

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

HB 2853

Title: An act relating to the rehabilitation council for the blind.

Brief Description: Conforming the advisory council for the blind with the federal rehabilitation act.

Sponsors: Representatives Wolfe, D. Schmidt, Romero, Cairnes, Haigh and Cody; by request of Department of Services for the Blind.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Meeting Date: February 3, 2000.

Bill Analysis Prepared by: Tracey Taylor (786-7196).

Background: In 1998, as part of the Workforce Investment Act, the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was amended. This included the requirements for the state plans under the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Previously, the state was required to have a Rehabilitation Advisory Council. The duties of the council included delivering advice regarding the development and implementation of the state plan and strategic plan. In 1998, the name of the council was changed in the federal legislation to State Rehabilitation Council. In addition, the council duties and composition were changed. The federal government required that the states make changes to their plans to conform to federal law within one year.

Summary of Bill: The bill amends current law to reflect those changes required in federal law. The name of the council is changed to Rehabilitation Council. It shall be comprised of members as specified in the amended Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and will authorize the Department of Services for the Blind to make any required adjustments in the future. The responsibilities of the council shall reflect those required by federal law. A comparison of the present Rehabilitation Advisory Council and the new Rehabilitation Council follows:

	State Rehabilitation Advisory Council	State Rehabilitation Council
Composition	<p>Shall have at least one representative of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the Statewide Independent Living Council; 2) a parent training and information center; 3) the client assistance program; 4) vocational rehabilitation counsel; and 5) community rehabilitation program service providers. <p>At least 4 representatives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Business, Industry and Labor. <p>Some representatives of disability advocacy groups representing a cross-section of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) individuals with physical, cognitive, sensory, and mental disabilities; 2) parents, family members, guardians advocates or authorized representatives of individuals with disabilities that have a difficult time representing themselves; and 3) current or former applicants or recipients of vocational rehabilitation. <p>The Director of the State agency shall be an ex officio member of the council.</p>	<p>Shall have at least one representative of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the Statewide Independent Living Council; 2) a parent training and information center; 3) the client assistance program; 4) <u>vocational rehabilitation counselor</u>; 5) community rehabilitation program service providers; 6) <u>project directors</u> 7) <u>the State educational agency; and</u> 8) <u>the State workforce investment board.</u> <p>At least 4 representatives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Business, Industry and Labor. <p>Some representatives of disability advocacy groups representing a cross-section of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) individuals with physical, cognitive, sensory, and mental disabilities; 2) parents, family members, guardians advocates or authorized representatives of individuals with disabilities that have a difficult time representing themselves; and 3) current or former applicants or recipients of vocational rehabilitation. <p>The Director of the State agency shall be an ex officio member of the council.</p>

Number of terms	No member of the Council shall serve more than 2 consecutive full terms.	No member of the Council shall serve more than 2 consecutive full terms. <u>Exception: representative from the client assistance programs, and project directors.</u>
Function	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) review, analyze and advise the department regarding the performance; 2) advise the department regarding activities and reports; 3) conduct a review and analysis of, and consumer satisfaction of department functions, vocational rehabilitation programs and employment outcomes; 4) prepare and submit annual report to the Governor; 5) avoid duplication of efforts; 6) provide coordination and establishment of working relationships; and 7) other functions. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) review, analyze and advise the department regarding the performance; 2) <u>in partnership with the department, develop, agree to, and review state goals, and priorities, and evaluate the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program and submit progress reports to the Commissioner;</u> 3) advise the department regarding activities and reports; 4) conduct a review and analysis of, and consumer satisfaction of department functions, vocational rehabilitation programs and employment outcomes; 5) prepare and submit annual report to the Governor; 6) avoid duplication of efforts; 7) provide coordination and establishment of working relationships; and 8) other functions.
Compliance		<u>Requires that states with a Rehabilitation Advisory Council, establish a Rehabilitation Council in compliance with the federal changes within 1 year.</u>

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: None.

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