SENT VIA E-MAIL

September 14, 2012

Ms. Catherine Meloy

President/CEO

Goodwill of Greater Washington

2200 South Dakota Avenue, NE

Washington, DC  20018

[Catherine.Meloy@dcgoodwill.org]

Dear Ms. Meloy:

 I have received the letter you sent me dated September 13, 2012, and I thank you for it. I have read it and the enclosed document.

I am pleased that Goodwill of Greater Washington pays all of its employees more than the minimum wage. Are you prepared to support the proposal currently in Congress to eliminate subminimum wage payments for disabled Americans? This proposal, H.R. 3086, is currently under consideration, and I urge your support.

Goodwill representatives have been in Congress to tell members that Goodwill wants to maintain the subminimum wage provisions of the law. This, it seems to me, conflicts with your stated policy. Are you prepared to make a statement that you would not tolerate American law continuing a two-class employment policy—one that guarantees the minimum wage to able-bodied people and one that deprives disabled people of the same protection? If you are not prepared to support such a discriminatory policy, are you prepared to disavow it publicly?

Currently your name and presence are being used by Goodwill to try to defeat a proposal to eliminate this discrimination. I urge you to tell those who want to use your presence that they may not do so.

Although the Goodwill of Greater Washington pays all of its workers at least the federal minimum wage, Goodwill of Greater Washington is part of a larger structure that does not pay according to the same policy. Some of your dollars support this structure, and many of your activities support it. Please let me know if you are willing to join with others who would eliminate this discriminatory policy. Ms. Catherine Meloy

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I note in your letter that you tell me my actions are hurting the very people I purport to support. This, it seems to me, is a misunderstanding of the realities that you and I both face. I have worked with disabled people for many decades, and I know firsthand the misunderstandings that sometimes result in discrimination against them. Some of these discriminations have occurred to me personally. To incorporate into American law a two-class system that says to disabled people that they may not expect the same legal protections readily available to others may be characterized in many ways—I believe that none of them are positive. This declaration that disabled Americans should be made into a sub-class causes me enormous pain. That your organization is being used to support the continuation of this system is a disadvantage to me. I could put the matter in different terms, but this will give you a notion about why we have taken the position that we espouse with such passion.

I have written to the supporters of Goodwill of Greater Washington to say that I want them to know about what I regard as an unfair, unjust system. You tell me that I should change my behavior and ask me to respond in writing. I have responded in this letter, but I think it might be more productive if we came together for a meeting. I invite you to our offices in Baltimore to talk about this correspondence and related matters. Please let me know if you are willing to discuss them further.

Sincerely,

Marc Maurer, President

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

MM/pwm