

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2187

As Reported By House Committee On:

Government Operations

Title: An act relating to grants for vocational rehabilitation equipment and materials.

Brief Description: Modifying grants for vocational rehabilitation equipment and materials.

Sponsors: Representatives Casada, Ogden, Dickerson, Mason and Costa; by request of Department of Services for the Blind.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Government Operations: 1/26/96, 1/31/96 [DP].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Reams, Chairman; Cairnes, Vice Chairman; Goldsmith, Vice Chairman; Rust, Ranking Minority Member; Scott, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Conway; R. Fisher; Hargrove; Honeyford; Hymes; Mulliken; Scheuerman; D. Schmidt and Wolfe.

Staff: Bill Lynch (786-7092).

Background: The Department of Services for the Blind serves as the state agency that contracts for and disburses state and federal funds for services for the blind. The department is required to provide a program of vocational rehabilitation to assist blind persons to overcome vocational handicaps and to develop skills necessary for self-support. Applicants for these services must reasonably be expected to benefit from the services in terms of employability.

The department may make grants of equipment and materials to participants in the vocational rehabilitation program if they are required by participants' individual written rehabilitation programs. The individual value of the equipment and materials may not exceed \$1,000. It has been suggested that the \$1,000 cap on equipment and materials may be too restrictive.

Summary of Bill: The Department of Services for the Blind may grant vocational rehabilitation clients equipment and materials that do not exceed the amount allowed by state financial policies and regulations.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The current cap on the value of the equipment is too restrictive. The agency is forced to keep ownership of the equipment and maintain it until it depreciates to a value below the cap.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Casada, prime sponsor; and Shirley Smith, Department of Services for the Blind.