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## **LEGISLATIVE AGENDA OF BLIND AMERICANS: PRIORITIES FOR THE 113TH CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION**

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

### **The NFB's three legislative initiatives for 2014 are:**

- **The Fair Wages for Workers with Disabilities Act (HR 831)**

Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act allows employers to pay workers with disabilities less than the minimum wage because of the false assumption that they are less productive than non-disabled workers. This antiquated provision breeds low expectations and discourages disabled Americans from reaching their full potential. HR 831 responsibly phases out the use of the 14(c) Special Wage Certificates, ending the era of segregated, subminimum wage work.

- **The Technology, Education and Accessibility in College and Higher Education Act (TEACH) (HR 3505)**

Electronic instructional materials have replaced traditional methods of learning in postsecondary education, but the overwhelming majority of e-books, courseware, web content, and other technology are inaccessible to students with print disabilities. The law mandates equal access in the classroom, but fails to provide a prescription to schools for how that applies to technology. The TEACH Act creates accessibility guidelines for electronic instructional materials that will guide the market, give clarity to schools, and protect blind students' rights to critical course material.

- **The Air Carrier Technology Accessibility Act (ACTA)**

Passenger interaction with technology is a central component of air travel. The Air Carrier Access Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by airlines, but it was written before the emergence of web sites, kiosks, and mobile apps. These tools are all inaccessible to blind travelers despite readily-available solutions, resulting in segregation and substandard service. ACTA calls for all technology-based air travel services to be accessible to blind passengers.

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. Americans have a strong philosophy of equality, but there are profound flaws in the application of our doctrine as it applies to people with disabilities. These bills help close the gaps. We urge Congress to protect our rights in the workplace, classroom, and air travel by supporting these legislative initiatives.