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October 30, 2024

Dr. Ruzenski

I write to you today in support of America's DeafBlind community and in recognition of the unique contributions that DeafBlind Americans offer to the work of the Helen Keller National Center. Their perspectives and lived experiences are of tremendous value to Helen Keller Services' stated mission of *"empowering individuals who are blind, DeafBlind, have vision loss, or have combined hearing and vision loss to live, work and thrive in the communities of their choice."*

In particular, I encourage the Helen Keller National Center to prioritize the appointment of qualified DeafBlind leadership at every level, including the Board of Trustees. Your organization's commendable efforts to serve the DeafBlind community would be furthered by the inclusion of additional DeafBlind representation within the organization's leadership.

Your commitment on August 5th, 2024 to create a leadership development program is a welcome step toward the goal of increased inclusion of DeafBlind perspectives. I support the goals of DeafBlind Leadership NOW (DBLN), of seeking to incorporate authentic DeafBlind representation at HKNC. The DBLN petition conveying this goal has gained strong statements of support from several groups, including the National Association of the Deaf and the National Federation of the Blind's DeafBlind Division. I would welcome specific, public benchmarks for your organization's expansion of DeafBlind representation.

I recognize and appreciate the services that the Helen Keller National Center has provided to countless DeafBlind people over decades of history, such as vocational training, medical services, and mental health services. I look forward to HKNC's future growth and success, guided by and in service of the DeafBlind community.

Sincerely,



Brandon Williams
Member of Congress