



News Advisory From . . .

Congressman Rodney Alexander

5th Congressional District of Louisiana

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 28, 2005

Contact: Adam Terry
202/225-8490

ALEXANDER SECURES \$400,000 IN APPROPRIATIONS FUNDING FOR NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

FUNDING TO BENEFIT RUSTON CENTER FOR THE BLIND

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Rep. Rodney Alexander, R-Quitman, today announced that he has secured \$400,000 in federal funding for the National Federation of the Blind's (NFB) NEWLINE service.

Alexander, who sits on the House Appropriations Committee, secured the \$400,000 through the Conference Report for Legislative Branch Appropriations, under Library of Congress funding.

"This funding means so much to the NFB," Alexander said.

"I've spoken with Pam Allen on several occasions and she has been a strong voice for this cause. I will continue to work with Allen as well as the Ruston Center for the Blind to find federal dollars for these worthy projects."

The conference report is expected to be passed by the full House and Senate and signed into law by President Bush in the coming days.

NFB-NEWSLINE[®] is a telephone-based electronic audio newspaper service. The National Federation of the Blind (NFB) developed this service to bring newspapers directly to blind readers at the time that the print publication is released. Public libraries are a free source for books, magazines, and newspapers but have very little to offer a patron who is blind. This is why in 1931 Congress created a national "Books for the Blind" program within the Library of Congress. This special media library, within the nation's premier library, administered by the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS), continues to be the principal source of Braille and audio books and magazines for blind adults. However, NLS had not supplied newspapers until NFB-NEWSLINE[®] became available. Using current production methods, the publication by NLS of even a single daily newspaper for distribution in Braille or on an audiocassette would require several weeks for preparation and delivery. In contrast, NFB-NEWSLINE[®] is designed for rapid distribution of the electronic text for each paper on the system. Using this service, blind people can read (hear) their favorite newspapers at the same time that print copies are being delivered to homes, offices, and newsstands. At present, NFB-NEWSLINE[®] offers over 150 newspapers and magazines daily (including its first Spanish-language newspaper), and more will be added. This is a significant expansion in our nation's capacity to meet the specialized

information needs of blind and disabled people.

Newspapers are important on the day they are published. This is why telephone access to digital text was chosen as the most cost-effective and rapid means of distribution of content through the NFB-NEWSLINE[®] system. The NFB-NEWSLINE[®] service is the only effective means available to provide reading matter that is time-sensitive. The problem of timely delivery is solved, but the continuing burden of paying the telecommunications costs is the problem that must be addressed.

For more information on this project, contact Pam Allen, President of National Federation of the Blind of Louisiana and Executive Director for Louisiana Center for the Blind, at 318-251-2891.

#