Honorable Patrick O’Donnell

Chair, Assembly Committee on Education

1020 N Street, Room 159

Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assemblymember O’Donnell:

(I or name of organization) would like to urge the Assembly Committee on Education to support Assembly Bill 947 by Assemblymember Quirk-Silva.

AB947, the most important bill in the area of education for children who have vision loss in several decades, achieves two major goals. First, the bill would entitle each student with vision impairment, to the extent needed, to a group of services known as the expanded core curriculum (ECC). The ECC includes services that are essential to living a productive and independent life, but which are obtained by sighted children through observation of others, such that children with vision loss must obtain them in school. Services that comprise the ECC include, compensatory academic sills, including braille and large print, technology, orientation and mobility (o/m), independent living sills, career development, recreation and leisure, and socialization. Except for braille and o/m instruction, these services are not recognized as required services under state law.

Secondly, the bill would reverse a growing trend among school districts and county offices of education to place restrictions on o/m instruction that can largely curtail the provision of adequate orientation and mobility services. Orientation and mobility refers to the ability to understand and navigate in one’s environment, whether in the home, the school, or the community. Restrictions such as not providing a vehicle for use by an o/m instructor, not allowing off-campus instruction, or limiting instruction to the school day have created enormous barriers to the receipt of sufficient instruction in this most valuable services.

Thus, AB947 is crucial to enabling students who are blind or have low vision to have the services they need to live as independent adults. It is for that reason that (I or name or organization) urges the committee to support this important bill.

Sincerely