



# Parent Advocacy



Melanie Knapp  
Vivecca Hartman

# What can Parents do?


Advocate for the needs of their loved ones to change the laws protecting & improving services for them:

2009	2009	2019	2021	WIP 2023
Amended the DBMD Waiver to be from Birth to Earth	Established a Career ladder for Interveners	Got Increased Slots & Pay rates for all services in the DBMD Waiver	Had automatic pay raises the next legislative session	Increase the DBMD Waiver Budget Cap & Slots

# How can you participate?

- Look-up Who Represents you:

<https://wrm.capitol.texas.gov/home>

- **Reach out to your legislators** to let them know you and your child live in their area – which means you are their “Constituent” (can vote for them 😊)
  - **Write them about the legislative ask** by using a template email (usually provided) and adding to it to make it reflect your Family’s story as well.
  - **Share any whitepaper** and other information provided
  - **Join in when groups plan a visit to the Capital** and visit your legislator’s office
  - **Thank the Legislators and their staff for their time. Then keep in touch.**
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# What to expect when Visiting the State Capital

- There is a convenient Parking Lot 1 block away <https://tspb.texas.gov/plan/parking/parking.html>

1201 San Jacinto Blvd  
Austin, TX 78701

(\$12 max/day)



- You will have to pass through security when you enter the capital.
- No water bottles, but closed cans and snacks are allowed. As well as bags with papers (i.e. info and story packets)



# Meeting at the Rotunda

- It is most common for groups to meet at the “rotunda” which is in the center on the ground level. It is a big circular area under the Capital’s peak.



# DBMAT At the State Capital



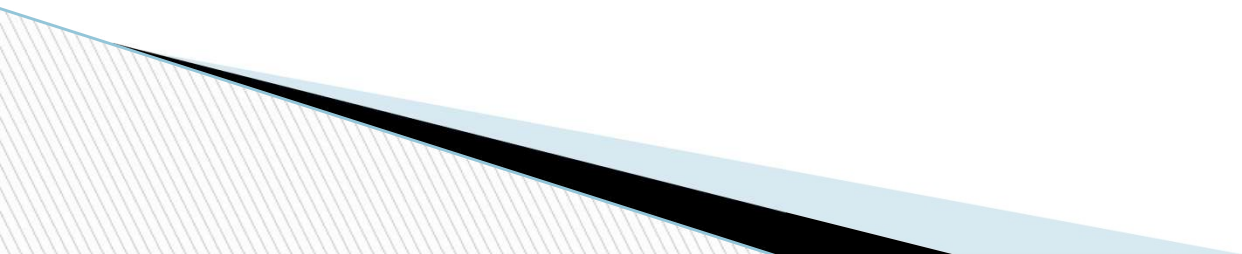
See Us, Hear Us!



# Come join our team on the State Level

Everyone has a voice.... let's use it

- 1) Increase the number of individuals served by the Deaf Blind with Multiple Disabilities (DBMD) Waiver. We ask that funding be increased to allow for at least a minimum of 50 slots to be released every year, to keep the population served as it grows.





# Come join our team on the State Level

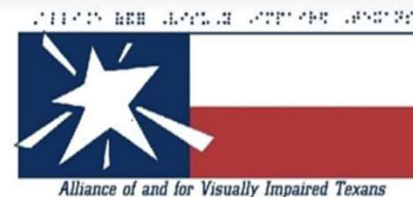
Everyone has a voice.... let's use it

- 2) Adjust the DBMD Waiver caps to reflect inflation, in the same manner of the Federal Social Security Cost of Living Adjustment ("COLA") DBMD Waiver cost cap to be increased to \$143,534.82, which is 25.1% (half the COLA increases as a starting point). This is an ask of approximately 1% per year for the last 25 years.



**It gets easier the more you reach out to Legislators and their staff.  
They are there to help 😊**

# DB Legislative Group Hosted by DBMAT *Collaboration = Teamwork*



**NATIONAL FAMILY  
ASSOCIATION  
FOR DEAF-BLIND**  
Empowering Families with  
Individuals who are Deaf-Blind



THE  
**CHARGE  
SYNDROME**  
FOUNDATION



# Help us Help you!

## Join the **DB Legislative Group**

(Melanie has a sign-up sheet or you can email us and we will add you!)

Quarterly Meetings from 7:30-8:30:

- Oct. 17<sup>th</sup>
- Jan. 16<sup>th</sup>
- April 16<sup>th</sup>
- July 16<sup>th</sup>

Melanie Knapp

[melanie.knapp@dbmat-tx.org](mailto:melanie.knapp@dbmat-tx.org)

Vivecca Hartman

[president@dbmat-tx.org](mailto:president@dbmat-tx.org)



# National Advocacy Agenda



## Cogswell- Macy Act

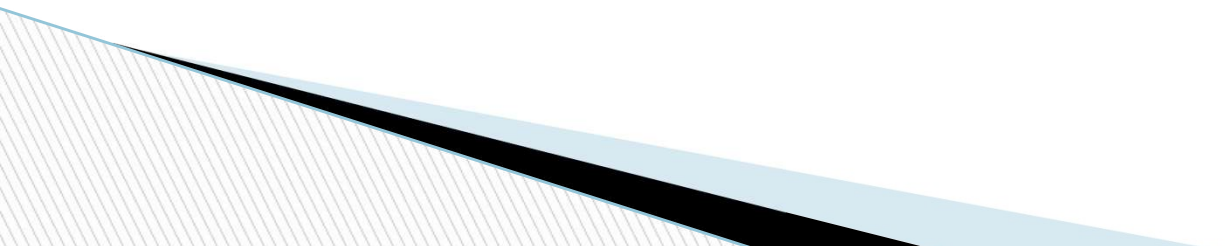
There is power in numbers and our voice is louder if we join together to be heard. See Us, Hear Us!



# NFADB HOST

- NFADB's PIE Committee - 2016
- Beginnings of FATE =2021- Family Advocacy Training and Education
- Our National Advocacy Agenda
- FACE for Deaf-Blind = Family Advocacy Coalition  
Educating for Deaf-Blind
- Deaf-Blind Day on the Hill

# #1 Ask: Education State Plan

- Define Deaf-Blind
  - Require qualified personnel
  - Interveners as related services
  - Technical assistance
  - Transition plans to follow to adult life
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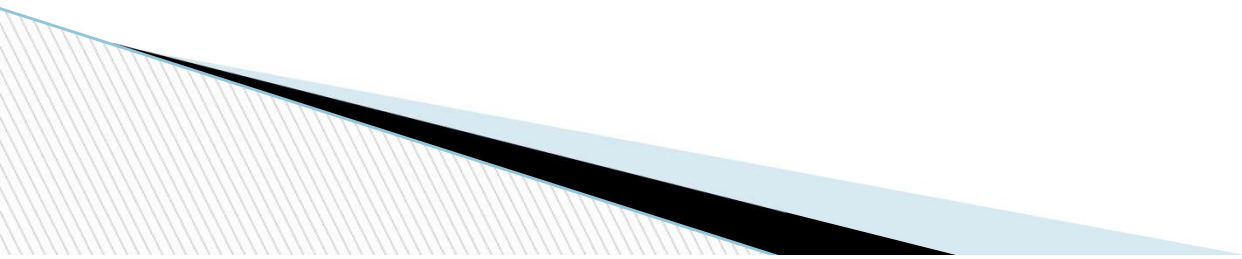
# Qualified Personnel

- Teachers of Students that are DeafBlind
- Interveners



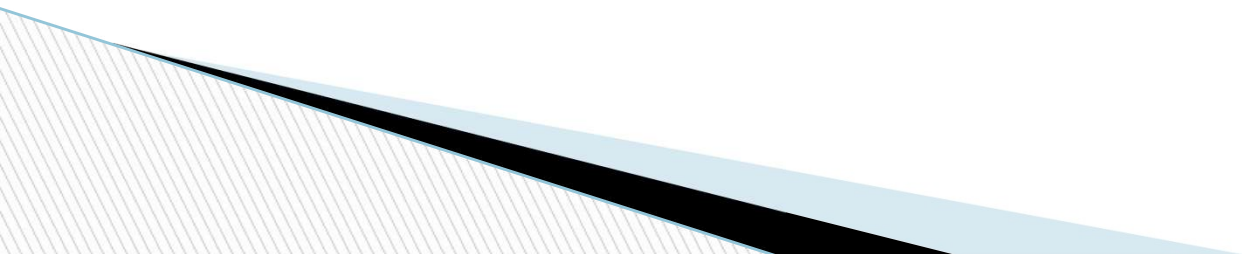
# Interveners

Recognize Interveners as a related service in IDEA



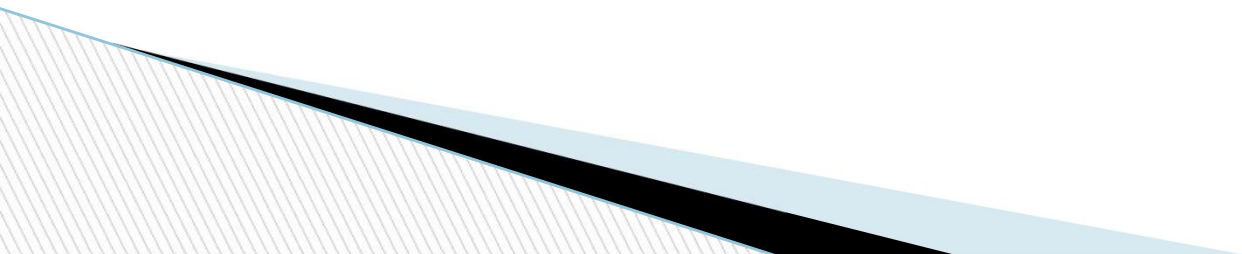
# Technical Assistance

- National Center on Deafblindness-NCDB
- State DeafBlind Projects



# Transition Plans

- Transition plans to adult life align with a State Plan for Adults (#2 ASK)



# #2 Ask: State Plan for Adults

Require states to develop a State Plan for Adults

- Coordinated with education transition plan
- Provide array of support services
- Provide DB Medicaid Waiver

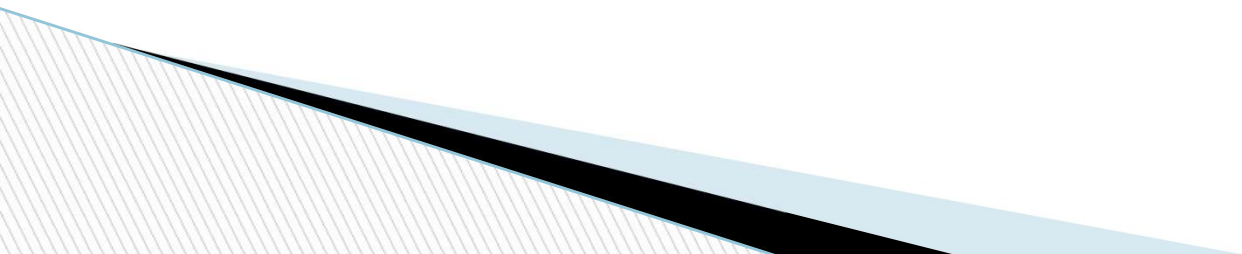


# Resources

If you want more information on our National Advocacy Agenda:

[www.nfadb.org](http://www.nfadb.org)

We also have position papers from a Family's point of view: Definition, Qualified Personnel, Interveners, Co-Navigators.



# Together we can do So Much!!

*If you collaborate with other parents and organizations, you can make a difference. There is strength and power in numbers.*

- ? *1 person = A fruitcake*
  - 2 people = A fruitcake and a friend
  - 3 people = Troublemakers
  - 5 people = “Let’s have a meeting”
  - 10 people = “We’d better listen”
  - 25 people = “Our dear friends”
  - 50 people = A powerful organization”**
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