ICBV Office Update

December 26, 2017

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**\*\*1** **Calendar of Events**

**January 28 through February 1, 2018**

Save the Date

NFB Washington Seminar

Holiday Inn Capitol

550 C Street, SW,

Washington, DC 20024

**March 20-23, 2018**

NAMA One Show in Las Vegas

(Randolph-Sheppard Training on March 20th)

**May 21-22, 2018**

NABM Goes to the Hill in Washington D.C.

NABM Advocacy and Current Issue Training in Washington, D.C.

**July 3-8, 2018**

NFB National Convention

Place: Rosen Shingle in Orlando Florida

Join the largest gathering of the blind next year.

**July 24-25, 2018**

NAMA DC Fly-In

The Fairmont Hotel

2401 M St NW

Washington, DC 20037

For more information visit:

[www.namaflyin.org](http://www.namaflyin.org)

**November 13-16, 2018**

BLAST Conference in San Antonio, Texas

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**\*\*2** From John Pare – **Legislative Update**

Dear Fellow Federationists:

The House of Representatives passed the conferenced version of the **Tax Cuts and Jobs Act** this afternoon. The Senate is expected to pass it this evening. President Trump is expected to sign it into law by the end of the week.

The good news is the additional standard deduction for the blind was included in the bill. This means that a blind person filing single or head of household will get an additional $1,550 deduction. A blind person filing married will get an additional $1,250 deduction, and two blind spouses filing jointly will get an additional $2,500 deduction.

This provision would not have been preserved if it had not been for your advocacy. Thanks to everyone for sending emails and making phone calls.

While we had hoped the Access Technology Affordability Act would be merged into the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, our bill sponsors are still fully committed to passage of our legislation. We need to continue to build cosponsors on the House and Senate bills (H.R. 1734 and S. 732).

As far as the impact the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will have on the federal deficit, there is still great concern. Some analysts predict an additional $1.5 trillion of federal debt, while others believe that increased economic activity will offset any additional debt. Our concern is that increased federal debt could lead to automatic spending cuts mandated by the Budget Control Act of 2011. We will need to keep a close watch and be ready to advocate against any cuts to vocational rehabilitation, IDEA, Medicaid, Medicare, or SSDI.

For those attending Washington Seminar, please remember we are only fourteen days away from the deadline to make hotel reservations at the Holiday Inn Capitol. That means that we are only forty-one days away from the Great Gathering-In and the official start of the 2018 Washington Seminar. You can make your reservations online by visiting the Holiday Inn Capitol’s reservations portal which will already include our group code, or by calling the Holiday Inn Capitol directly. The telephone number to call is 1 877-572-6951, and the booking code to reference is FB8. The 2018 room rate is $192.00 per night. This rate does not include DC sales tax, currently 14.8%. The last day to make your room reservations is Tuesday, January 2, 2018, so please make your reservations as soon as possible.

More information regarding our 2018 legislative priorities, fact sheets, and FAQs is forthcoming. Please don't hesitate to let us know if you have any questions.

Warm regards,

John G. ParÃ© Jr.

Executive Director for Advocacy and Policy

200 East Wells Street, Baltimore, MD 21230

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**\*\*3** From John Pare – **Legislative Update**

Dear Fellow Federationists:

Good news! The **Accessible Instructional Materials in Higher Education (Aim High) Act** has been incorporated into the Promoting Real Opportunity, Success, and Prosperity through Education Reform (PROSPER) Act (H.R. 4508). We anticipate the PROSPER Act will be passed by the House Committee on Education and the Workforce this week.

In other news, the conference committee for the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act continues to negotiate this bill. There is still a possibility that the Access Technology Affordability Act (ATAA) could be merged into the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. Along with your calls, we have had several meetings with members of the conference committee. We also know that Congressman Young and Senator Boozman, the corresponding House and Senate bill sponsors, are working hard to promote these bills.

Currently, the Access Technology Affordability Act has eighteen cosponsors in the House (H.R. 1734) and four cosponsors in the Senate (S. 732). The Senate version of the Aim High Act (S. 2138) has one cosponsor.

We need to continue our final 2017 surge on these two items. So please make three phone calls or send three emails. Please contact your two senators and urge them to cosponsor both the Aim High Act (S. 2138) and the Access Technology Affordability Act (S. 732).

Please also contact your representative and urge him or her to cosponsor the Access Technology Affordability Act (H.R. 1734).

When you call or email your senators, you might say something like the following:

“Hello, my name is [your name] and I am a constituent of [your senator. I live in [city, state]. I am calling to urge [your senator] to cosponsor S. 732, the Access Technology Affordability Act. This bill would increase the availability of access technology, thereby increasing educational and employment opportunities for all blind Americans. The bill does this by creating a tax credit for the purchase of access technology. The National Federation of the Blind has analyzed the cost impact and the bill is either cost neutral or will save the government money. I also urge [your senator] to cosponsor the Accessible instructional Materials in Higher Education Act, S. 2138. This bill will foster the creation of guidelines for accessible instructional material in higher education. I urge [your senator] to cosponsor both of these bills. Thanks.”

When you call your representative, you might say something like this:

“Hello, my name is [your name] and I am a constituent of [your representative]. I live in [city, state]. I am calling to urge [your representative] to cosponsor H.R. 1734, the Access Technology Affordability Act. This bill would increase the availability of access technology thereby increasing educational and employment opportunities for all blind Americans. The bill does this by creating a tax credit for the purchase of access technology. The National Federation of the Blind has analyzed the cost impact and the bill is either cost neutral or will save the government money. I urge [your representative] to cosponsor the bill. Thanks.”

Also, please check the list at the end of this email for the current list of Senate and House cosponsors. You do not need to call anyone on this list, unless you would like to call them and thank them for their cosponsorship.

If you are in a meeting, you will want to go into more detail but general calls and emails do not have to be very long. The key points to mention: the bill number, that you are a constituent, and that you urge the member of Congress to cosponsor the legislation.

You can contact your member of Congress by calling the Capitol Switchboard and asking for the office in question. The number is (202) 224-3121. If you email your representative or senators, please copy me at JPare@nfb.org.

It is critical that we move on this quickly, so please strive to make your calls and send your emails as soon as possible.

Senate ATAA Cosponsor List:

Sen. Boozman, John [R-AR] - Sponsor

Sen. Cardin, Benjamin L. [D-MD]

Sen. Coons, Christopher A. [D-DE]

Sen. Hirono, Mazie K. [D-HI]

Sen. Van Hollen, Chris [D-MD]

Senate AIM HIGH Cosponsor List:

Sen. Hatch, Orrin G. [R-UT]

Sen. Warren, Elizabeth [D-MA] - Sponsor

House ATAA Cosponsor List:

Rep. Bilirakis, Gus M. [R-FL-12]

Rep. Cicilline, David N. [D-RI-1]

Rep. Davis, Danny K. [D-IL-7]

Rep. Demings, Val Butler [D-FL-10]

Rep. Hanabusa, Colleen [D-HI-1]

Rep. Kihuen, Ruben J. [D-NV-4]

Rep. Lawson, Al, Jr. [D-FL-5]

Rep. Lujan, Ben Ray [D-NM-3]

Rep. Moulton, Seth [D-MA-6]

Rep. Norton, Eleanor Holmes [D-DC-At Large]

Rep. Quigley, Mike [D-IL-5]

Rep. Rosen, Jacky [D-NV-3]

Rep. Roybal-Allard, Lucille [D-CA-40]

Rep. Ryan, Tim [D-OH-13]

Rep. Schakowsky, Janice D. [D-IL-9]

Rep. Sinema, Kyrsten [D-AZ-9]

Rep. Smucker, Lloyd [R-PA-16]

Rep. Young, David [R-IA-3] - Sponsor

Rep. Young, Don [R-AK-At Large]

John G. ParÃ© Jr.

Executive Director for Advocacy and Policy

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**\*\*4** From Grant Station

A Federal Funding Checkup for the Safety Net:

**THE CURRENT OUTLOOK FOR HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCIES**

By Kevin Peters Research Specialist

In our ongoing series on federal funding under President Trump, we've seen a pattern: the White House proposes massive budget cuts, and the Senate Appropriations Committee rejects those cuts. While some agencies have fared better than others, it looks like health and human services funding should remain fairly stable.

The White House budget initially proposed cutting funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention by 17%, the Food and Drug Administration by 31%, and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) by 18%.

However, in September, the Senate Appropriations Committee voted on the fiscal year 2018 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS) Appropriations Bill, and chose to support a $3 billion increase over 2017, a total of $27.5 billion more than the President's budget request. A large portion of the increase is because of an extra $2 billion for the NIH, though several other agencies will also see additional funding under the bill.

Proposed cuts include $61.5 million to the Department of Labor and $11 million to the Corporation for National and Community Service.

(The Bill still needs final approval, and the approval process is moving fairly slowly for the upcoming fiscal year.)

If overall funding stays consistent, it's likely that grant availability will also stay consistent, and that is good news for current federal grantees and potential applicants.

But we also need to keep in mind that there might be an increase in future demand for health and human services support through avenues other than the government. In the wake of the House and Senate's votes on the tax plan, despite claims that the plan will trigger enough economic growth to be "revenue neutral," several legislators, including Senator Marco Rubio and Speaker of the House Paul Ryan, are discussing cuts to the safety net (including Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid) in order to offset decreased tax revenue. With decreased support through these programs, other entities may need to fill the gaps in service. Organizations may have to find ways to do more with their current funding, or find new sources of funding in order to serve more people.

So aside from the federal government, where can health and human services agencies find funding?

If certain programs do get cut at the federal level, some states will step up to fill in the gap. (Obviously, this depends on your particular state.) GrantStation maintains lists of state grantmaking agencies. Many agencies have a place on their website where you can sign up to be informed of new opportunities as they become available. Local governments also occasionally offer opportunities for funding.

Outside of the government, one major source of targeted funds is professional associations. For example, the Alzheimer's Association, the American Heart Association, and the American Association of People with Disabilities offer a variety of funding opportunities. Even if an association doesn't offer grant support, it can often provide capacity building support and resources to help you in your funding search.

Many hospitals maintain foundations. While a lot of these exist to provide support directly to programs run by the hospital, some offer funding for programs in the community. And while you may think that these types of foundations may limit themselves to programs explicitly addressing health, many will fund human services efforts, as well. Issues like homelessness and hunger are definitely related to the health of people in the community. Check with your local healthcare provider to see what they offer. And consider being open to partnership opportunities. Many grantmakers are especially fond of collaborative efforts.

In the health field, many pharmaceutical companies and medical equipment makers offer grant programs. For example, GlaxoSmithKline, a maker of vaccines, offers a range of funding opportunities related to the company's interests. Even corporations that don't have a specific business interest in the health and human services sector may also be willing to consider support for such endeavors, as they can benefit the community as a whole.

Many churches and religious organizations also have a specific interest in human services and health issues. While some of these organizations limit their funding to their own programs, others offer support for outside organizations. Although some of these organizations only provide support to organizations with a specific religious affiliation, many consider support for any group doing good work in the community.

Of course, there are also a large number of private foundations and other funders addressing health and human services concerns. Services such as GrantStation can help you in your search for these funders.

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**\*\*5** From Braun, Beth via NFBNet-Members-List

The National Federation of the Blind has partnered with E la Carte, Inc., creators of the **Presto™ Smart Dining System™** for full-service restaurants; the Applebee’s™ restaurant franchise; and LightHouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired of San Francisco to produce a text-to-speech capability for the Presto Smart Dining System that will be incorporated into all current and future Presto-system tablets, including those used in Applebee’s restaurants. This partnership is a result of negotiations that began last year among E la Carte, the Applebee’s franchise, and the National Federation of the Blind, the LightHouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired of San Francisco, and several blind Californians.

new functionality enables blind persons to interact with the Presto system to independently order menu items, pay their bills, and perform other functions using a Presto-system tablet. By performing certain gestures, blind patrons can turn on the text-to-speech capability of the tablets in order to access the new functionality. In addition, blind patrons can take advantage of the audio jack available on newer PrestoPrime EMV tablets to activate the text-to-speech capability by simply plugging in a pair of headphones. The audio jack on PrestoPrime tablets can be found and identified by a Braille tactile label located next to the jack.

The National Federation of the Blind and LightHouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired of San Francisco have been working with E la Carte and the Applebee’s franchise for several months to develop the new functionality, which has been tested by blind consumers. This continued testing and the related feedback will help E la Carte to fine-tune the implementation such that it provides a user experience for blind consumers that is similar to that of other mobile and small screen device applications and, as a result, is familiar to them.

“Like many new technologies, the E la Carte system has the potential to provide the blind with greater independence than ever before, since we will now be able to access a restaurant’s menu choices in the same way that other customers do,” said Mark Riccobono, President of the National Federation of the Blind. “We therefore applaud E la Carte in its efforts to provide to blind diners the same access to the Presto system that sighted persons enjoy, while also helping the restaurants who deploy the system comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and other applicable laws.”

The new accessibility functionality will be included as a standard part of the Presto system and tablets and is available to all E la Carte customers.

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**\*\*6** From Commissioner John Fritchey

If Washington D.C. Republicans are successful in their **continuing efforts to diminish or repeal the ACA**, the annual loss of revenue for care provided by the Cook County Health & Hospitals System is estimated to be between $300 million and $800 million annually.

It would additionally jeopardize access to affordable health care for thousands of Cook County residents.

While the Cook County Board unfortunately can't stop this Republican assault, I filed a resolution that will be passed by the Board urging Congress to protect the Affordable Care Act and the coverages it provides.

You can read the text of my resolution below.

RESOLUTION URGING CONGRESS TO PROTECT ACCESS TO QUALITY, AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE PROVIDED TO MILLIONS OF AMERICANS AND THOUSANDS OF COOK COUNTY RESIDENTS BY THE PATIENT PROTECTION AND AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

WHEREAS, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, commonly called the Affordable Care Act ("ACA") was adopted in 2010 to dramatically reduce the number of uninsured Americans and improve overall public health for the American people; and

WHEREAS, the ACA protects our working families against health insurance discrimination and denial for pre-existing conditions, provides subsidies to working families to offset the cost of health insurance, incentivizes states to expand Medicaid coverage for the working poor, and requires coverage of basic family health care needs in health insurance plans; and

WHEREAS, the Congressional Budget Office ("CBO"), the nonpartisan budget-scoring agency, estimated that between 2010-2019 the ACA would yield a projected reduction in the Country's deficits of more than $150 billion over that period; and

WHEREAS, the ACA, over the last six (6) years, has cut the overall uninsured rate in the United States from 15.7% to 8.6% and, among those ages 18-64, from 22.3% to 11.9%, and has reduced the number of uninsured at our County health system from 70% to 30%; and

WHEREAS, thanks to the ACA, more than 1 million people in Illinois get insurance through the ACA marketplace or the expansion of Medicaid, and through CountyCare, the Cook County Health & Hospital System ("CCHHS") which provides 140,000 Medicaid recipients with health care coverage, a number that could double in 2018; and

WHEREAS, the repeal of ACA would lead to a significant negative economic impact for Illinois as the Illinois Health & Hospital Association predicted the state could lose as much as $11.6 billion to $13.1 billion in annual economic activity, translating into a potential loss of 84,000 to 95,000 jobs, if Congress and President Trump repeal coverage for those 1 million people without a viable and comprehensive replacement plan; and

WHEREAS, thanks in large part to the ACA,the Cook County Health & Hospitals System ("CCHHS") has been able to reduce its reliance on the annual taxpayer allocation by more than $370 million due to the ACA and Medicaid expansion, a 75 percent decrease in local tax support since 2009, from $481 million to $111.5 million; and

WHEREAS, should the ACA be repealed or severely diminished, the annual loss of revenue for care provided by the Cook County Health & Hospitals System may likely exceed $300 million annually and could be as high as $800 million. Additionally, other hospitals and providers in Cook County would stand to lose more than $300 million in reimbursements from our CountyCare Health Plan, which is on top of the hundreds of millions more dollars lost from other Medicaid health plans, and cuts mentioned in ACA repeal proposals thus far are unsustainable, unfair, callous and would require increased state or local revenues to meet the needs of the uninsured in Cook County; and

WHEREAS, a significant increase in the uninsured rate and amount of uncompensated care in the County and the region due to the loss of health insurance coverage for working families because of any repeal of the ACA would undermine the "patient mix" of the CCHHS, reducing the financial success of the system and diminishing the quality of life of our residents; and

WHEREAS, the Republican-led Congress has made repeated efforts to repeal parts or all of the ACA, with the Senate recently passing the elimination of the individual mandate, a central tenet of the ACA that health policy experts and proponents say is essential to making the law work; and

WHEREAS, the CBO reported that repealing said mandate would increase the number of uninsured by 13 million by 2027 and that health insurance premiums would rise by about 10 percent in most years over the next decade in the individual market created by the Affordable Care Act; and

WHEREAS, the Cook County Board of Commissioners, believes that access to quality, affordable health care is a human right, not a privilege, and is essential to the quality of life of families and individuals in Cook County and everywhere throughout our country; and

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of our federal, state and local officials to defend the issues and interests of their constituents, including advocating for access to quality, affordable health care coverage provided for by the Affordable Care Act;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the President and Cook County Board of Commissioners oppose the repeal of the Affordable Care Act and replacing it with any alternative that would not improve access to quality, affordable health care for all of our residents; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the President and Cook County Board of Commissioners oppose any measure that results in a loss of health insurance coverage by any American, weakens the ACA's protection against health insurance discrimination or denial based on preexisting conditions, reduces the ACA's subsidies to individuals for buying health care, or reduces the incentives for states to cover individuals through expanding Medicaid; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the County urges the Illinois Congressional Delegation, Illinois General Assembly, the Governor and members of the general public to oppose and resist any weakening of the protections of the Affordable Care Act for working families; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be sent to the President of the United States, U.S. Speaker of the House, U.S. Senate Majority Leader, U.S. House Minority Leader, U.S. Senate Minority Leader, the Illinois Congressional Delegation, Governor of Illinois, President of the Illinois Senate, and Speaker of the Illinois House.

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**\*\*7** Shared by David Meyer, NFB of Illinois Coordinator and Channel Administrator, NFB-NewsLine

Are you looking for **contact information on your federal or state legislators** and you don't want to go through the hassle of checking websites to get it? Well, so long as you know your representatives and senators, you don't have to. NewsLine now has contact information for all state representatives, state senators, national reps and our two US senators.

To find this information, do the following.

1. Go to your states information channel, (option 2 from the main menu.)

2. Go to the NFB of Illinois channel, located within your states information channel.

3. Go to the section legislators and legislation.

If you wish to become familiar with HB2626 the legislation we passed earlier this year, you will find the text for that bill as well.

Finally, if you have yet to sign up for NewsLine and you wish to do so,

please let me know. I can, and would love to sign you up. With NewsLine,

there is a world of information at your fingertips that is not otherwise

available from one location. This new enhancement is one more reason to

become a NewsLine subscriber.

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**\*\*8** Shared by USDOT – **How to Write a Business Plan Quickly and Efficiently**

December is national Write a Business Plan Month. Writing a business plan doesn't have to be intimidating. Check out templates and tools from the SBA to get you started.​

Your business plan is the foundation of your business. Learn how to write a business plan quickly and efficiently with a business plan template.

**Content**

* Business plans help you run your business
* Pick a business plan format that works for you
* Business plan tool

For more information, please click here. <https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/plan/write-your-business-plan-template?utm_campaign=write_a_business_plan&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery>

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**\*\*9** From Lou Ann Blake, Deputy Executive Director, Jernigan Institute

The below research participant solicitation is being provided for informational purposes only. The National Federation of the Blind has no involvement in this research, but we believe that it may contribute to our research mission.

**Alliance Consulting Group** is conducting a study to help better understand how blind people are using smartphones and features that are priorities for improving. The study is a roughly 30 minute interview by telephone and participants will receive a $40 Amazon Gift Card by email as an incentive.

The criteria for participation are:

Must own and use either an iPhone or Android smartphone purchased in 2016 or 2017.

Totally blind or minimal vision.

Age 18 – 59

Study is limited to 100 participants

If interested, please send an email to blindstudy@theallianceconsultinggroup.com or text to 310.874.3468 with the following information:

First and last name.

The phone number to call you at.

Your phone brand and model.

Your age.

Your gender (male or female).

The time zone you live in so that we call at an appropriate time.

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**\*\*10** This week on **Eyes On Success**

1752 Running with a Guide Dog (Dec. 20, 2017)

Guide dogs are trained to help the blind navigate throughout the day in many different environments. Hosts Nancy and Peter Torpey talk with Thomas Panek, president of Guiding Eyes for the Blind, about a new skill for which his organization is training dogs - running with their blind owners. We'll hear how this is done and how it is working out for Thomas.

1751 Pros and Cons of Having a Guide Dog (Dec. 13, 2017)

Although guide dogs can provide blind individuals with a greater sense of

independence, they may not be for everyone. Hosts Nancy and Peter Torpey talk with Thomas Panek, president of Guiding Eyes for the Blind, about how his organization trains guide dogs and matches them with owners. They also talk about the pros and cons of having a guide dog.

Subscribe to the eyes On Success podcast on iTunes or download shows at: [www.EyesOnSuccess.net](http://www.EyesOnSuccess.net)

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**\*\*11** From Second Sense **Check Out Apple Michigan Avenue**

Don’t miss this terrific opportunity to learn your way around the new Apple Michigan Avenue location! David Flament has reached out to Apple Accessibility and has arranged tours and sessions for people with vision loss to explore the new Apple Michigan Avenue store. This awesome opportunity includes an introduction to available staff, a tour of the store to locate elevators, stairs, Genius Bar, mobile devices and customer service. Apple representatives are also providing an accessibility session to go along with your tour. Two tours are scheduled: Saturday, Jan. 20 and Thursday, Feb. 1, both tours from 9:00 to 11:00 am. Space is limited, but additional tours may be scheduled if there is demand. To register, call our front desk or email David. Please provide your date preference when registering.

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**\*\*12** Shared by Terry Smith, NABM/NFBEI

See the **message below from NABM President Nicky Gacos**

Greetings to Our Randolph-Sheppard Family:

As 2017 draws to an end and the holiday season is upon us, it is time to reflect a little on the past year while at the same time looking forward with anticipation to 2018. As the year closes, we face many challenges as our opportunities continue to decline and new threats are emerging. Whether it is the growing momentum of rest area commercialization; DOD playing games with the priority; the American Heart Association laying aim at customer choice in our vending facilities, or a new threat we don’t even know about yet, all of us have our work cut out for us next year. So first, let me say thank you for all that you do every day and then ask you to get ready to roll up your sleeves. There is a lot to be done in 2018.

As we look forward to the New Year, you may want to mark your calendar for some important dates. On January 29th, NABM will be meeting in our nation’s capitol in conjunction with the National Federation of the Blind Washington Seminar. In March, the NAMA One Show will be held in Las Vegas and there will be a day of Randolph-Sheppard training on Tuesday, March 20th. NABM will be conducting training on advocacy and leadership May 21-22 in D.C. and attendees will have another opportunity to visit The Hill and tell their stories to Congress. The NFB national convention will be in Orlando July 3-7 and the Merchants Division will provide a half-day of training and updates for blind entrepreneurs. The NAMA Fly In is July 24-25. We close out the year November 13-16 in San Antonio with our BLAST Conference which promises to be bigger and better than ever. I hope to see you at as many of these as possible.

But before we take on the challenges that 2018 will bring, let's pause and enjoy family and friends during this holiday season. All that we do we do for those that are important to us and this is the time to thank them and enjoy their company. From the National Association of Blind Merchants, I wish you a very Merry Christmas and a glorious New Year!

Nicky Gacos, President

National Association of Blind Merchants

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