarship, and its effrontery is of such enormity that the entire document may be largely laughable. However, some may be bamboozled by it into believing that obstacles should be put in the way of education for blind students. Therefore, I bring it to your attention.

The so-called "addendum" recommends that requirements be added to an already overloaded curriculum before Braille is offered to blind students. Your letter urges that blind students be given a quality education with Braille incorporated in it. This supposed "addendum," to the contrary, urges that an emphasis be placed on the remaining eyesight of blind students rather than the tools used to achieve a quality education. It implies that those who possess the use of vision can get a quality education but that those who do not cannot. This implication is contrary to the experience of blind people throughout the United States.

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We believe in a quality education for blind students; we believe in the tools used by blind people to get it; we believe you share our commitment to this quality education; and we urge you to maintain this position.

Sincerely,



Marc Maurer, President
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

MM/pwm
Enclosures

cc: The Honorable Arne Duncan, Secretary
United States Department of Education

The Honorable John Boozman
The Honorable Tom Harkin
The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
The Honorable John F. Kerry
The Honorable John D. Rockefeller IV
The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski
The Honorable Barbara Boxer
The Honorable Olympia J. Snowe
The Honorable Ron Wyden
The Honorable Jack Reed
The Honorable Mary L. Landrieu
The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
The Honorable Maria Cantwell
The Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg
The Honorable Mark L. Pryor
The Honorable Benjamin L. Cardin
The Honorable Sherrod Brown
The Honorable Robert P. Casey, Jr.
The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
The Honorable Jeff Merkley
The Honorable Mark Begich
The Honorable Michael F. Bennet
The Honorable Kirsten E. Gillibrand
The Honorable Al Franken
The Honorable Christopher A. Coons