



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Federation of the Blind and Others Settle Lawsuit against United States Department of Education *DOE to Reopen Investigations, Allow Appeals*

Washington, DC (February 6, 2020): The National Federation of the Blind, the Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA), and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) have resolved the lawsuit they brought against the United States Department of Education (DOE). The suit was filed when DOE's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) changed the way it handles discrimination complaints, by revising its case processing manual, in March of 2018. The changes required OCR to dismiss discrimination complaints without investigating if an individual or organization had filed complaints before, or when complaints were filed against multiple schools or colleges. The right to appeal was also eliminated. DOE revised the manual again to roll back some of the changes in November of 2018, but the status of complaints that had already been dismissed under the March 2018 procedures was not resolved.

Under the agreement, OCR has reopened all the nearly 700 disability rights complaints it dismissed and will investigate them following the complaint investigation processes as of November 2018. In addition, complainants who were denied the right to appeal the dismissal of their complaints between March and November of 2018 will be able to do so.

"As America's civil rights organization of the blind, the National Federation of the Blind routinely combats discrimination by K-12 schools, colleges, and universities, often manifest as the use of inaccessible technology and materials," said Mark Riccobono, President of the National Federation of the Blind. "Department of Education OCR investigations are an important avenue for protecting the rights of blind students. We are therefore proud of the work we have done with our partners to ensure the civil rights of the blind and of others who experience discrimination in education."

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About the National Federation of the Blind

The National Federation of the Blind (NFB), headquartered in Baltimore, is the oldest and largest nationwide organization of blind Americans. Founded in 1940, the NFB consists of affiliates, chapters, and divisions in the fifty states, Washington DC, and Puerto Rico. The NFB defends the rights of blind people of all ages and provides information and support to families with blind children, older Americans who are losing vision, and more. We believe in the hopes and dreams

of blind people and work together to transform them into reality. Learn more about our many programs and initiatives at www.nfb.org.

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