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## 2023 ACB Legislative Imperatives

The American Council of the Blind is the nation's leading member-driven organization for individuals who are blind and experiencing vision loss. With over 65 state and special-interest affiliates across the country, ACB is committed to increasing the security, independence, quality of life, and economic opportunity for people who are blind and low vision in the United States, and ACB stands committed to advocacy that lifts up our values.

The following legislative imperatives represent several key issues that were pieces of legislation in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress that ACB seeks to have reintroduced and passed in the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress. These bills will help ACB members in furthering independence and bettering quality of life.

### The Exercise and Fitness for All Act

For the 25 percent of Americans with a disability, equal access to fitness or exercise equipment and instruction remains elusive. As a result, people with disabilities are more likely to suffer from chronic health conditions including heart disease, diabetes, and obesity.

ACB urges Congress to reintroduce the Exercise and Fitness for All Act so people with disabilities can [Get Up and Get Moving](#). This legislation would require exercise and fitness facilities to provide a base level of accessibility for disabled consumers, both in the equipment as well as the instruction they provide. Offices interested to support the Exercise and Fitness for All Act should contact Stephanie Deluca in the office of Sen. Duckworth (D-IL) in the Senate, and Sarah Jackson in the office of Rep. DeSaulnier (D-CA-11) in the House.

### The Medical Device Nonvisual Accessibility Act

The majority of home use medical devices and outpatient equipment utilizes digital display interfaces that are inaccessible to blind, low vision, and DeafBlind users. Class 2 and Class 3 medical devices such as glucose monitors, blood pressure readers, and at-home chemotherapy treatments do not have any non-visual accessibility features like text to speech output, tactile markings, or audible tones built in. As a result, people who are blind, low vision, and DeafBlind cannot independently manage their health from the privacy of their own homes in the same ways as people who are not disabled.

ACB calls on Congress to support and pass the Medical Device Nonvisual Accessibility Act, which was reintroduced on a bipartisan basis on March 1<sup>st</sup> by Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL-09), to ensure that medical equipment with a digital display is accessible and that people with disabilities can take back control of their health. This legislation would require the Food and Drug Administration to consider non-visual accessibility when approving Class 2 and Class 3 medical equipment and devices with a digital display to ensure access for patients with disabilities. Offices in the House of Representatives interested in supporting the bipartisan Medical Device Nonvisual Accessibility Act should contact Gidget Benitez in the office of Rep. Schakowsky (D-IL-9), and offices in the Senate should support introduction of a Senate companion bill.

## The Website and Software Applications Accessibility Act

Access to websites, applications and online services impacts most aspects of everyday life, and the COVID-19 pandemic has made digital inclusion more important than ever. However, the Department of Justice has not finalized enforcement standards that clearly state websites, applications, and online services must be accessible to people who are blind, low vision, and DeafBlind. As a result, people who are blind, low vision, and DeafBlind face countless barriers when accessing workplace portals, educational platforms, healthcare and public health information, transportation services, shopping, and entertainment over the Internet.

ACB calls on Congress to reintroduce the Websites and Software Applications Accessibility Act. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) introduced This legislation and Representative John Sarbanes (D-MD-03) introduced a version of the bill in the House of Representatives. This bill would establish clear and enforceable accessibility standards for websites and software applications. The “Websites and Software Applications Accessibility Act” would clarify that it is unlawful to own, operate or maintain inaccessible websites and applications that exclude or otherwise discriminate against people with disabilities. It would establish a clear, enforceable accessibility standard, and establish a technical assistance center and advisory committee to provide advice and guidance on accessible websites and applications. It would also authorize a study on addressing emerging technologies. Senate offices wishing to support this bill should contact Stephanie Deluca in Senator Duckworth’s office, and House offices should contact Katie Teleky in Representative Sarbanes’ office.

## The Communications, Video, and Technology Accessibility Act

The Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA) guaranteed access for people with disabilities to advanced communications services, telecommunications hardware and software, accessible video displays and user interfaces and digital apparatuses, and required the delivery of audio-described content. For more than ten years, ACB and its members have worked to implement and enforce the CVAA, and in several key aspects, we have reached the limits of what the CVAA is able to enforce.

It is time for Congress to update the accessible video and communications requirements of the CVAA. In the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress, Senator Edward J. Markey (D-MA) and Representative Anna G. Eshoo (D-CA-18) introduced the Communications, Video, and Technology Accessibility (CVTA) Act of 2022. The CVTA reaffirms our nation’s commitment to accessible communications and video technologies for people who are blind, low vision, and Deafblind. Once passed, this legislation will update existing requirements for accessible media, video user interfaces, and video conferencing services. ACB urges Congress to reintroduce the Communications, Video, and Technology Accessibility Act in the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress. Offices interested in supporting the CVTA should contact Leslie Ireland in Senator Markey’s office and Stuart Styron in Representative Eshoo’s office.

For questions or further information on the 2023 ACB Legislative Imperatives, please contact Clark Rachfal, ACB’s Director of Advocacy and Governmental Affairs, [crachfal@acb.org](mailto:crachfal@acb.org), or Swatha Nandhakumar, ACB’s Advocacy and Outreach Specialist, [snandhakumar@acb.org](mailto:snandhakumar@acb.org), or by calling (202) 467-5081.

The American Council of the Blind greatly appreciates your support on these critical issues for 2023, and we look forward to working with you during the remainder of the 118th Congress.