Resolution 2014-17

Regarding Accessible Online Ballot-Marking Systems

WHEREAS, the right to cast a secret and anonymous ballot is a cornerstone of our democracy that enables citizens to vote their conscience without fear; and

WHEREAS, the passage of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) has enabled the majority of blind voters and many others with disabilities to exercise their right to vote privately and independently at polling places; and

WHEREAS, the accessible voting machines typically found in polling places do not have the capability to allow some voters with disabilities, such as the deaf-blind, to exercise their right to vote privately and independently as guaranteed by HAVA; and

WHEREAS, accessible online ballot-marking systems will enable many voters who cannot currently cast a secret ballot, such as the deaf-blind, to vote privately and independently using their own personal access technology; and

WHEREAS, seventeen states (Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Delaware, Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Carolina, Utah, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin) and counties in California and Florida have implemented online ballot-marking systems that enable voters to access and mark their ballot online and then email or print and mail the ballot to their local board of elections, demonstrating that these systems can be made secure; and

WHEREAS, only Alaska, Delaware, Utah, and Washington extend the use of their online ballot-marking systems to voters with disabilities; Now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind in Convention assembled this fifth day of July, 2014, in the city of Orlando, Florida, that this organization strongly urge the thirteen states that have online ballot-marking systems, but do not make them available to voters with disabilities, to make their systems accessible and to extend their use to voters with disabilities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the National Federation of the Blind strongly urges all remaining states and territories to implement accessible online ballot-marking systems and to make these systems available to voters with disabilities so that all citizens can exercise their right to cast a secret ballot.