**AMERICAN COUNCIL OF THE BLIND**

**1996 RESOLUTIONS**

**RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE REPORT**

**1996 ACB NATIONAL CONVENTION**

**The convention considered and adopted 30 resolutions. All resolutions submitted were adopted. All numbers are therefore in the proper sequence, although resolutions were not necessarily adopted in the sequence numbered. This explains the varied adoption dates noted in the "resolved" clauses.**

**Resolution 96-29 was amended by a motion to strike all "whereas" clauses and transmit these to the ACB national office for use in the drafting of legislative testimony and position papers. It was the view of the maker of the motion that the "whereas" clauses provided excellent background, but were too detailed for appropriate inclusion in the final draft of the resolution. The "whereas" clauses of this resolution are thus not a part of this report, but have been transmitted to the ACB national office in a separate report.**

**Resolutions 96-26 and 96-27, which commend the host affiliate and the convention volunteers, respectively, are not reprinted here. Copies of these resolutions may be obtained from the ACB national office.**

**Submitted by:**

**Michael Byington**

**1996 Resolutions Committee Chair**

**Resolution 96-01**

**Expressing Regret That Plans for the Roosevelt Memorial Do Not Depict President Roosevelt as a Person Having a Severe Disability, and Calling upon the Roosevelt Memorial Commission and the National Park Service to Provide Educational Materials Concerning President Roosevelt's True Status as a Person Having a Disability**

**WHEREAS, President Franklin D. Roosevelt was a severely disabled American who coped with and overcame his severe disability while achieving an unparalleled record of accomplishments; and**

**WHEREAS, after more than half a century since President Roosevelt's death, the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial is being constructed on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., and will be dedicated during the spring of 1997; and**

**WHEREAS, to comply with the alleged ongoing wishes of the Roosevelt family, the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial Commission regrettably has approved a design plan for the memorial which fails in any way to depict President Roosevelt as a person who had a disability;**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the American Council of the Blind, in convention assembled at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 6th day of July, 1996, that this organization express its deep regret that the approved design for the Roosevelt Memorial will not in any way depict President Roosevelt as the severely disabled individual that he actually was; and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that, despite the historical inaccuracies of the memorial, this organization calls upon the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial Commission and the National**

**Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior to develop, as part of the memorial's ongoing programming, educational and instructional materials, available in accessible formats, which will candidly acknowledge President Roosevelt's actual status as a severely disabled individual and will tell the story of his coping with his disability while achieving a record of outstanding accomplishments.**

**Adopted.**

**Cynthia Towers, Secretary**

**Resolution 96-02**

**Calling on the United States Bureau of the Census to Collect Additional Information Concerning Persons Who Are Blind, and Calling on the American Foundation for the Blind to Intensify Its Efforts in Collecting Demographic Information**

**WHEREAS, limited and conflicting data exists in the United States regarding the number of blind and visually impaired persons, the causes for specific visual impairments, and the age of onset of blindness; and**

**WHEREAS, this data is important in a variety of contexts, including public policy decision-making and determinations concerning the awarding of grants to agencies serving blind persons; and**

**WHEREAS, the absence of such data creates serious difficulties for blind and visually impaired consumer and service provider organizations in their efforts to provide the most accurate information to governmental entities who make decisions concerning laws which affect the blind and visually impaired; and**

**WHEREAS, the United States Bureau of the Census compiles information concerning numerous topics, including information relating to various minority groups; and**

**WHEREAS, the gathering of the limited amount of data concerning blindness collected in the 1990 census has proven useful in advocacy, grant, and service activities on behalf of persons who are blind;**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the American Council of the Blind in convention assembled at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 5th day of July, 1996, that this organization urge the United States Bureau of the Census to compile, through the 2000 or 2010 census, information regarding the number of blind and visually impaired persons in each state, the degree and causes of visual impairment, and the age of the onset of blindness; and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that, as the availability of such data will obviously be 10 to 20 years in coming, this organization strongly encourage the American Foundation for the Blind, as the foremost conservator of information such as that described in this resolution, to intensify its research efforts concerning demographic issues regarding blindness.**

**Adopted.**

**Cynthia Towers, Secretary**

**Resolution 96-03**

**Calling for Increased Funding of Public Transportation**

**WHEREAS, although public transit funding comprises only 11 percent of all funding for United States Department of Transportation (DOT) programs, reductions in funding for public**

**transit accounted for 42 percent of DOT funding cuts in this fiscal year; and**

**WHEREAS, federal transit reductions have already caused fare increases and service cuts across the nation; and**

**WHEREAS, state and local governments, even if willing, are unable to make up for the lost federal funds; and**

**WHEREAS, while federal operating assistance for public transit was cut by 44 percent in fiscal year 1996, spending on federal highway programs increased by $844 million; and**

**WHEREAS, many blind and visually impaired persons, senior citizens, and low-income persons rely on public transit to reach jobs, school, and health care; and**

**WHEREAS, although federal proposals for fiscal year 1997 provide for the maintenance of fiscal year 1996 public transit funding levels, severe reductions are proposed for funding of operations costs; and**

**WHEREAS, the Americans with Disabilities Act mandates paratransit services to be comparable with fixed-route service as of 1997; and**

**WHEREAS, due to the labor-intensive nature of this service, reductions in federal public transit funding for operations expenditures will have an especially severe impact on paratransit services;**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the American Council of the Blind, in convention assembled at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 5th day of July, 1996, that this organization urge Congress to approve vastly increased levels of public transit funding for operating costs for fiscal year 1997; and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this organization work in conjunction with its state and local affiliates to advocate for approval of the highest level of funding from state and local government sources for public transit programs.**

**Adopted.**

**Cynthia Towers, Secretary**

**Resolution 96-04**

**Deplores Quality of Coverage of the 1996 American Council of the Blind Convention as Appeared in *The Tulsa World***

**WHEREAS, an article in *The Tulsa World* of June 28, 1996, titled "Convention for Blind Finds Hotel Prepared," by Michael Overall, contained flagrant inaccuracies, attributed to hotel staff, regarding accommodation of blind and visually impaired convention attendees; and**

**WHEREAS, the tone of Mr. Overall's article projects utterly untrue, paternalistic, and demeaning images of persons who are blind or who have low vision; and**

**WHEREAS, it would have been common journalistic practice to substantiate the information attributed to hotel staff sources through cross-checking with those responsible for organization of the convention or the convention's press office;**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the American Council of the Blind, in convention assembled at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 1st day of July, 1996, that this organization deplore the flagrantly inaccurate slant and content presented by *The Tulsa World* through this article; and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this organization supports and commends its press office and staff in communicating the strongest of responses to *The Tulsa World* article and directs that a copy of this resolution shall be conveyed immediately to the editor and publisher of *The Tulsa World*; and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this organization express its expectation that at least equal space shall be afforded to the view conveyed by the ACB press office in refuting Mr. Overall's deplorable coverage.**

**Adopted.**

**Cynthia Towers, Secretary**

**Resolution 96-05**

**Calls for a Budget Line Item for Video Description in Corporation for Public Broadcasting-Funded Projects**

**WHEREAS, the advent of video description, which makes television and video accessible to blind and visually impaired audiences through the verbal description of key visual elements of the program, has been available for more than 6 years on the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), home video, and select cable networks; and**

**WHEREAS, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting has funded the early research, development, and start-up of WGBH's Descriptive Video Service; and**

**WHEREAS, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting funds major video productions that are nationally broadcast, as well as video programs designed for use in classrooms; and**

**WHEREAS, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting currently requires a line item in budgets of video productions covering the cost of inclusion of closed captions for the benefit of deaf and hard of hearing viewers; and**

**WHEREAS, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting has been a leader in various forms of media accessibility for persons with disabilities;**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the American Council of the Blind, in convention assembled at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 5th day of July, 1996, that this organization urge the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to establish a policy requiring a line item for video description in all video production budgets (such as dramas, documentaries, and story telling-based children's programs) so that blind and visually impaired persons may have full access to Corporation for Public Broadcasting­funded video projects.**

**Adopted.**

**Cynthia Towers, Secretary**

**Resolution 96-06**

**Calls for a Budget Line Item for Video Description in National Endowment for the Arts-Funded Projects**

**WHEREAS, the advent of video description, which makes television and video accessible to blind and visually impaired audiences through the verbal description of key visual elements of the program, has been available for more than 6 years on the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), home video, and select cable networks; and**

**WHEREAS, the National Endowment for the Arts has funded through a challenge grant the first three years of WGBH's Descriptive Video Service; and**

**WHEREAS, the National Endowment for the Arts funds major video productions that are nationally broadcast, as well as video programs designed for use in the classroom; and**

**WHEREAS, the National Endowment for the Arts currently requires a line item in budgets for video productions for the inclusion of closed captions for the benefit of deaf and hard of hearing viewers; and**

**WHEREAS, the National Endowment for the Arts has been a leader in all forms of arts accessibility for persons with disabilities;**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the American Council of the Blind, in convention assembled at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 4th day of July, 1996, that this organization urge the National Endowment for the Arts to establish a policy requiring a line item for video description in all video production budgets (such as dramas, documentaries, and storytelling-based children's programs) so that blind and visually impaired persons may have full access to National Endowment for the Arts-funded video projects.**

**Adopted.**

**Cynthia Towers, Secretary**

**Resolution 96-07**

**Calls for the Establishment of a Policy Requiring Video Description in National Science Foundation-Funded Projects**

**WHEREAS, the advent of video description, which makes television and video productions accessible to blind and visually impaired audiences through the verbal description of key visual elements of the program, has been available for more than 6 years on the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), home video, and select cable networks; and**

**WHEREAS, the National Science Foundation has funded research on the value of video description, and that research has concluded that video description has positive psychological, social, and cognitive impacts on blind and severely visually impaired viewers; and**

**WHEREAS, the National Science Foundation funds major video productions that are nationally broadcast, as well as video programs designed for classroom use; and**

**WHEREAS, the National Science Foundation currently requires a line item in budgets of videotape productions covering the cost of inclusion of closed captions for the benefit of deaf and hard of hearing viewers;**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the American Council of the Blind, in convention assembled at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 6th day of July, 1996, that this organization urge the National Science Foundation to establish a policy requiring a line item for video description in all appropriate video production budgets so that blind and visually impaired persons may have full access to National Science Foundation-funded video projects.**

**Adopted.**

**Cynthia Towers, Secretary**

**Resolution 96-08**

**Calls for the Establishment of a Policy Requiring Producers of Programs Which are Public Broadcasting Service-Funded to Provide Video Description**

**WHEREAS, the advent of video description, which makes television and video accessible to blind and visually impaired audiences through the verbal description of key visual elements of the program, has been available for more than 6 years on the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), through WGBH's Descriptive Video Service (DVS), on home video and select cable networks; and**

**WHEREAS; PBS is the first and only broadcast network to provide access to television programming for blind and visually impaired viewers; and**

**WHEREAS, PBS has provided technical support for the research, development, and start-up phases of WGBH's Descriptive Video Service and today provides technical support to ensure the national distribution of described programs with particular attention to the highest technical standards; and**

**WHEREAS, PBS serves on DVS's National Advisory Board, and has also committed to various forms of promotion about DVS, including print advertising in major national magazines, on air spots, press releases, and other forms of promotion; and**

**WHEREAS, PBS has delivered more than 1,200 programs to member stations with DVS since 1990 and has provided technical assistance to individual public television stations to ensure that stations are able to receive, record and broadcast programs with DVS on their Second Audio Program (SAP) channels; and**

**WHEREAS, PBS funds major television productions that are nationally broadcast, as well as video programs designed for use in the classroom; and**

**WHEREAS, PBS considers providing closed caption information of a program for the benefit of deaf and hard of hearing viewers to be a requirement of a program producer; and**

**WHEREAS, PBS has been a leader in providing media accessibility for persons with disabilities through its captioning policies and continued involvement in· closed captioning and video description;**

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the American Council of the Blind, in convention assembled at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 6th day of July, 1996, that this organization urge PBS to establish a policy requiring producers to deliver programs with video description (as well as closed captions) for all appropriate television programming (such as dramas, documentaries, and storytelling-based children's programs) so that blind and visually impaired persons may have full access to more**

**PBS programming.**

**Adopted.**

**Cynthia Towers, Secretary**

**Resolution 96-09**

**Calls on WGBH to Establish a Line Item for Video Description in the Final Budgets of All Projects**

**WHEREAS, the advent of video description, which makes television and video accessible to blind and visually impaired audiences through the verbal description of key visual elements of the program, has been available for more than 6 years on the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), home video, and select cable networks; and**

**WHEREAS, WGBH has developed and maintained Descriptive Video Service (DVS), the nation's first and largest description agency dedicated to making television, video and other media accessible to blind and visually impaired audiences; and**

**WHEREAS, WGBH has dedicated early research and development funds to launch DVS following its success in captioning services for the benefit of deaf and hard of hearing viewers; and**

**WHEREAS, WGBH's Descriptive Video Service is the leader in the description field and, in addition to producing more than 1,200 hours of described programming for PBS and 140 titles on home video, has worked successfully with the blind community on legislation affecting media access policy and funding, and has committed staff and funds to ongoing outreach initiatives and mechanisms to gather and incorporate feedback from the blind community with regard to the writing, narration and technical aspects of description; and**

**WHEREAS, WGBH is a major producer of prime-time programming that is delivered nationally via PBS and also produces significant programming designed for use in the classroom; and**

**WHEREAS, WGBH currently requires a line item in budgets of national video productions covering the cost of inclusion of closed captions for the benefit of deaf and hard of hearing**

**viewers; and**

**WHEREAS, WGBH has been a leader in various forms of media accessibility for persons with disabilities since 1970;**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the American Council of the Blind, in convention assembled at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 6th day of July, 1996, that this organization urge WGBH to establish a policy requiring a line item for video description in all video production final budgets (such as dramas, documentaries, and storytelling-based children's programs) so that blind and visually impaired persons may have full access to WGBH-produced television and video projects.**

**Adopted.**

**Cynthia Towers, Secretary**

**Resolution 96-10**

**Calls on WNET to Establish a Line Item for Video Description in the Final Budgets of All Projects**

**WHEREAS, the advent of video description, which makes television and video accessible to blind and visually impaired audiences through the verbal description of key visual elements of**

**the program, has been available for more than 6 years on the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), home video, and select cable networks; and**

**WHEREAS, WNET was one of the first PBS stations to carry description during the test phase of WGBH's Descriptive Video Service (DVS) in 1988 and for the launch of the service in 1990; and**

**WHEREAS, WNET has broadcast locally via its Second Audio Program (SAP) channel more than 1,200 programs with DYS since 1990; and**

**WHEREAS, WNET is a major producer of prime-time programming that is delivered nationally via PBS; and**

**WHEREAS, more than 175 episodes of the highly rated WNET series *Nature* have been broadcast with DYS; and**

**WHEREAS, WNET has included costs for description as a line item in numerous production budgets, including *People in Motion I and II*, *Great Tales of Asian Art*, *Paving the Way*, *Travels*, and *Knife to the Heart*;**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the American Council of the Blind, in convention assembled at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 6th day of July, 1996, that this organization applauds WNET's efforts in this area and urges WNET to establish a policy requiring a line item for video description in all appropriate video production budgets (such as dramas, documentaries, science and nature programs, and storytelling-based children's programs) so that blind and visually impaired persons may have full access to WNET-produced television and video projects.**

**Adopted.**

**Cynthia Towers, Secretary**

**Resolution 96-11**

**Urges Congress to Re-Establish the Linkage Between Social Security Earnings Limits for Persons Ages 65 to 69 and Persons Who Are Blind**

**WHEREAS, prior to April of this year, the amount a blind person could earn while continuing to receive Social Security disability benefits was legally linked to the amount an older worker can earn while continuing to receive Social Security benefits; and**

**WHEREAS, in April of 1996, both houses of Congress attached to a national debt ceiling bill legislation which massively increased the earnings limits for older workers, but broke the linkage with earnings limits for workers who are blind; and**

**WHEREAS, President Clinton signed this legislation into law; and**

**WHEREAS, the legislative process through which the U.S. Senate channeled this legislation did not allow amendments to be attached, and thus blocked an attempt by Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) to partially restore linkage of earnings limits between blind Americans and older citizens; and**

**WHEREAS, an attempt by Congresswoman Barbara Kennelly (D-CT) to restore linkage of earnings limits in the U.S. House of Representatives failed;**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the American Council of the Blind, in convention assembled at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 5th day of July, 1996, that this organization commend both Congresswoman Kennelly and Senator Bingaman for their efforts on behalf of Americans who are blind; and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this organization urge Congress to re-introduce and adopt restoration of the linkage between earnings limits for blind workers and older Americans through attachment of this legislation to the earliest available legislative vehicle.**

**Adopted.**

**Cynthia Towers, Secretary**

**Resolution 96-12**

**Calls Upon Congress, While Re-Authorizing the Rehabilitation Act, to Link the Concept of "Competitive" with Earning of Federal Minimum Wage, Rather Than with Issues Related to Integration**

**WHEREAS, the Rehabilitation Act is entering the reauthorization process; and**

**WHEREAS, proposals are under consideration, and interpretations of the current Rehabilitation Act promulgated by the Rehabilitation Services Administration suggest, that the term "integrated employment" be viewed as meaning employment only where most employees do not have disabilities, and is considered a synonymous concept with "competitive employment;" and**

**WHEREAS, "competitive employment" places emphasis on a current priority in the Rehabilitation Act and will undoubtedly become a strengthened requirement via the re-authorization process; and**

**WHEREAS, vocal and well-organized groups of workshops for the developmentally disabled, which pay workers sub-minimum wage, are engaging in well-organized and well-funded campaigns to attempt to insure that the Rehabilitation Act reauthorization will consider even vastly sub-minimum wage jobs to be competitive so long as they exist in integrated settings;**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the American Council of the Blind, in convention assembled at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 5th day of July, 1996, that this organization espouse the absolute imperative that the standard for determining competitive employment in placements should be tied to the payment of federal minimum wage or better, and not to some arbitrary philosophical social engineering experiment which degrades consumer choice in selecting from a wide variety of work settings.**

**Adopted.**

**Cynthia Towers, Secretary**

**Resolution 96-13**

**Supports Categorical and Specialized Services for Persons Who are Blind Throughout the Re-Authorization Process of the Rehabilitation Act**

**WHEREAS, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is scheduled to be re-authorized in 1997; and**

**WHEREAS, despite the knowledge, experience and recommendations of the entire blindness community, there is an unprecedented erosion of categorical and specialized services; and**

**WHEREAS, it is our experience, and it has long been demonstrated, that such categorical and specialized services are the only viable means to provide pre-vocational and vocational services leading to successful employment and independent outcomes for persons who are blind and low vision;**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the American Council of the Blind, in convention assembled at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 5th day of July, 1996, that this organization direct its officers and staff to make every effort to preserve, protect, defend, and strengthen categorical and specialized service delivery to persons who are blind and visually impaired, in the reauthorization process for the Rehabilitation Act and as other threats to categorical and specialized services arise.**

**Adopted.**

**Cynthia Towers, Secretary**

**Resolution 96-14**

**Urges Use of Truncated Dome Warnings, But Only as Hazard Markings**

**WHEREAS, the American Council of the Blind has long supported the use of truncated dome warnings identifiable under foot, and in 24-inch strips, and commends all entities who have moved forward with installing such warnings at lines of demarcation between pedestrian ways and vehicular ways, and at other hazards; and**

**WHEREAS, this organization embraces the position of its Environmental Access Committee that truncated dome detectable warnings should represent exclusively an indication of an imminent hazard and not a wayfinding device; and**

**WHEREAS, in order for the aforementioned warnings to be effective in permitting persons who are blind and visually impaired to travel with added safety and independence, it is essential that the meaning of the warnings is readily understood; and**

**WHEREAS, if orientation and mobility personnel are to efficiently utilize the above-described warnings in helping to improve travel skills for persons who are blind, consistency in the meaning of hazard markings is essential;**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the American Council of the Blind, in convention assembled at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 6th day of July, 1996, that this organization urge all Title II and III entities under the Americans with Disabilities Act, who are proactive in installing truncated dome warnings, to utilize such warnings solely for purposes of providing information concerning hazards.**

**Adopted.**

**Cynthia Towers, Secretary**

**Resolution 96-15**

**Opposes a Position Taken by the National Council on Independent Living Which is Critical of Categorical and Specialized Services**

**WHEREAS, the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL), in a letter to the American Council of the Blind (ACB) dated May 31, 1996, stated that NCIL is preparing a position paper to address changes in the reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act; and**

**WHEREAS, in that letter, signed by Gina McDonald, President, and Robert E. Michaels, Chair, NCIL Rehabilitation Committee, NCIL made the following assertions:**

**"As you know, NCIL has long-standing concerns about segregated programs funded under the Act. The feedback which we receive from both our members and professionals in the field is that services provided through these programs do not adequately prepare individuals to integrate into their communities. In addition, NCIL is concerned that segregated services perpetuate the idea that one disability is more significant than all others, and as such, warrants 'special' treatment in a sequestered environment."; and**

**WHEREAS, the NCIL letter goes on to suggest that, while organizations such as the ACB have counseled that services provided in integrated settings to persons who are blind would be underfunded and delivered ineffectively, NCIL rather asserts that such services would improve in integrated settings because the environments would better prepare persons who are blind or visually impaired for community living; and**

**WHEREAS, NCIL also alleges that centers for independent living have made great strides in reaching out to persons having sensory disabilities; and**

**WHEREAS, NCIL requests that ACB assist them by proposing a workable formula for funding and providing all needed services completely in integrated settings; and**

**WHEREAS, NCIL implies that ACB will actually decide to work in partnership with them to destroy categorical and specialized services replacing them with services which are unresponsive to the unique needs of persons who are blind; and**

**WHEREAS, NCIL's interest in developing a position paper concerning reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act is a transparent re-statement of the reprehensible positions NCIL took during 1994 and 1995 with regard to one-stop shopping human services proposals;**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the American Council of the Blind, in convention assembled at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 6th day of July, 1996, that this organization finds it to be a profound dichotomy that the entire philosophy of independent living is centered around choices and consumer control, yet NCIL would advocate depriving persons who are blind and visually impaired of the basic civil right to choose services needed, the settings in which they are provided, the qualifications of the providers, and right to receive services and exercise control, in exclusively specific peer-based settings; and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that while the American Council of the Blind acknowledges that services statistics may show an increase in persons who are sensory impaired being served by centers for independent living, such services do not offer appropriate comprehensive intervention required in providing effective training in such areas as travel skills, literary braille, specialized techniques of daily living, and assistive technology; and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the American Council of the Blind notes with irony numerous documented examples where, at NCIL and center for independent living sponsored conferences, a great deal of emphasis is placed on every specific detail of architectural and interpreter access, but in many documented cases, braille, large print, and other media of choice has not been provided in a timely manner or with any care given to quality or usability; and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the American Council of the Blind further observes with distress that, while NCIL has adopted a policy stating that, if providers of handout materials fail**

**to provide them in accessible media, such handouts may not be distributed, blind advocates have experienced numerous incidents at NCIL and independent living center events of this policy being flagrantly disregarded; and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this organization, joined by its state and local affiliates and chapters, will leave no stone unturned in defending categorical and specialized services against the egregious onslaught waged against them by entities such as NCIL.**

**Adopted.**

**Cynthia Towers, Secretary**

**Resolution 96-16**

**Urges National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped to Change Formats of Braille Magazines**

**WHEREAS, braille continues to be a very popular means of reading both for information and recreation; and**

**WHEREAS, a large number of magazines of many varieties continue to be published in braille; and**

**WHEREAS, the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) of the Library of Congress circulates approximately 34 magazines, a large majority of which it authorizes for publication in braille; and**

**WHEREAS, those magazines list the title, date, and volume number near the middle of the page, with the ink print information at the top, thus making the title less easily located when magazines are stored in their mailing containers, or on magazine racks;**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the American Council of the Blind, in convention assembled at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 6th day of July, 1996, that this organization urge the NLS to change the format of its braille magazines, placing the braille title, date, and volume number at the top of the page on the first two lines, and the additional ink print information in a lower position.**

**Adopted.**

**Cynthia Towers, Secretary**

**Resolution 96-17**

**Opposes Development or Installation of Electronic Cuing Systems in Public Transit Systems**

**WHEREAS, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), pursuant to an equivalent facilitation determination by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), has developed an electronic cuing system as a substitute for truncated domes; and**

**WHEREAS, the electronic cuing system as currently developed is flawed, unreliable, ineffective, and unsafe for use by people who are blind or visually impaired for the following reasons:**

1. **The system provides no accurate or precise distance information;**
2. **The system provides no accurate or precise orientation information;**
3. **The system provides no information when the infrared signal is blocked by other pedestrians or obstacles in the built environment;**
4. **The system is subject to failure when there are power surges, outages, or failure of receiver batteries;**
5. **The system requires a pedestrian to procure, carry, and return a hand-held device;**
6. **The system is designed to receive signals from only one direction at a time even though many of the transit stations are built with center platforms featuring tracks on either side; and**
7. **Current design requires different receivers for underground stations as opposed to above ground stations, requiring the selection and use of two units;**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the American Council of the Blind, in convention assembled at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 6th day of July, 1996, that this organization seek to enjoin any further development and/or installation of such electronic cuing system in any transit system in this country.**

**Adopted.**

**Cynthia Towers, Secretary**

**Resolution 96-18**

**Expresses Support for Use of Curbs with Ramps, and Supports Use of Detectable Warnings at Locations Where Curbs Have Been Removed**

**WHEREAS, there exists a trend to eliminate curbs at corners, sidewalks, and bus stop pads adjoining vehicular ways, (e.g., intersections, parking lots, bus stops, etc.); and**

**WHEREAS, this trend is promoted primarily by mobility impaired individuals for reasons of increased access; and**

**WHEREAS, the absence of curbs presents specific, serious hazards for pedestrians, including those who are blind and visually impaired; and**

**WHEREAS, the original intent of the installation of curbs on sidewalks and street corners is to inhibit drivers from cutting corners and injuring pedestrians, to ensure that drivers refrain from parking on sidewalks, to ensure proper drainage for storm drains, and to establish highly visible delineations of no parking zones;**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the American Council of the Blind, in convention assembled at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 6th day of July, 1996, that this organization adopt as its position the following:**

1. **Support for curbs at sidewalks and corners adjoining vehicular ways, such as intersections, streets, or parking lots, with curb ramps as per federal, state, and local accessibility standards and building codes; and**
2. **In the unlikely necessity to eliminate curbs at the aforementioned locations, there shall be detectable warnings, at a depth of 24 inches, placed along a reasonable length of sidewalks extending in both directions from the corner.**

**Adopted.**

**Cynthia Towers, Secretary**

**Resolution 96-19**

**Supports the Health Care Portability Act**

**WHEREAS, working-age blind Americans continue to face a devastating 74 percent rate of unemployment; and**

**WHEREAS, a major obstacle to entry level employment is the risk of losing health insurance from Medicaid or Medicare without replacement coverage; and**

**WHEREAS, Senators Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and Nancy Kassebaum (R-KS) have sponsored the Health Insurance Portability Act, which would ban certain practices of denying coverage based on pre-existing conditions; and**

**WHEREAS, this legislation would help to remove the insurability obstacle to employment for many blind people with medical conditions such as diabetes;**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the American Council of the Blind, in convention assembled at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 5th day of July, 1996, that this organization communicate its unequivocal support for the Health Insurance Portability Act to all members of the House-Senate conference committee which is currently considering this legislation.**

**Adopted.**

**Cynthia Towers, Secretary**

**Resolution 96-20**

**Promoting "ActiveX Accessibility" for Windows Programs**

**WHEREAS, Microsoft Windows is now the dominant operating system in personal computers; and**

**WHEREAS, during the last few years, many blind people have lost promotional opportunities, jobs, or potential jobs because Windows has not been accessible to adaptive equipment such as screen readers and braille displays; and**

**WHEREAS, this past year Microsoft Corporation has laudably been developing ActiveX Accessibility, which adds adaptive support to Windows 95; and**

**WHEREAS, for this to benefit blind computer users, cooperation is also needed from developers of Windows-based programs by including compatibility with ActiveX Accessibility;**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the American Council of the Blind, in convention assembled at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 5th day of July, 1996, that this organization launch an initiative to educate Windows application developers about the importance of supporting ActiveX Accessibility so that blind people can have full use of personal computers; and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this initiative include conducting a mass mailing to application developers and requesting time on the meeting agenda of the Software Publishing Association.**

**Adopted.**

**Cynthia Towers, Secretary**

**Resolution 96-21**

**Promoting Continuation of Residential Schools for the Blind**

**WHEREAS, for in excess of 150 years, residential schools for the blind have provided the strongest of foundations for literally tens of thousands of blind men and women in their integration into mainstream American society; and**

**WHEREAS, residential schools have gone beyond the traditional offering of a strong K through 12 curriculum, and are beginning to provide more individualized programs and services to blind children and youth, including short-term (one- to three-year) placement options, pre-vocational training, and other skill-enhancement activities; and**

**WHEREAS, the continued absolute necessity of such institutions has recently been reaffirmed through a policy statement issued by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), authored by Judith Heumann, stipulating that residential facilities can serve as a viable placement option within the continuum of services available to blind and visually impaired children;**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the American Council of the Blind, in convention assembled at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 5th day of July, 1996, that this organization join with the other major organizations and agencies of and for the blind in taking all steps necessary to ensure the continued existence of residential schools for the blind.**

**Adopted.**

**Cynthia Towers, Secretary**

**Resolution 96-22**

**Calls Upon State and Local Affiliates of the American Council of the Blind to Take a Leadership Role in Working with Other Organizations to Form Coalitions to Work Toward the Protection of Categorical and Specialized Services and Residential Schools for the Blind as an Option in the Continuum of Educational Services; Calls Upon the Board of Directors of the American Council of the Blind to Work Collaboratively with Other Organizations to Create Materials Which Can Be Utilized by the Above Mentioned Local and State Coalitions and Calls for the Identification of at Least Two States to Pilot Coalition Approaches and Efforts**

**WHEREAS, the political climate in virtually every state is focusing on measures that would combine service delivery into large "super-agencies" for the alleged purpose of cost-cutting; and**

**WHEREAS, this has already resulted in the dilution of categorical services which are absolutely indispensable for the rehabilitation of people who are blind; and**

**WHEREAS, in addition, in several states the value and relevance of schools for the blind is being seriously questioned by legislators and the media; and**

**WHEREAS, the American Council of the Blind has a history of supporting both categorical services and schools for the blind as part of the continuum of educational options that must be made available for students who are blind;**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the American Council of the Blind, in convention assembled at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this the 6th day of July, 1996, that state and local affiliate of this organization are urged to take a leadership role in forming coalitions with other organizations working with blind people, including, but not limited to, the National Association of Parents of the Visually Impaired, affiliates of National Industries for the Blind, and state and local chapters of the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired; and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the national office and board of the American Council of the Blind work collaboratively with these other organizations, and with the American Foundation for the Blind, to create and disseminate materials that state coalitions can use to maintain categorical services and schools for the blind; and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the organizations collaborating at the national level identify at least two states to pilot coalition efforts so as to refine and document model approaches to creating such cooperative efforts within 60 days of the end of this convention.**

**Adopted.**

**Cynthia Towers, Secretary**

**Resolution 96-23**

**Calls upon the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services of the U.S. Department of Education to Strengthen the "All Students" Definition as It Applies to School to Work Programs So That These Programs Will Appropriately Serve More Students with Disabilities, and Urges Affiliates of the American Council of the Blind to Seek Membership on State and Local School to Work Councils in Order to Advocate for the School to Work Needs of Blind Students**

**WHEREAS, President Clinton has launched a major initiative in vocational education and placement known as School to Work, which is making substantial funding available to promote smooth, job-related transition from education to employment; and**

**WHEREAS, the federal legislation clearly contains a mandate to include "all students" in state and local projects fund ed under this initiative; and**

**WHEREAS, in many state and local projects, operators of grants under this initiative are not reaching out to assure the inclusion of participants with disabilities; and**

**WHEREAS, these initiatives have the potential to create a very large number of highly paid jobs for which blind people could qualify;**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the American Council of the Blind, in convention assembled at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 6th day of July, 1996, that this organization urge that the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, which has already appointed a liaison with the School to Work program, work to strengthen the definition of "all students" and is further urged to broaden the range of monitorable elements of these grants so as to assure that students with disabilities are, in fact, included; and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the American Council of the Blind urge its state and local affiliates to seek membership on School to Work councils, from where they can actively advocate for the needs of people who are blind within School To Work grants.**

**Adopted.**

**Cynthia Towers, Secretary**

**Resolution 96-24**

**Notes Rumors of Agreements Which Might Jeopardize the Randolph-Sheppard Program, and Places the American Council of the Blind on Record with the Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of America in Opposing Any Agreements Which Would Jeopardize the Randolph-Sheppard Program**

**WHEREAS, surveys being circulated in U.S. post offices and other postal facilities inquiring about current food service vending, which were reviewed by members of the Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of America, indicated the development of a possible national agreement between the U.S. Postal Service and the Coca-Cola Company, under which full service vending would be provided by Coca-Cola at post offices and postal facilities throughout the country; and**

**WHEREAS, a meeting was held on June 11, 1996, including representatives of the Rehabilitation Services Administration, the Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of America (which is an affiliate of the American Council of the Blind), and the National Federation of the Blind Merchants Association, with the general counsel, senior attorneys, and staff of the Postal Service for the purpose of discussing this rumored agreement and the priority of the Randolph-Sheppard Act; and**

**WHEREAS, it was ascertained at the meeting that no agreement between the Postal Service and Coca-Cola was imminent, that the Postal Service was in the process of exploring a variety of marketing strategies and plans, that the Postal Service pledged to abide by the Randolph-Sheppard Act in all respects and keep RSA informed of any developments affecting the Randolph-Sheppard program;**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the American Council of the Blind, in convention assembled at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 6th day of July, 1996, that this organization urge that any agreements that would jeopardize the Randolph­Sheppard Act be vehemently opposed; and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the American Council of the Blind shall join with its affiliate, the Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of America, in their efforts to protect all aspects of the Randolph-Sheppard Act priority.**

**Adopted.**

**Cynthia Towers, Secretary**

**Resolution 96-25**

**Thanks Direct Guest Services Personnel at the Doubletree and Adam's Mark Hotels, Downtown Tulsa, for the Services Provided, While Providing Criticism of Poor Judgment and Inaccurate Information Given to Press Outlets by Management of the Hotels**

**WHEREAS, providing hotel-related and guest services for the most complex convention of persons who are blind and visually impaired in the United States is a task which requires a great deal of common sense and understanding of equal treatment in addition to the usual courtesies afforded convention goers; and**

**WHEREAS, direct guest services personnel located at the Doubletree and Adam's Mark Hotels, Downtown Tulsa, in most instances, provided convention attendees of the 35th annual convention of the American Council of the Blind with excellent services; and**

**WHEREAS, these direct guest services personnel clearly benefited from training provided to them in serving people who are blind or who have low vision; and**

**WHEREAS, management staff, however, of the two hotels mentioned above failed in a blatantly insensitive and ill-informed manner to provide services and information which were of equal quality and quantity of that which would likely be provided to non-disabled guests, examples of which are, but not limited to:**

1. **Offering of abbreviated menus in major hotel restaurants because of the utterly erroneous allegation that the provision of a full-service menu in braille would be an impossible-to-produce book-length manuscript; and**
2. **Failing entirely to provide braille menus for the nationally rated restaurant in the Doubletree; and**

**WHEREAS, this same management staff generally appears to have failed to benefit from training opportunities provided them in serving people who are blind or who have low vision; and**

**WHEREAS, management staff of the Downtown Tulsa Doubletree sullied the image of blind Americans through its now documented release of inaccurate. and demeaning information to local press;**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the American Council of the Blind, in convention assembled at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 6th day of July, 1996, that this organization express its sincere thanks for the excellent work done by Convention Center staff and most hotel staff; and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this organization convey to Doubletree and Adam's Mark corporate executives its profound disappointment at the poor judgment used by Doubletree and Adam's Mark management.**

**Adopted.**

**Cynthia Towers, Secretary**

**Resolution 96-28**

**Supports Changes in United States Copyright Laws to Allow Materials to be More Readily Available in Alternate Formats for Use by Blind Citizens**

**WHEREAS, the overwhelming majority of materials published in standard ink print format are not made readily available in formats accessible to Americans who are blind or visually impaired; and**

**WHEREAS, those few materials which are reproduced in accessible formats are only reproduced and distributed after significant delay; and**

**WHEREAS, this problem, coupled with a general lack of awareness of the need for accessible materials, is a direct result of the imposition of requirements in current law specifying that copyrighted materials may not be reproduced in any format without the prior consent of the copyright holder; and**

**WHEREAS, the failure to produce accessible media, the delay resulting from the need to secure permission, and the natural lag time typically required to make printed materials accessible create an information gap between blind and sighted Americans which perpetuates inequality; and**

**WHEREAS, the aforementioned delay and unavailability of accessible materials are particularly problematic for America's blind and visually impaired students; and**

**WHEREAS, free and equal access to information by all Americans is essential for full participation in public discourse and the experience of national citizenship; and**

**WHEREAS, the Association of American Publishers (AAP), the leading organizational representative of publishers in the United States, has publicly endorsed draft legislation prepared by major national organizations of and for the blind, including the American Council of the Blind, amending the Copyright Act of 1976 to eliminate the requirement that permission be obtained prior to the reproduction and distribution of copyrighted materials in accessible media; and**

**WHEREAS, the Copyright Office of the Library of Congress has also endorsed this draft legislation; and**

**WHEREAS, Congress is currently in the process of making substantive changes in copyright law, and such major revisions of copyright law are profoundly infrequent; and**

**WHEREAS, pending legislation, entitled the NII Copyright Protection Act of 1995 (H.R. 2441), was expected to be the legislative vehicle used to enact the language endorsed by AAP; and**

**WHEREAS, H.R. 2441 has languished in committee for some time, has been indefinitely postponed, and is now presumed dead;**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the American Council of the Blind, in convention assembled at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 6th day of July, 1996, that this organization commend the AAP for its commitment to the principle of equal access to information and for its cooperation in drafting mutually agreeable amendment language; and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this organization is hereby authorized to use all necessary and appropriate legislative mechanisms, and to work in coalition with all cooperative partner organizations, to secure passage of the amendment language agreed to by the AAP as set forth in the AAP's written testimony before the House Subcommittee on Courts and Intellectual Property on February 8, 1996.**

**Adopted.**

**Cynthia Towers, Secretary·**

**Resolution 96-29**

**Establishes ACB Position on Social Security Reform**

**RESOLVED, by the American Council of the Blind, in convention assembled at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 6th day of July, 1996, that this organization affirm and advocate the following policies:**

1. **Congress should enact legislation providing for the gradual reduction of SSDI cash benefits when beneficiaries exceed the allowable earnings limit;**
2. **Congress should preserve the medical definition of disability with respect to blindness;**
3. **Congress should restructure the existing "work incentive" provisions to make them easier to understand and use; and**
4. **Congress should not remove significant numbers of beneficiaries from the rolls without creating incentives for employers to hire people with disabilities and without guaranteeing adequate health care coverage; and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this organization urges the American Foundation for the Blind to assist ACB by collecting, organizing, and preparing statistical and other evidence supporting the legitimacy and appropriateness of the statutory definition of blindness.**

**Adopted.**

**Cynthia Towers, Secretary**

**Resolution 96-30**

**Authorizes a New Awards Category Within the American Council of the Blind**

**WHEREAS, the American Council of the Blind confers awards on individuals and organizations who have made substantial contributions to the field of blindness; and**

**WHEREAS, the current criteria for all ACB awards which can be granted to individuals require that recipients be blind; and**

**WHEREAS, there are occasions when persons who are fully sighted also should be recognized;**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the American Council of the Blind, in convention assembled at Tulsa, Oklahoma, this 6th day of July, 1996, that this organization instructs its officers and directors to establish an award category without regard to visual impairment; and**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this organization stipulates that this award shall be given on an as-warranted basis.**

**Adopted.**

**Cynthia Towers, Secretary**