**National Federation of the Blind of Michigan (NFBMI)**

**The Informant 2025**

**Vol. 2: Keeping the Pace with the Blind…**

**February 16, 2025**

## Affiliate Zoom Link

<https://zoom.us/j/9612695221?pwd=dHlxZDNwcVVZbUVTYUM5cEU4cDlndz09>

## From the President

Greetings and Happy Black History Month to my Federation friends, guests, and most of all family. This edition of “The Informant” is one that is so important, as we are in the midst of exciting times. From the work accomplished nationally during the 2025 NFB Washington Seminar to the consistent work that our chapters, committees, and divisions are keeping at the forefront of their agendas, the Michigan affiliate reminds me of an appropriate quote from James Baldwin. He articulated, “Those who say it can’t be done usually are interrupted by others doing it.”

Over the past few weeks, our nation has been hit with a myriad of messages regarding the identity of its members. Some of these messages have affected blind people because we all know that the National Federation of the Blind is a microcosm of the greater social landscape, meaning that we are a snapshot of what this world looks like. It is natural to both be affected by and want to react to the narratives about blindness and its intersecting identities, especially when it inaccurately paints a picture of the way we live our fulfilling lives. Through these difficult moments of unclear communication, know that the National Federation of the Blind of Michigan, its leaders, and its members know your heart and support you as we continue to do the things others imagine the blind cannot. Continue to believe in the Blind People’s Movement and build the Federation…

## Important National Program Updates

* The 2025 NFB Washington Seminar took place February 3-6 at the Holiday Inn Washington Capital. The NFB of Michigan thanks our 11 members and leaders that travelled and advocated alongside hundreds of blind Americans to continue to further the mission of the Federation and elevate the issues of the Blind People’s Movement.
* The 2025 Jacobus Tembroek Disability Law Symposium will take place March 20-21, 2025, at the Jernigan Institute, 200 E. Wells St., Baltimore, MD. 21230. This year’s theme, “Democracy, Justice and the Rule of Law: Protecting Our Right to Live in the World,” includes live, interactive sessions surrounding intersectional representation in the disability rights community and the rule of law’s parallels to our right to live in the world. The deadline for registration is March 7, 2025, and there are options for students and virtual attendees. To register for this program, please visit https://nfb.org/programs-services/legal-program/jacobus-tenbroek-disability-law-symposium.
* The 2025 NFB scholarship program is underway. Each year, 30 awards are offered to eligible students who apply for this competitive program that provides opportunities for both leadership and networking. The deadline for the program is March 31, 2025, and applicants must be blind and willing to attend the NFB national convention in person. Please visit [www.nfb.org/scholarship](http://www.nfb.org/scholarship) for more information.
* The 2025 NFB national convention will take place at the Marriott Hotel from July 8-13 in New Orleans, Louisiana. Additional information about convention registration and hotel reservations is available online. To learn more about our national convention, please visit [www.nfb.org/convention](http://www.nfb.org/convention).
* The National Federation of the Blind excitedly welcomes the introduction of the Blind Americans Return to Work Act (H R 1175(, introduced into the 119th Congress by Representative P. Sessions of Texas. Our organization is both humbled and motivated by the constructive collaboration of our elected representatives to empathize with the needs of the Blind and encourage our members to both research and inform our elected representatives about this important piece of legislation to ensure its co-sponsorship and continued success.
* Have you tried out NFBRN yet? At our 2025 Washington Seminar, President Mark Riccobono shook the room when he unveiled the National Federation of the Blind Radio Network (NFBRN). This all-new, always-on radio network offers updates, presidential releases, classic banquet addresses and so much more Federation content that continue to help blind people raise their expectations. To get connected and learn more, visit https://nfb.org/resources/publications-and-media/nfbrn.

## Important State Updates

* Visitors and members of the National Federation of the Blind of Michigan can now view this issue and past issues of “The Informant” on the NFBMI Webpage. You can access these issues by visiting [www.nfbmi.org/informant](http://www.nfbmi.org/informant).
* We encourage all chapters, divisions and members that are considering ways they can support our organization more to join the Pre-Authorized Contribution (PAC) plan for as little as $5 per month. To learn more about the PAC plan and how it benefits members and programs of the National Federation of the Blind, please visit [www.nfb.org/pac](http://www.nfb.org/pac).
* The National Association of Blind Students (NABS) encourages interested students to consider registering for the Midwest Regional Student Seminar, taking place March 7-9, 2025, at the Holiday Inn O’Hare. Registration has been extended until February 28, 2025. The weekend-long seminar is an opportunity for students of the various Midwest student divisions and affiliates to collaborate in different ways on academic development, philosophy building, professional development, networking, skills and much more. For more information about this event, please contact Jerusalem Crawley, MIABS President, or Tiaira Mayes, MIABS Vice President.
* The NFBMI fundraising committee is grateful for the efforts and suggestions of its members that took part in its first quarter activities this year. With your assistance and input, the Super Bowl Pool was successful; profiting $850 toward our affiliate and future programs. This initial fundraiser opened the door for our quarter two options and started the pledges for our upcoming second quarter initiatives. We look forward to meeting soon to discuss these possibilities.
* The Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP’s) Community Involvement Committee (CIC) reconvened for its second term on February 7, 2025. During the meeting, the committee focused on securing its staying power and maintaining collaboration across different agencies and member organizations. The National Federation of the Blind of Michigan thanks state affiliate board member Felecia Bradford and senior division member Michael Powell for their service as delegates of the CIC for this term of two years, representing our organization’s philosophy and membership in this effort.
* The NFBMI Legislative Committee thanks its members for attending its February 13 meeting, where we recapped experiences from Washington Seminar, confidence in performance in meetings on Capitol Hill with elected officials and their aides and goals moving forward. The committee hopes for all members of our affiliate to work together to communicate with their representative for their support of HR 1175, as well as the continued support of legislation that protects the rights of the blind. If you are interested in working with us on crafting this template for members who would like to advocate locally, please contact Sheila Fulmore, committee chair, at spfulmore0402@gmail.com.
* The NFBMI Communications committee is excited to welcome Michael Powell as the affiliate Newsline Coordinator, opening up opportunities for our membership to access our content in a variety of new ways in the future. This includes exciting items like “The Informant,” content from our conventions, program agendas and more will soon be available via Newsline. We thank Mike for his service and if you are interested in becoming a member of the statewide communications committee to help get the word our about the work of the Federation, please join us by contacting Ather Jammoa at atherjammoa@yahoo.com. We are all stronger together.
* The NFBMI Youth and Family Program Planning committee met on February 10 to discuss the development of the 2025 REAL program. This year’s Raising Expectations Accessing Life program will take place June 27-29, 2025, in Dearborn and will be hosted by the New Wayne County chapter. It is a statewide program that aims to educate youth, parents, and community members alike. We would appreciate all interested members interested in volunteering to promote positive Federation philosophy in both the NFB STEM2U and Parent Education tracks. To learn more about these and how to get involved, please contact Donna Posont at donnabutterfly50@gmail.com.

## Chapter/Division Updates

* **At Large Chapter:** Greetings members and friends. The At Large chapter will hold its meeting on Tuesday, February 18 at 8pm. We look forward to connecting with you all to discuss outcomes from the 2025 Washington Seminar, our legislative and philosophical priorities, as well as potential programs we hope to engage with.
* **Detroit Chapter:** Greetings, members of the Detroit Chapter congratulate its newly elected 2025-chapter board. Three members of our chapter attended the 2025 Washington Seminar. We are planning a blind bowling event on Saturday March 8th at the Garden Bowl, 4120 Woodward, from 1-5 PM, cost is $12, $16 with bowling shoes, as well as a game event at Eye Learn on March 22. We are also presenting members with several upcoming leadership/advocacy training opportunities including the Blind Leaders Program sponsored by Eye Learn.
* **Michigan Association of Blind Students (MIABS):** MIABS sent three members of our division to the 2025 Washington Seminar this month. It was a great chance for us to network and learn so much from different student leaders, including ideas on how to grow our division, connections with other members and ways we can increase membership retention. Our leaders also grew in confidence as we learned to advocate, some for the first time, with our national elected representatives. MIABS is also proud to have contributed to the “Taste of Michigan” basket submission in the 2025 NABS auction at Washington Seminar, which sold for $150, further elevating the legacy of the Michigan affiliate nationally. We look forward to all we can share with our members about our experience.
* **Michigan Seniors Advocating for Seniors (BMISAFS):** Hello NFB friends! I hope you all are staying warm and healthy. The BMISAFS Division is off and running for 2025. Tune in on ZOOM for our February 24th meeting at 8:00 PM. We’ll learn all about the 2025 Washington Seminar firsthand  from 2 of our Senior members that attended. I hope you join us to learn about the important work that is happening and what we can do to help.

## Important Affiliate Dates

* **02/17/25:** NFBMI Capital Region Chapter Meeting – 7pm
* **02/18/25:** NFBMI At Large Chapter Meeting– 8pm
* **02/21/25:** NFBMI Fundraising Committee Meeting—6pm
* **02/24/25:** Michigan Seniors Advocating for Seniors Meeting – 8pm
* **02/28/25:**NFBMI Soundboard—8pm
* **03/01/25:** NFBMI New Wayne County Chapter Meeting—1pm
* **03/07/25:** NFBMI Communications Committee Meeting—8pm
* **03/07/25-03/09/25:** Midwest Regional Student Seminar, Hosted by NABS and the NFB of Illinois

With Love, Hope and Determination,