

May 25, 2023

Senates Health Committee:

- My name is Dawn Watts, I live near Hillard, Ohio.
- My educational background is a BA degree in Psychology from the Gallaudet University in Washington, DC, and some graduate courses in Counseling, Mental Health, Interpreting field, and ASL linguists.
- I am here to represent the DeafBlind community, I am a long Deaf advocate for the DeafBlind as an SSP/Co-Navigator and Deaf Interpreter for the American Association of the DeafBlind and Ohio Association of the DeafBlind for the past 50 years. And, I am President of the Ohio Deaf Friends of the Library.
- SSP or Co-Navigator and Interpreter are different meanings.
- Facts with SSP from the HKNC and researched by American Foundation for the Blind, April 2023.
 - Bank, Money,
 - Letters, TV, Newspaper
 - Food shopping
 - Clothes
 - Doctor/Dentist appointments
 - Church
 - Social/Restaurants
 - Transportation

Today we live with computer technology such as getting access to teleconferencing for health and social reasons. DEAFBLIND people?

- Barriers on the Web for the DeafBlind People. (Vision Level: Blind 67%, Low Vision 97%, DeafBlind 8.8%).

Booking Train or Bus Travel 91%
Booking Air Travel 94%
Ordering Food: 88%
Online shopping: 86%
Banking/Finance 60%
Virtual meeting?
Uber service

- The Greatest Difficulties for DeafBlind people (180) in Ohio are those related to communication and mobility. They have braille access but are not designed to read with the website due to a lack of format matching. Cleveland Blind Library has more access to “audio” for books, but Braille books are declined. No access can lead to a profound sense of isolation, loneliness, depression, and helplessness that leads to suicide. SSP’s service statewide in Ohio for the DeafBlind is so important for them.

