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Letter of Support:

On behalf of Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled, an Independent Living Center, we support DeafBlind Leadership NOW in their effort to secure substantial representation for DeafBlind people at every level at the Helen Keller National Center (HKNC). We believe firmly in the idea of “Nothing About Us Without Us” that people with disabilities must not only be part of the conversations around services, supports, and programs, but also must be empowered to control the direction of those conversations, and to lead their own communities.

DeafBlind Leadership NOW has called for a DeafBlind person to be appointed HKNC’s executive director, for the establishment of HKNC as its own entity, and the establishment of its own board of directors comprising of 70% DeafBlind members. We urge you to pursue these goals. Having visible, empowered DeafBlind leadership at an organization that serves the DeafBlind will send a strong message that concerns of the DeafBlind community are taken seriously. It will improve your attentiveness to the community’s needs and will provide a model of DeafBlind leadership for others to follow.

DeafBlind people have made their positions known through DeafBlind Leadership NOW, and we encourage you to take their concerns seriously and pursue the changes in your organization that they have asked for.

We appreciate the work your organization has done for DeafBlind people. We look forward to your organization taking these steps to be more accountable to the community you serve.

Yours truly,

Evan Yankey
Advocacy Director
Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled