Dear Congressman Tiberi,

My name is Beth Debus, President of the Columbus Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of Ohio. As one of your constituents, I urge you to sign on to important legislation to work with blind Americans to establish a commission within the Department of Education to set uniform national standards for the education of blind students in grades K–12. Our representatives discussed this proposed legislation with your staff early this month, and we expect soon to have a bill introduced. Currently the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and other existing laws and regulations do not provide objective standards to measure the educational progress of blind students. When blind children do not keep up with their sighted peers, everyone presumes that they are incapable of doing so. In reality it is usually that no one expects them to work up to grade level, so they fall further and further behind.

This legislation should:

* Create a commission within the Department of Education, comprised to ensure representation of all stakeholders, to set educational standards for blind children, and to promulgate regulations.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and other existing laws and regulations do not currently provide objective standards to measure the effectiveness of the education of blind students against accepted standards like the Common Core State Standards. Such standards must be set by a regulatory body that consists of and receives input from all stakeholders, including educators, blind Americans, and parents of blind children. We urge Congress to enact legislation that creates a commission within the Department of Education, to ensure representation of all stakeholders in order to set educational standards for blind children and to promulgate regulations providing for the enforcement of the standards throughout the United States. Only through the establishment of objective standards by such an independent body will blind children in America finally be freed from the chains of inadequate instruction, lackluster educational support, and low expectations.

Please support blind Americans by cosponsoring legislation to establish a commission within the Department of Education to set standards for the education of all blind children in America.

Thank you for considering this piece of legislation. The National Federation of the Blind will follow up with a bill number as it becomes available.

Thank you ,

Beth Debus, President

NFB-O Capital Chapter