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**Coloradans with Disabilities to Protest Goodwill’s payment of Subminimum Wages**

***Protesters to Urge Boycott, Demand Fair Wages***

**Denver, Colorado (August 22, 2012):** The National Federation of the Blind (NFB), of Colorado, the state’s oldest and largest organization of the blind, announced today that it, along with affiliates of the Federation all over the nation and other organizations of people with disabilities, will conduct over eighty coordinated nationwide protests in front of thrift stores operated by Goodwill Industries International, Inc., the nonprofit manufacturer and retailer.  NFB Colorado will conduct two informational protests in front of the Goodwill stores located at 21 S. Broadway, Denver and 2007 S. Circle Drive, Colorado Springs, on Saturday, August 25th from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The informational protests will raise awareness of Goodwill’s practice of paying subminimum wages to many of its workers with disabilities.  Freedom of information requests filed by the NFB confirmed that Goodwill Industries employees with disabilities have been paid as low as $0.22 an hour.  The NFB and nearly fifty other organizations of people with disabilities including the Colorado Cross Disability Coalition support legislation, the Fair Wages For Workers with Disabilities Act (H.R. 3086), which would phase out and then repeal the nearly seventy-five-year-old provision of the Fair Labor Standards Act that permits special certificate holders to pay subminimum wages to workers with disabilities.

Dr. Marc Maurer, President of the National Federation of the Blind, said: “Goodwill Industries is one of the most well-known charitable organizations in the United States, but most members of the general public are unaware that Goodwill exploits people with disabilities.  We are conducting informational protests to make the public aware of this practice that, although sadly still legal, is unfair, discriminatory, and immoral.  Given its lucrative retail operations and the fact that it can lavish half-a-million dollars on the salary of its president and chief executive officer, Goodwill is certainly in a position to stop exploiting its workers with disabilities.  We are calling upon all Americans to refuse to do business with Goodwill Industries, to refuse to make donations to the subminimum-wage exploiter, and to refuse to shop in its retail stores until it exercises true leadership and sound moral judgment by fairly compensating all of its workers with disabilities.”

“Locally, we have called upon Goodwill organizations in Colorado to abandon the unfair and immoral practice of paying subminimum wages but they refuse,” said Scott LaBarre, President of the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado. In fact, both Goodwill organizations in Colorado have confirmed that over 100 of its workers with disabilities receive less than the minimum wage. In contrast, the two chief executives of these organizations earn salaries and benefits of several hundred thousand dollars each. “The CEO of the Denver based Goodwill, Jesse Wolf, has met with us and agreed to engage in a dialogue with the Federation to consider reforms to these antiquated wage practices, but the CEO of Goodwill based in Colorado Springs has shockingly and recklessly refused even to meet with us,” commented LaBarre.

For a media conctact for the Denver protest, contact James Gashel, Secretary of the National Federation of the Blind, at [jgashel@comcast.net](mailto:jgashel@comcast.net) and 720 295-7401. For a media contac at the Colorado Springs protest, contact Scott LaBarre at [slabarre@labarrelaw.com](mailto:slabarre@labarrelaw.com) and 303 520-3584. For more background regarding this critically important issue, please visit [www.nfb.org/fair-wages](http://www.nfb.org/fair-wages) and to learn about the Federation in Colorado, go to [www.nfbco.org](http://www.nfbco.org).