

Resolution I2020-01: Regarding Emergency COVID-19 Relief Funding for Blind Randolph-Sheppard Entrepreneurs

WHEREAS, the Randolph-Sheppard Act affords over 1,800 blind entrepreneurs the opportunity to manage and operate vending facilities in government buildings: and,

WHEREAS, Indiana is home to more than 30 of these blind entrepreneurs and,

WHEREAS, the vast majority of these businesses were shut down or had sales drastically reduced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; and,

WHEREAS, the possibility exists many of these businesses may not reopen until 2021 and business may be significantly decreased at that time; and,

WHEREAS, the United States House of Representatives included \$20,000,000 in the Fiscal Year 2021 Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Funding Bill to provide relief to the Randolph-Sheppard entrepreneurs negatively affected by the pandemic: and,

WHEREAS, the United States Senate has not yet included this one-time appropriation in its version of the bill; and

WHEREAS, without the approval of Congress, the states cannot use federal funding to assist these businesses with resupplying to reopen: Now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind of Indiana in Convention assembled this eleventh day of October, 2020, that this organization call upon and implore our members of United States House of

representatives to support legislation that includes this relief for our nation's blind entrepreneurs; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the National Federation of the Blind of Indiana urge our United States Senators to include and support this same funding in its Fiscal Year 2021 Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Funding Bill: and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the National Federation of the Blind of Indiana urge our senators and representatives support the state's ability to assist these businesses when the time comes to resupply and reopen.

RESOLUTION I2020-02 ON HOMEMAKER AS A GOAL FOR VR OUTCOMES.

WHEREAS, the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) has amended the regulatory definition of "employment outcome" to include only compensated outcomes, which has eliminated both homemaker closures and closures for individuals in unpaid family work; and

WHEREAS, Homemaker, as a profession, is a legitimate and important job; and individuals who strive to be homemakers should not have to disguise this desire by setting some other professional goal just to receive the services and support that they need to be successful homemakers; and

WHEREAS, the goal of VR is to train clients for competitive, integrated employment and economic self-sufficiency; and

WHEREAS, the two facets of the definition of competitive, integrated employment are that the employment is A) "typically found in the community" and B) is compensated at a rate that is not less than the customary rate paid to other employees who are not disabled and are performing the same or similar work; and

WHEREAS, A 2013 U.S. Census Bureau report shows that approximately 24% of married mothers with children under the age of 15 were stay-at-home parents demonstrating that Homemakers are typically found in the community; and

WHEREAS, Homemakers do not earn a wage regardless of disability, and their financial stability is determined by other, unrelated variables, demonstrating that homemakers who have disabilities are compensated at the same rate as homemakers without disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the skills taught under the homemaker or unpaid family worker goals are necessary skills to restore self-esteem and the confidence needed to pursue an employment goal, and

WHEREAS, the rapidly changing technologies and skills required to carry out daily activities require special training in adaptive and assistive technologies, now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind of Indiana in Convention assembled this 10th day of October, 2020, that this organization condemn and deplore RSA for its position as outlined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the Final Rule that places Blind and visually impaired individuals in the unfair position of not having the same opportunity of success as our sighted counterparts.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this organization call upon the department of education and RSA to re-evaluate their position and reinstate the Homemaker and unpaid family worker goals in the final rule for Vocational rehabilitation.

Resolution I2020-03

Call upon the Indiana state legislators to protect the rights of parents who are blind.

Whereas blind individuals continue to face unfair, preconceived, and unnecessary societal biases as

well as antiquated attitudes regarding their ability to successfully parent their children.

Whereas blind individuals face these biases and preconceived attitudes in family and dependency law proceedings in which the allocation of parental responsibilities and parenting time are at stake and in public and private adoption, guardianship, and foster care proceedings; and

Whereas because of these societal biases and antiquated attitudes, children of blind parents are unnecessarily being removed from their parents' care or being restricted from enjoying meaningful time with their parents; and

Whereas children are being denied the opportunity to enjoy the experience of living in loving homes with blind parents or other blind caregivers, and

Whereas the Parents with disabilities bill (SB312) failed to pass during the 2020 session of the Indiana General Assembly,

Be it hereby resolved by the National Federation of the Blind of Indiana, gathered in convention on this 10th day of October, 2020, that this organization strongly urge the Indiana General Assembly to pass legislation that protects our right to parent in declaring that we are competent adults until proven otherwise by evidence rather than fear of blindness.

Be it further resolved that this organization urge the Indiana Department of Child Services to stamp out discrimination against parents who are blind by implementing training programs that include blind parents and blindness advocates to educate their case workers in the rights and capabilities of persons who are blind.

Be it further resolved that these agencies be required to expunge any overturned decisions or reversed rulings from the file of any proceeding in which the allocation of parental responsibilities and parenting time are at stake, and in public and private adoption, guardianship, custody or foster care proceedings.

Resolution I2020-04 on accessible voting.

Whereas Voting is one of our nation's most fundamental rights and a hallmark of our democracy. still too many people who are blind or have low vision have been excluded from this core aspect of citizenship because the ballot is completely inaccessible to them.

Whereas the Indiana bill of voter's rights guarantees us the right to vote privately and independently in a free and fair election.

Whereas the Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act of 1984 (VAEHA) requires that voters must be provided an alternate means of voting on Election Day when no accessible location is available to serve as a polling place.

Whereas the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) requires the accessible voting system must provide the same opportunity for access and participation, including privacy and independence, that other voters receive.

WHEREAS, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act requires that voters with disabilities be afforded an opportunity to exercise the right to vote that is equivalent to the opportunity afforded to voters without disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the use of vote-by-mail and absentee voting to conduct local, state, and federal elections has increased substantially due to the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, mail in ballots are not an accessible avenue for blind individuals to vote independently and privately.

BE IT RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind of Indiana in Convention assembled this 10th day of October 2020, that this organization implore all election officials in the state to ensure that every polling place is equipped with an accessible electronic voting machine.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that this organization implore all election officials in the state to ensure that the poll workers are sufficiently trained to ensure

that the privacy and independence provided to all voters be available to the blind and visually impaired.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that this organization call upon the state of Indiana to find a safe, secure, and accessible means of electronic voting that can be used as a form of absentee balloting.

RESOLUTION I2020-05 ON THE RIGHTS OF BLIND CITIZENS OVER 55.

WHEREAS, the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) has amended the final rule to make individuals over the age of 55 no longer eligible to receive Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services, and

WHEREAS, this ineligibility leaves a large population of newly blind citizens without the appropriate training to continue in the active pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness, and

WHEREAS, medical insurance does not cover orientation and mobility, or other Skills of Blindness training required when a person, regardless of age, loses their sight, but these types of skills are typically provided by VR services; and

WHEREAS, the rapidly changing technologies and skills needed to carryout daily activities require special training in adaptive and assistive technologies for individuals who are blind, and

WHEREAS, more and more citizens over the age of 55 years have been called upon to play significant roles in raising and caring for children, and

WHEREAS, Senior blind individuals are no less required to take on these responsibilities, and may need the same training as younger blind adults in order to be successful in their family obligations, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind of Indiana in convention assembled this 10th day of October, 2020, that this organization condemn and deplore RSA for its position of Age discrimination that places Blind and visually impaired citizens over the age of 55 in the unfair position of not having the same rights and opportunities as their younger and sighted counterparts.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this organization call upon the department of education and RSA to re-evaluate their position and reinstate the training and services for citizens over the age of 55.