Whereas, The current state of education of blind and visually impaired children is in crisis; and,

Whereas, There is a tremendous lack of trained personnel, and a location to obtain training in the education of non visual learners is not available in the State of Washington; and,

Whereas, A committee of Teachers of the Visually Impaired and Orientation and Mobility Specialists (Washington TOVI Education Reform Committee), hereinafter referred to as the committee, was established in 2007 to address these issues; and,

Whereas, This committee has solicited the assistance and/or support of the National Federation of the Blind of Washington in their efforts; and

Whereas, A number of activities are taking place to address the two distinct issues of personnel shortage and well trained personnel working with blind and visually impaired children; and,

Whereas, The committee has initiated a process to establish a Washington State “Endorsement” in Education of Blind and Visually Impaired children as part of a standard Washington State Teaching Certificate, which endorsement would include teachers of the visually impaired and orientation and mobility specialists; and,

Whereas, As part of this process the committee is now putting forward standards which an applicant would be required to meet in order to qualify for a certificate of endorsement; and,

Whereas, This organization, by action and statement, has worked tirelessly to promote a quality education for blind children in the state of Washington for the last 30 years; and,

Whereas, This organizations support of the efforts of the committee will be based on an understanding of the role of the organized blind movement in the promotion of the welfare of the blind in the State of Washington and in the United States; and

Whereas, Only with complete information and collaboration can this organization expect its membership to lend its support to such an endeavor.

Now Therefore:

Be It Resolved by the National Federation of the blind of Washington in Convention assembled this second day of November, 2008, in the City of Everett, Washington:

that this organization work in concert with the Committee to strive for a better prepared teaching professional in working with blind and visually impaired children. And,

Be It Further Resolved:

that this effort proceed recognizing the concerns that the organized blind have in incorporating standards which are non discriminatory to blind persons by adopting standards currently used at the Portland State University Professional Training Program for the Education of Non Visual Learners. And,Be It

Further Resolved:

that any endorsement program recognize the most appropriate certification for Orientation and Mobility Specialists is in the category of “Educational Staff Associate” (ESA) And,

Be It Further Resolved:

that any Orientation and Mobility Specialist will be considered for ESA by acquiring education and training from a qualified program certified by the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals, ACVREP, and/or by The National Blindness Professional Certification Board, NBPCB, the two nationally recognized certification bodies in the area of Orientation and Mobility for Blind Persons