

Dear DBLN supporters,

Thank you for your continued commitment in this fight for DeafBlind Leadership NOW. We would like to share some updates and how you can continue to support DBLN.

### **The HKNC “Working Group”- Rinse Wash Repeat!**

HKS/HKNC management has still not reached out to DBLN. HKS/HKNC management has also not issued additional public statements identifying members of this working group nor the actual goals of the working group mentioned in CEO Sue Ruzenski’s August 5th letter (link: <https://www.helenkeller.org/statement-from-sue-ruzenski-ceo-of-helen-keller-services/>). This is RINSE WASH REPEAT going on for the past 25 years.

### **Update On Capitol Hill:**

Marc Safman, DBLN’s legislative outreach point of contact, has taken the fight to Capitol Hill. He has been building the relationships our DeafBlind community needs. One trip to DC during the week of December 16th helped gain support of Rep Mike Lawler R- NY17, Rep Tom Suozzi D-NY03, Rep Andrew Garbarino R-NY02, and former Rep Brandon Williams R-NY22.

Prior to this DC trip, Marc managed to convince Rep Williams' staff to support DBLN. The staff turned around and convinced Rep Williams to take additional action by writing the October 30, 2024 letter to HKS CEO, Sue Ruzenski (link: <https://deafblindleadershipnow.org/document/Congressman-Brandon-Williams-Letter-to-HKS.pdf>).

Rep Garbarino’s staff has agreed to follow through on this letter along with staff from Rep Mannion and met with HKS CEO, Sue Ruzenski and 3 unidentified HKS/HKNC staff on December 9th, 2024. Shortly after, Marc learned the working group was established but not yet publicized.

## **Upcoming Congressional Outreach:**

Marc has meetings this week with the staff of the cosponsors of the bill versions of Helen Keller Reauthorization Act—co-sponsor of S2376, Senator Roger Marshall (R-KS) and the co-sponsor of HR4749, Rep Sharice Davids (D-KS 03). Marc is working on getting an interview with the transition team for president elect Trump.

## **How You Can Support:**

We now have the attention of Congress but we need to apply more pressure. It means YOU. How? Check and find the sample letters to guide you to send to your area's representatives and Senators at this link: <https://deafblindleadershipnow.org/advocacy.html>. It's all about Helen Keller National Center Reauthorization Act (S2376 and HR4749).

## **For Future Generations:**

Petitions are only successful as our commitment and investment to DBLN movement.

DeafBlind people need to lead the fight for DeafBlind Civil Rights.

That requires outreach and financial commitment from the community and allies.

The future generations of DeafBlind children depend on DBLN.

We need YOU!

The more we have the attention of Congress, the better for us to pave the way for DeafBlind leadership NOW. It's TIME once again.

Thank you for your consideration and support.

DBLN Strong,  
DBLN Team