

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA



PROCLAMATION BY THE GOVERNOR

WHEREAS, an estimated 2.4 million Americans experience combined hearing and vision loss, a population that includes individuals who identify as DeafBlind, spanning all ages, backgrounds, and communities; and in Pennsylvania, approximately 97,160 or 0.75% of residents live with DeafBlindness or combined hearing and vision loss; and

WHEREAS, DeafBlind individuals contribute to society as educators, advocates, professionals, artists, and leaders, enriching our communities through their unique perspectives and experiences, pursuing higher education, advancing in their careers, participating in civic life, and driving innovation in accessibility; and

WHEREAS, DeafBlind individuals access the world through a range of communication methods, including tactile sign language, Protactile language, haptics, fingerspelling, braille, speech, and assistive technologies, and awareness of these methods enables professionals, providers, and community members to communicate more effectively and respectfully with DeafBlind individuals; and

WHEREAS, full participation in education, employment, and community life depends on accessible communication, appropriate accommodations, and communities that embrace diverse communication methods and accessible design; and

WHEREAS, the 2026 DeafBlind Awareness Week theme, "Connected by Touch: Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges," recognizes that touch is the foundation of connection for the DeafBlind community in their everyday interactions, enabling DeafBlind individuals to communicate, navigate, learn, work, and thrive; and

WHEREAS, DeafBlind Awareness Week 2026 presents an opportunity for communities, organizations, and individuals across Pennsylvania to deepen their understanding of DeafBlindness and take meaningful steps toward greater inclusion and accessibility.

THEREFORE, I, Josh Shapiro, Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, do hereby proclaim June 25-July 1, 2026, to be

DeafBlind Awareness Week

and encourage all Pennsylvanians to educate themselves on DeafBlindness and the contributions DeafBlind individuals make to our Commonwealth every day.



GIVEN under my hand and the Seal of the Governor, at the City of Harrisburg, this eleventh day of June two thousand twenty-six, the year of the Commonwealth the two hundred fiftieth.

Governor Josh Shapiro