

American Council of the Blind Lauds U.S. House of Representatives...

... for Introduction of Landmark Special Education Legislation

ARLINGTON, VA, USA, February 1, 2014 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, Reps. Matt Cartwright (D-Pa.) and Steve Stockman (R-Tex.) introduced H.R. 4040, the Alice Cogswell and Anne Sullivan Macy Act. H.R. 4040 will improve the delivery of appropriate special education and related services to all students who are [blind or visually impaired](#) as well as students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

"This is a momentous day for the blind community," said Kim Charlson, president of the American Council of the Blind (ACB). "The introduction of this bill is a critical first step to ensuring that the special education system can be transformed in a manner that will truly allow for blind or visually impaired students to succeed in a twenty-first century climate."

Anne Sullivan Macy is fondly remembered as having been Helen Keller's teacher, and Alice Cogswell was the first deaf girl to be educated at a school for the deaf in the U.S.

H.R.4040 will:

- Ensure that blind or visually impaired students, regardless of additional disabilities, are properly counted and served;
- Expect states to conduct strategic planning, and commit such planning to writing, to guarantee that all students who are blind or visually impaired within each state receive all specialized instruction and services needed by students with vision loss provided by properly trained personnel;
- Clarify that proper evaluation of students who are blind or visually impaired includes evaluation for students' needs for instruction in communication and productivity (including braille instruction, and assistive technology proficiency inclusive of low-vision devices where appropriate); self-sufficiency and interaction (including orientation and mobility, self-determination, sensory efficiency, socialization, recreation and fitness, and independent living



skills); along with age-appropriate career education;

- Ramp up U.S. Department of Education responsibilities to monitor and report on states' compliance with their obligations with respect to instruction and services provided to students who are blind or visually impaired;
- Assist parents and educators of students who are blind or visually impaired through regular and up-to-date written policy guidance from the U.S. Department of Education; and
- Establish a national collaborative organizational resource, the Anne Sullivan Macy Center on Vision Loss and Educational Excellence, to proliferate evidence-based practices in the education of students who are blind or visually impaired, to keep special educators current with the latest instructional methods, and to supplement state and local educational agency provisions.

About the American Council of the Blind

The American Council of the Blind is the largest consumer-based organization of blind and visually impaired Americans advocating for the rights of blind Americans. Comprised of more than 70 affiliates across the United States, the organization is dedicated to making it possible for blind and visually impaired Americans to participate fully in all aspects of American society. For more information, visit www.acb.org; write to American Council of the Blind, 2200 Wilson Blvd., Suite 650, Arlington, VA 22201; phone (202) 467-5081; or fax (703) 465-5085.

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