

The Alice Cogswell and Anne Sullivan Macy Act

H.R.1959 and S.813

THE PROBLEM:

Just under 11,000 children ages birth-21 are deafblind in the U.S.

- "Deafblind" refers to combined hearing and vision loss, and these two senses can be reduced, distorted, or missing entirely.
- Deafblindness is a disability of access to the visual and auditory information about people and things in the environment necessary for learning, communication, and development.
- Children who are deafblind can learn and interact if given access to specialized educational programming and appropriate supports.
- There is a critical shortage of early intervention and educational personnel with the knowledge and skills required to meet the unique, specialized needs of this population of children.
- Post-secondary outcomes are dismal for students who are deafblind, with the majority of them being unemployed after graduation from high school. If education is the pathway to employment and independence, then the current system has failed these students.



THE SOLUTION:

Title III of the Alice Cogswell and Anne Sullivan Macy Act ([H.R.1959](#) and [S.813](#)) focuses on improving results for children and youth who are deafblind by ensuring that:

- Teachers and other educators will be available who have the specialized knowledge and skills needed.
- Intervener services for students who are deafblind will be listed as a related service.
- States will engage in strategic planning to ensure that they can in fact meet each child's specialized needs.
- Every child who is deafblind, regardless of whether they have additional disabilities, will be properly counted, evaluated, and served.



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