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Sustaining Federal Policies and Programs Empowering People Experiencing Vision Loss to Continue Contributing to America

Blind individuals contribute to society in countless meaningful ways, just like anyone else. We are taxpayers, business owners, employees, consumers, homeowners, veterans, students, and seniors. We excel in various fields such as education, arts, technology, science, sports, and so much more.

However, specific federal policies and programs must be sustained by Congress to empower all Americans experiencing vision loss to continue contributing to our economic and social life. These laws and programs provide education, rehabilitation, employment, and opportunities for a healthy, fulfilling, and independent life.

Essential Laws and Programs for the Independence of People with Vision Loss:

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973

This law provides rehabilitation services for people with disabilities. It also prohibits disability discrimination by the federal government, federal contractors, and recipients of federal funds. This law has historically opened the door to countless employment and other opportunities for people with disabilities, including people who are blind or who have low vision.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

This law provides equal opportunity by prohibiting discrimination against people with disabilities by private and public employers, state and local governments and public accommodations. It enables blind and low vision people to participate equally and fully in all areas of our economy and society.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

School districts receive federal funding to provide special education and services that blind school-age children need to learn and compete in employment and to access higher educational opportunities.

The Older Individuals Who are Blind Program

This program provides funding to each state for targeted services to seniors experiencing vision loss. These services enable seniors to remain in their own homes and to avoid unwanted, unnecessary, and costly institutionalization in nursing homes.

The National Library Services

The program provides funding for audio and Braille books and other reading material to state and regional libraries for distribution to people who are blind or have low vision. Together with the Free Matter for the Blind privilege under the U.S. Postal Service, students can receive needed materials that set them up for remarkable success.

The Department of Transportation

Provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act and other related laws enforced by DOT enable the blind and low vision community to travel independently to places of employment, public accommodations, and other social events.