Hello Statewide Members and Supporters

I hope this message finds you well. Please note that our next Statewide meeting, scheduled for Sunday, April 20th, is cancelled due to the Easter holiday. If you have any questions about this email, don’t hesitate to contact me at [statewide@nfbflorida.org](mailto:statewide@nfbflorida.org). In lieu of the meeting, here are some important updates and announcements from across the Federation:

In this update:

* Florida Statewide giving challenge reminder
* Affiliate-related Announcements
* Legislative Alerts
* State and national convention information

Florida Statewide giving challenge

We’re launching the Statewide Giving Challenge to raise funds and support our members! Our goal is $2,000, and we’re just $600 away. Here’s how you can help:

* Ask friends & family to donate.
* Start a fundraiser or request donations from businesses.
* Make a personal contribution if possible.

Where to donate: Zelle (nfbf.statewide@gmail.com) or PayPal (paypal.me/nfbf)

Incentive: The top fundraiser wins a $100 Amazon gift card!

Challenge Dates: March 30 – September 30

Report your donations here: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdEAreJ54OYLZv7cDLRxux9Igq5Y2450L41q7CQ-VEk2AGy4g/viewform>

Let’s work together to make an impact! Thanks to everyone who has donated so far.

Affiliate-related Announcements

Open Convention Planning Meetings: Thanks to everyone who attended the first open convention planning committee. These meeting will occur the first Sunday of the month. These meetings are a great opportunity to give id on how convention can be a success. This convention is not just the affiliate board’s convention; this is all of our convention, and we, the members and our ideas is what can make it a success for everyone.

Cruise Fundraiser: The affiliate is hosting a cruise fundraiser to help raise funds for the affiliate. The cruise will start and end in Port Canaveral:

* 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. The deposit is $120 per person.
* 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.
* Refer to March’s minutes for more info.

Florida Affiliate Scholarship: The Florida Affiliate Scholarship has been released and is now accepting applications.

* Recipients will receive their scholarships at the state convention scheduled for the weekend of October 3rd to October 5th at Hilton Altamonte Springs.
* Travel to and from convention, hotel room,, and a daily stipend will be covered by the affiliate for the scholarship recipients.
* Qualified high school seniors and college students must complete the scholarship application form in MS word format, write a 500-word essay, provide two letters of recommendation, and submit academic transcripts.
* All documentation must be returned to the scholarship committee chair, Kaye Baker at [scholarships@nfbflorida.org](mailto:scholarships@nfbflorida.org).
* Four scholarships will be awarded in the amount of $1500; two blind and two deaf blind scholarships.
* Deadline: September 1st at 11:59 PM
* For more information and to ask questions, contact the scholarship chair, Kaye Baker, at [scholarships@nfbflorida.org](mailto:scholarships@nfbflorida.org) or by telephone at (904) 832-2884.
* The application can be found at <https://nfbflorida.org/2025-student-scholarship>
* If you know a student that is a Florida high school senior, or is attending college in Florida, please share this scholarship with them.

Florida State Convention Theme Contest: It’s time once again to put on your thinking cap and come up with a theme for our 2025 NFB Florida State Convention! The contest will be open until Easter Sunday at midnight. Please send your entries to: [peggy.lynn.fleischer@gmail.com](mailto:peggy.lynn.fleischer@gmail.com) You could be the winner of a $25 Amazon gift card!

Legislative Alerts

* Reminder: Contact the Attorney General and Florida Governor regarding Section 504 Lawsuit
  + The lawsuit is still ongoing, and a hearing will occur very soon.
  + For more information, refer to previous emails from the affiliate or refer to the March minutes.
* Reminder: Senate Bill 1050 and house bill 1103: Consolidating Blind Agencies into one Agency for People with Disabilities
  + This bill is still active on both houses until the end of the session in May.
  + 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.
  + For more information, refer to the March minutes and previously sent emails by the affiliate board.

SB 676: Minimum Wage Requirements

* A new bill, SB 676, has been introduced in the Florida Senate.
* The bill would allow employees to “volunteer” to be paid less than Florida’s current minimum wage.
* This would undermine the minimum wage increases approved by Florida voters in 2020.
* Current and Future Wage Increases:
  + Current minimum wage in Florida: $13/hour.
  + Scheduled increase to $14/hour on October 1, 2025.
  + Scheduled increase to $15/hour on October 1, 2026, followed by regular adjustments per Florida Statute.
* SB 676 would reclassify certain jobs (e.g., internships) to exempt them from minimum wage laws.
* The bill may violate the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), which sets federal worker protections.
* Contact your Florida senator to demonstrate our opposition to this bill.
* For a template and more info, refer to previous emails sent by the affiliate board.

Access Technology Affordability Act (H.R. 1529)

* The U.S. House of Representatives has passed the FY25 Concurrent Budget Resolution.
* This sets the stage for a comprehensive tax bill as part of the reconciliation process.
* The Access Technology Affordability Act (H.R. 1529) can be included in the comprehensive tax bill.
* This is a prime opportunity to get the bill enacted into law.
* There are currently 18 current cosponsors: 10 Democrats, 8 Republicans.
* More bipartisan cosponsors, especially Republicans, are needed due to GOP majorities in both chambers.
* A recent Mathematica report estimates the ATAA would save the federal government $315 million over 5 years.
* Savings would come from increased employment among blind Americans and reduced reliance on government benefits.
* Urgent action is required as Congress could finalize the tax bill very soon.
* We must contact our Representatives and ask them to cosponsor H.R. 1529.
* For more information, including a template, can be found in a previously sent email from our national office.

Convention Reminders

* State Convention
  + Dates: October 3rd – October 5th
  + Location: Hilton Altamonte Springs, 350 Northlake Blvd, Altamonte Springs, FL 32701
  + Information regarding room reservations, virtual options, transportation options, convention activities, and more will be released as we get closer to the convention Date. Stay tuned for more details.
* National Convention
  + 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.
  + Visit [nfb.org/convention](https://nfb.org/convention) for more info.