Florida statewide Chapter Monthly Business Meeting Minutes

Date: 03/16/2025

Quick Links and Resources

[Link to Kenneth Jernigan Scholarship for First-Timers to National Convention](https://nfb.org/get-involved/national-convention/kenneth-jernigan-convention-scholarship)

[Link to NFB National Convention Registration'](https://nfb.org/civicrm/event/register?reset=1&id=618)

[NFB National Convention Hotel Information](https://nfb.org/get-involved/national-convention-prep)

[Old Hotel Description from National Convention 2022](https://nfb.org/get-involved/national-convention/past-conventions/2022-national-convention/nfb22-navigating-hotels)

[article from Washington Post Regarding Section 504](https://www.washingtonpost.com/wellness/2025/03/11/disability-rights-section-504-rehabilitation-act/)

[Email Cindy Kiper at ckiper@dreamvacations.com](mailto:ckiper@dreamvacations.com)

[Call Cindy Kiper at 813-418-0647](file:///I:\My%20Drive\FSW%20Drive\Meetings\03-16-2025\813-418-0647)

8:05 PM Role Call

* Officers:
  + President Z’Leah Liburd
  + Vice President Britney Frayer
  + Treasurer Scott Wilson
  + Secretary Jose Bohorquez
  + Board Member 1 Niklas Ham
  + Board Member 2 Natalie Williams
  + Board Member 3 Justin Reagan
  + The entire board was present; a Corum was established.
* Other Participants:
  + Affiliate President Camille Tate
  + Peggy Fleischer
  + Jerilyn Higgens
  + Sherry Brunn
  + Russ Davis
  + Tangi Yonce
  + Scott Larson
  + Steve Cook
  + Shannon Cook
  + Denise Valkima
  + Cecelia R

8:07 PM pledge

Russ recited the pledge.

8:08 PM One Minute Message

Affiliate president Tate recited the one-minute message.

8:09 PM Agenda Review

The agenda was reviewed.

8:11 PM Secretary’s report

The report was emailed on February 22nd. Russ motioned to accept the secretary’s report as emailed; Jerilyn seconded; all were in favor.

8:18 PM Treasurers report

The starting Balance for the month of February was $1573.62.

* Expenses $10
  + $10: PAC Plan
* Deposits $40
  + $40: Four people paid dues

The ending balance for the month of February was $1603.62.

Jose motions to accept the treasurer’s report as read; Gathary seconded; all were in favor.

8:21 PM State Convention Committee Announcement

• Convention planning will be coming up soon and we’ve gathered our committee from statewide that will be reporting back to us on what happens.

• Those members are Jose, Sherri, Britany, and Niklas.

8:28 PM Affiliate Announcements/ Legislative Alerts and Reminders

* Florida Senate Bill 396: Changes to voting by mail.
  + This bill will require people to obtain medical documentation to be eligible to vote by mail.
  + The NFB of Florida is opposed to this bill.
  + This will create barriers for people with disabilities since obtaining medical documentation can be time consuming, and it is not always easy to send those documents to the right office.
  + People who live in rural areas or people who cannot access adequate transportation are highly impacted.
  + This bill has not been introduced in the Florida house.
* Reminder: Contact the Florida Attorney General and Florida Governor regarding Section 504
  + Latest News
    - The lawsuit has been temporarily paused; however, the lawsuit has not been dismissed.
    - Some states wish to consider section 504 unconstitutional due to the added rule regarding Gender Dysphoria, while some states just wish to remove the newly added rule.
  + Quick Facts
    - Seventeen U.S. states (including Texas, Florida, Georgia, and others) are suing the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Robert F Kennedy JR.
    - The complaint challenges the May 9, 2024, Final Rule, which adds "gender dysphoria" to the definition of "disability" under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
    - Section 504 states that "No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States … shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance".
  + Refer to previously sent emails to get the Attorney general and the governor’s contact info.
* Senate Bill 1050 and house bill 1103: Consolidating Blind Agencies into one Agency for People with Disabilities
  + Introduced by Jennefer Bradley-R, district 8 in the Florida senate, and Jennifer Kincart-Johnson-R, district 49 of the Florida House
  + This bill will consolidate all disability services into the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD).
  + The National Federation of the Blind is firmly apposed to any consolidation of blind services into one general disability services agency.
  + No other house or senate members have signed onto this bill as of writing the agenda.
  + Contact your Florida Senate member and Florida house member to demonstrate your opposition. Template can be found in emails sent by our affiliate president.
  + Call specific offices to get email addresses. This is especially if you are going to send the resolution with your letter.

8:50 PM Scholarship Reminders and National Convention Registration Announcement

* Kenneth Jernigan Scholarship:
  + Application or letter, including affiliate presidential interview due April 15th.
  + Will need the following info: basic contact info, state affiliate and chapter information, mentor information (anyone on the Florida Statewide Chapter board or affiliate can be your mentor, just ask), and the amount of funding needed. There are also five essay questions, with the last one being optional.
  + Can be blind or sighted.
  + While the expectations of the award are not explicitly mentioned, expect the funding to have some strings attached, like attending Rookie Roundup, having to attend specific convention sessions, and possibly having to write a reflection.
  + Notification of award: May 15th. If no communication or notice is received by that date, you were not selected for an award.
  + Important tasks to complete after submission of application:
    - Book your hotel room. If you don’t win, you can cancel immediately with half of your deposit. If a roommate is booking for you, no action is required. Don’t wait too long, rooms will start to run out fast, probably by late May.
    - Find a roommate. Having two or three other roommates can do wonders to the hotel cost. Just imagine four roommates of KJ scholarship recipients? Hint, hint!
    - Notify the affiliate president, chapter president, and mentor that you submitted an application. These people may be contacted to learn more about you.
    - Do not book your flight unless you are notified of an award. In most cases, canceling a flight does not result in a refund but in a refund of travel credit.
    - Form a rough budget for yourself. This includes roundtrip flight cost, possible rideshare cost to and from the airport (15 miles, $20-$30 each way), hotel cost ($119 (double) or $129 (triples and quads) with 18.2% taxes and fees with $3 nightly occupancy fee), two or three meals per day (cost will vary), $25 convention registration, and $80 banquet.
    - The website mentioned that if you cannot cover these costs, and if you win an award, you should talk to the affiliate treasurer to form a payment plan.
* Convention Registration
  + Registration for convention is now open. Head to nfb.org/convention to register.
  + Registration is $25 and banquet is $80.
  + Dates: July 8th to July 13th
  + Hotel info:
    - Main hotel: New Orleans Marriott - 555 Canal St, New Orleans, LA 70130
    - Overflow Hotel/ Exhibit Hall Hotel: Sheraton New Orleans - 500 Canal St, New Orleans, LA 70130
    - Prices: $119 for doubles and $129 for triples and quads. Expect combined sells tax and tourism support rate of 18.2%, and $3 nightly occupancy fee.
    - Total nightly cost: Based on rough math, the cost per night for doubles should be $141.28 and triples and quads should be $152.90. These are just rough estimates.
    - An initial deposit of the first night’s cost is required upon booking.
    - If a reservation is cancelled before Sunday, June 1, 2025, half of the deposit will be returned. Otherwise, refunds will not be made.
    - Reserve your room by calling 888-238-2427 for the Marriott or 888-827-7033 for the Sheraton New Orleans. Ask for the “National Federation of the Blind 2025 Convention” block.

9:00 PM Presentation on Affiliate Cruise Fundraiser (Cindy Kiper from Dream Vacations)

* The sail date of the cruise will be on October 18th from Port Canaveral, FL, and return on October 26th to Port Canaveral, FL.
* In order to sail on the cruise, you must make a deposit. Deposits are due April 25th. I don’t remember the deposit amount; contact Cindy to inquire about the amount.
* Ports of Call:
  + Port Canaveral, FL (Sailing Port)
  + Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic
  + St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands
  + Tortola, British Virgin Islands
  + Stirrup Cay, Bahamas
  + return at Port Canaveral, FL
* Rooms:
  + All cabins are double occupancy; that means you can pay for half the cabin or pay for the full cabin. If you pay for half, you will most likely be paired with someone. If you know someone, you should contact them.
  + Balcony Cabins: $1483 Single; $2967 entire cabin.
  + Interior Cabin: $1202 single; $2404 entire cabin.
  + Each cabin generates $100 for the affiliate, and for every five cabins, the affiliate is able to auction off one cabin.
* Packages:
  + Package 1: Some amount of onboard credit, Specialty dining is free, $50 off excursion per cabin, 150 minutes per device Wi-Fi.
  + Package 2: 10 free professional photos, 100 onboard credit, $50 off excursion per cabin, 150 minutes Wi-Fi
  + Balcony cabins can enjoy everything from one package.
  + Interior cabins can enjoy two options from either package.
  + This might sound confusing; I encourage to contact Cindy to learn more.
* You will have till June 20th to pay for the entire cruise.
* Contact Cindy if you have any questions.
  + Phone: 813-418-0647
  + Email: [ckiper@dreamvacations.com](mailto:ckiper@dreamvacations.com)

9:22 PM: Fundraising Plans

* Donation Drive—

we are launching the Statewide Giving Challenge! This is our chance to come together, rally support, and make a meaningful impact.

How Does the Statewide Giving Challenge Work?

* It is simple! We are asking all of you—our members and supporters—to help raise funds by reaching out to your networks. You can participate in several ways:
* ✅ Ask your friends and family to donate, then send the contributions to Statewide.
* ✅ Create a Facebook fundraiser or use another donation platform of your choice and direct the proceeds to Statewide.
* ✅ Request donation from a business, nonprofit, or other organization. If requesting donations from a business, nonprofit, or other organization, please contact our president, Z’Leah Liburd, for approval to ensure alignment with our mission.
* ✅ Make a personal contribution if you are financially able. Every dollar counts!

There will be an incentive of a $100 Amazon gift card to the one who raises the most funds!

9:27 PM. Adjournment

Jose motions to adjourn the meeting; Justin seconds; all were in favor. The meeting ended at 9:27 PM.

Have any questions? Email the secretary at [statewide@nfbflorida.org](mailto:statewide@nfbflorida.org).

Pledge

I pledge to participate actively in the effort of the National Federation of the Blind to achieve equality, opportunity, and security for the blind; to support the policies and programs of the Federation; and to abide by its constitution.

Belief Statement

We know that blindness is not the characteristic that defines you or our future. Every day we raise the expectations of blind people, because low expectations create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. Our collective power, determination, and diversity achieve the aspirations of all blind people.