

Dear DBLN Supporters,

Thank you for continuing to support DeafBlind Leadership NOW (DBLN). We have critical information about the Congressional DeafBlind Caucus (CDBC) from Marc Safman, DBLN's legislative outreach point of contact. If you missed the last update, please refer to this link: <https://deafblindleadershipnow.org/document/DBLN-Alliance-3-23-2025-Starburst.pdf>.

When was CDBC established?

During the last session of Congress (the 118th), Representative Matt Cartwright (D-PA08) introduced the CDBC. Unfortunately, he lost his re-election, and his staffers have moved on to other offices. In the current session (the 119th Congress), Congresswoman April McClain Delaney (D-MD06) and Congressman Morgan McGarvey (D-KY03) have taken on the responsibility and their plan is to officially relaunch the CDBC by June during DeafBlind Awareness Week.

What is a congressional caucus?

A caucus is an informal networking group that allows advocacy groups, vocational and community service centers, and others to discuss issues of importance to the group members. In other words, the following would be a few examples of members who may wish to join the Congressional DeafBlind Caucus (congressional member organizations or CMOs):

- DeafBlind Organizations or Associations
- Service Centers for the DeafBlind
- Agencies serving the DeafBlind

This is a great opportunity to convey our viewpoints to people on the Hill including the need to amend the Helen Keller Reauthorization Act to incorporate DBLN's goals. Another example for other DeafBlind organizations/associations and community service centers to consider is sharing the need for CoNavigators (CNs).

A caucus usually holds one or two meetings a year on Capitol Hill and may also offer programs (i.e. internships). It just depends on how much time and energy the chairs of the caucus are willing to devote to promoting it.

How You Can Help

If you would like your voice to be represented, please reach out to your local DeafBlind organizations/associations, community service centers, agencies serving

DeafBlind consumers, and members of congress and ask them to join the CDBC by emailing Kaylee.Robinson@mail.house.gov or Trevor.Oconnor@mail.house.gov. (To find your local representatives, please refer to this link: <https://congress.gov/members/find-your-member>) You may share the official invitation below with them to join the CDBC from Congresswoman April McClain Delaney (D-MD06) and Congressman Morgan McGarvey (D-KY03).

We would also appreciate you letting Marc Safman know which members of congress and DeafBlind organizations/associations, community service centers, and/or agencies you have contacted at marc@safmanconsulting.com.

DBLN Strong,

DBLN Core Team

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Join the Newly Created, Bipartisan Congressional Deafblind Caucus

Caucus Founding Members (8): *McClain Delaney, Carson, Cline, Doggett, Kiggans, McGarvey, Mullin, Norton.

Supporting Organizations: American Association for the DeafBlind (AADB), DeafBlind Community of Texas, Deafblind Community United, Helen Keller National Center (HKNC), National Coalition on Deafblindness, National Family Association for DeafBlind (NFADB), National Intervener and Advocate Association (NIAA).

Dear Colleague,

I invite you to join the newly founded Bipartisan Congressional Deafblind Caucus. This Caucus will bring together advocates, individuals who are deafblind, and lawmakers to expand representation and increase support for the deafblind community.

Individuals who are deafblind experience combined hearing and vision loss, which can pose communication challenges, limit information access, and hinder social and emotional well-being. In children, deafblindness may significantly impact development and educational attainment. For deafblind adults, it can be difficult to secure employment opportunities or live independently.

Estimates of the total population of deafblind people in the U.S. range from 40,000 to 100,000 individuals. While a lack of public awareness often prevents deafblind priorities from being heard, deafblind individuals deserve to have the full extent of their experiences accounted for in Congress.

The Congressional Deafblind Caucus will be dedicated to:

1. Highlighting and amplifying the priorities of the deafblind community;
2. Encouraging the creation, and implementation, of legislation that advances these priorities and elevates the needs of this community, such as:

- o Appropriations priorities

- o Rep. McGarvey and Senator Markey's bipartisan Alice Cogswell and Anne Sullivan Macy Act (H.R. 5748/S.2945)

- o Rep. McClain Delaney's bipartisan Deafblind Disabled Americans Table Approximation Act or Deafblind DATA Act (H.R. 8859)

3. Connecting individuals who are deafblind with deafblind advocates, Congresspeople, and their staff via briefings and events.

While advocates across the nation work tirelessly at a local level, more must be done at a federal level to uplift deafblind voices and advocate for their equitable inclusion in society. There are no dues or attendance requirements. To become a member of the Congressional Deafblind Caucus, please email Kaylee.Robinson@mail.house.gov or Trevor.Oconnor@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

April McClain Delaney and Morgan McGarvey

Members of Congress

Source: Marc Safman Consulting e-mail correspondence with Kaylee Robinson, Deputy Chief of Staff/Legislative Director for April McClain Delaney (MD-06) 4/18/2025.