The National Association for the Employment of People who are Blind

PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT
Submitted by Dan Kelly
Board Meeting: March 3, 2025

TOPICS:

- 2025 Federal and Congressional Strategy Document
- SSDI Cash Cliff
- Responding to AbilityOne Commission 400 Series Policies

I: 2025 Federal and Congressional Strategy Document

For the board record I have attached the "Federal Strategy document" that outlines our key public policy objectives, tactics, and strategies as we head into the 119th congress. Thanks to NIB, the public policy committee, and the NAEPB membership that helped shape this document and get it to paper earlier than we have ever done before. The hard work of execution has already begun, and we will continue to adapt this living document as conditions on the ground change.

II: SSDI Cash Cliff

Over the past several months NIB has surveyed our employee population on issues related to their Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and has reached nearly 1,200 employees who are blind. They are closing down the survey to begin analyzing the data. Thank you to everyone who promoted the survey within your NPAs, **and our special thanks to all the employees who completed it.** The information we learn will I am sure be helpful in comparing what we learned to the 2018 survey results and most importantly educating Congress on the challenges faced by people who are blind desiring upward mobility and maximizing opportunities for personal and economic independence. Survey results will be timely as Legislation to authorize a demonstration project as part of the effort to eventually reform the Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) cash cliff challenge has been introduced by Rep. Pete Sessions (R-TX17), the lead sponsor of the same legislation in the 118th Congress. The three original cosponsors are: Rep. Kweisi Mfume (D-MD7), Rep. Cleo Fields (D-LA6), and Rep. David Valadao (R-CA22). We are awaiting the release of the

official legislative text, and the link to the bill on congress.gov follows here: https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/1175/text?s=4&r=1

III: Responding to AbilityOne Commission 400 Series Policies

On behalf of its membership, the NAEPB submitted updated comments on the Commission's revised Draft Policy 51.405 relating to Employee Career Development. In addition to our previous comments that remained the same, we noted that issuance of this additional policy guidance is at odds with the Trump Administration's increased push for deregulation. *See* Executive Order—Unleashing Prosperity Through Deregulation (Jan. 31, 2025). NAEPB members are certainly in favor of advancing their workforce to the extent possible, and we further encouraged dialogue with the Commission to brainstorm how NPAs can develop best practices that further the goals of the AbilityOne Program, including the regulatory obligation for NPAs to provide ongoing placement programs for participating employees.