



General Assembly

January Session, 2013

**Raised Bill No. 853**

LCO No. 3010



Referred to Committee on HUMAN SERVICES

Introduced by:  
(HS)

**AN ACT CONCERNING TECHNICAL AND OTHER REVISIONS TO  
STATUTES CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION  
SERVICES.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General  
Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 10-297 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2013*):

3 The Commissioner of Rehabilitation Services is authorized to aid in  
4 securing employment for [capable] legally blind [or partially blind]  
5 persons. [in industrial and mercantile establishments and in other  
6 positions which offer financial returns.] Said commissioner may aid  
7 [needy] blind persons in such way as said commissioner deems  
8 expedient, expending for such purpose such sum as the General  
9 Assembly appropriates. [, provided the maximum expenditure for any  
10 one person shall not exceed the sum of nine hundred and sixty dollars  
11 in a fiscal year, but, if said maximum amount is insufficient to furnish  
12 necessary medical or hospital treatment to a beneficiary, said  
13 commissioner may authorize payment of such additional costs as the  
14 commissioner deems necessary and reasonable.]

15       Sec. 2. Section 10-298 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
16 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2013*):

17       (a) [The Commissioner of Rehabilitation Services shall, annually, as  
18 provided in section 4-60, submit to the Governor a report, containing a  
19 statement of the activities of the Department of Rehabilitation Services  
20 relating to services provided by the department to individuals in the  
21 state who are legally blind or visually impaired during the preceding  
22 year.] The [commissioner] Commissioner of Rehabilitation Services  
23 shall prepare and maintain a register of the blind in this state which  
24 shall describe their condition, cause of blindness and capacity for  
25 education and rehabilitative training. The commissioner may register  
26 cases of persons whose eyesight is seriously defective and who are  
27 liable to become visually disabled or blind, and may take such  
28 measures in cooperation with other authorities as the commissioner  
29 deems advisable for the prevention of blindness or conservation of  
30 eyesight and, in appropriate cases, for the education of children and  
31 for the vocational guidance of adults having seriously defective sight  
32 but who are not blind. The commissioner shall establish criteria for low  
33 vision care and maintain a list of ophthalmologists and optometrists  
34 that are exclusively authorized to receive agency funds through  
35 established and existing state fee schedules for the delivery of  
36 specifically defined low vision services that increase the capacity of  
37 eligible recipients of such services to maximize the use of their  
38 remaining vision.

39       (b) The Commissioner of Rehabilitation Services may accept and  
40 receive any bequest or gift of personal property and, subject to the  
41 consent of the Governor and Attorney General as provided in section  
42 4b-22, any devise or gift of real property made to the Commissioner of  
43 Rehabilitation Services, and may hold and use such property for the  
44 purposes, if any, specified in connection with such bequest, devise or  
45 gift.

46       (c) The Commissioner of Rehabilitation Services shall provide the

47 Department of Motor Vehicles with the names of all individuals  
48 sixteen years of age or older who, on or after October 1, 2005, have  
49 been determined to be blind by a physician or optometrist, as provided  
50 in section 10-305. The Commissioner of Rehabilitation Services shall  
51 provide simultaneous written notification to any individual whose  
52 name is being transmitted by the Commissioner of Rehabilitation  
53 Services to the Department of Motor Vehicles. The Commissioner of  
54 Rehabilitation Services shall update the list of names provided to the  
55 Department of Motor Vehicles on a quarterly basis. The list shall also  
56 contain the address and date of birth for each individual reported, as  
57 shown on the records of the Department of Rehabilitation Services.  
58 The Department of Motor Vehicles shall maintain such list on a  
59 confidential basis, in accordance with the provisions of section 14-46d.  
60 The [Department] Commissioner of Rehabilitation Services shall enter  
61 into a memorandum of understanding with the [Department]  
62 Commissioner of Motor Vehicles to effectuate the purposes of this  
63 subsection.

64 Sec. 3. Subsection (a) of section 17b-607 of the general statutes is  
65 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*  
66 *1, 2013*):

67 (a) The Commissioner of [Social] Rehabilitation Services is  
68 authorized to establish and administer a fund to be known as the  
69 Assistive Technology Revolving Fund. Said fund shall be used by said  
70 commissioner to make loans to persons with disabilities, senior  
71 citizens or their family members for the purchase of assistive  
72 technology and adaptive equipment and services. Each such loan shall  
73 be made for a term of not more than [five] ten years. Any loans made  
74 under this section after July 1, 2013, shall bear interest at a fixed rate [to  
75 be determined in accordance with subsection (t) of section 3-20] not to  
76 exceed six per cent. Said commissioner is authorized to expend any  
77 funds necessary for the reasonable direct expenses relating to the  
78 administration of said fund. Said commissioner shall adopt  
79 regulations, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54, to

80 implement the purposes of this section.

81 Sec. 4. Section 17b-612 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
82 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2013*):

83 The Department of Rehabilitation Services shall establish a program  
84 to assist disabled public school students in preparing for and obtaining  
85 competitive employment and to strengthen the linkage between  
86 vocational rehabilitation services and public schools. Under the  
87 program, the Department of Rehabilitation Services shall provide,  
88 within the limits of available appropriations, vocational evaluations  
89 and other appropriate transitional services and shall [place] provide  
90 vocational rehabilitation counselors [in the following] to school  
91 districts [: Hartford, West Hartford, Norwich, Bloomfield, Wethersfield  
92 and other school districts selected by the Department of Rehabilitation  
93 Services] throughout the state. The counselors shall, if requested, assist  
94 those persons planning in-school skill development programs. The  
95 counselors shall, with planning and placement team members, develop  
96 transition plans and individual education and work rehabilitation  
97 plans for disabled students who will no longer be eligible for  
98 continued public school services. Students whose termination date for  
99 receipt of public school services is most immediate shall be given  
100 priority.

101 Sec. 5. Section 17b-650a of the general statutes is repealed and the  
102 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2013*):

103 (a) There is created a Department of Rehabilitation Services. The  
104 Department of Social Services shall provide administrative support  
105 services to the Department of Rehabilitation Services until the  
106 Department of Rehabilitation Services requests cessation of such  
107 services, or until June 30, 2013, whichever is earlier. The Department of  
108 Rehabilitation Services shall be responsible for providing the  
109 following: (1) [Providing services] Services to the deaf and hearing  
110 impaired; (2) [providing] services for the blind and visually impaired;

111 and (3) [providing] rehabilitation services in accordance with the  
112 provisions of the general statutes concerning the Department of  
113 Rehabilitation Services. The Department of Rehabilitation Services  
114 shall constitute a successor authority to the Bureau of Rehabilitative  
115 Services in accordance with the provisions of sections 4-38d, 4-38e and  
116 4-39.

117 (b) The department head shall be the Commissioner of  
118 Rehabilitation Services, who shall be appointed by the Governor in  
119 accordance with the provisions of sections 4-5 to 4-8, inclusive, and  
120 shall have the powers and duties described in said sections. The  
121 Commissioner of Rehabilitation Services shall appoint such persons as  
122 may be necessary to administer the provisions of public act 11-44 and  
123 the Commissioner of Administrative Services shall fix the  
124 compensation of such persons in accordance with the provisions of  
125 section 4-40. The commissioner may create such sections within said  
126 department as will facilitate such administration, including a disability  
127 determinations section for which one hundred per cent federal funds  
128 may be accepted for the operation of such section in conformity with  
129 applicable state and federal regulations. The commissioner shall have  
130 the power to adopt and enforce such regulations, in accordance with  
131 chapter 54, as are necessary to implement the purposes of the  
132 department as established by the general statutes.

133 (c) The Commissioner of Rehabilitation Services shall, annually, in  
134 accordance with section 4-60, submit to the Governor a report in  
135 electronic format on the activities of the Department of Rehabilitation  
136 Services relating to services provided by the department to individuals  
137 who (1) are blind or visually impaired, (2) are deaf or hearing  
138 impaired, or (3) receive vocational rehabilitation services. The report  
139 may include the data the department provides to the federal  
140 government that relates to the evaluation standards and performance  
141 indicators for the vocational rehabilitation services program. The  
142 commissioner shall submit the report in electronic format, in  
143 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, to the joint standing

144 committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters  
145 relating to human services and appropriations and the budgets of state  
146 agencies.

147 Sec. 6. Section 17b-661 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
148 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2013*):

149 Notwithstanding any other provision of the general statutes, the  
150 Department of Rehabilitation Services may, within the limits of  
151 appropriations, purchase (1) wheelchairs and placement equipment  
152 directly and without the issuance of a purchase order, provided the  
153 cost of such purchases shall not be in excess of [three thousand five  
154 hundred] twenty thousand dollars per unit, [purchased,] and (2)  
155 adaptive equipment, [and modified] including equipment to modify  
156 vehicles for persons with disabilities directly and without the issuance  
157 of a purchase order, provided the cost of such purchases of adaptive  
158 equipment shall not be in excess of [ten] one hundred twenty thousand  
159 dollars per unit. [purchased and such purchases of modified vehicles  
160 shall not be in excess of twenty-five thousand dollars per vehicle.] All  
161 such purchases shall be made in the open market, but shall, when  
162 possible, be based on at least three competitive bids. Such bids shall be  
163 solicited by sending notice to prospective suppliers and by posting  
164 notice on the Internet web site of the Department of Rehabilitation  
165 Services. Each bid shall be opened publicly at the time stated in the  
166 notice soliciting such bid. Acceptance of a bid by the Department of  
167 Rehabilitation Services shall be based on standard specifications as  
168 may be adopted by said department.

169 Sec. 7. Section 17b-650 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
170 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2013*):

171 As used in sections 17b-650 to [17b-665] 17b-663, inclusive, and  
172 sections 10-298b and 10-298c:

173 (a) "Person with a disability" means any individual with a disability,  
174 excluding blindness, as such term is applied to Title I of the

175 Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 USC 701 et seq., as amended from time  
176 to time;

177 (b) "Vocational rehabilitation service" means any goods and services  
178 necessary to render a person with a disability employable, in  
179 accordance with Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 USC 701 et  
180 seq., as amended from time to time;

181 (c) "Community rehabilitation program" means a program that  
182 provides directly for or facilitates the provision of vocational  
183 rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities, as defined in the  
184 Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 USC 701 et seq., as amended from time  
185 to time;

186 (d) "Products are made or manufactured by or services are provided  
187 by persons with disabilities" if not less than seventy-five per cent of the  
188 hours of direct labor required for such products or services are  
189 performed by persons with disabilities.

190 Sec. 8. Subsection (a) of section 17b-655 of the general statutes is  
191 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*  
192 *1, 2013*):

193 (a) In carrying out sections 17b-650 to [17b-665] 17b-663, inclusive,  
194 as amended by this act, the Department of Rehabilitation Services shall  
195 cooperate with other departments, agencies and institutions, both  
196 public and private, in providing for the vocational rehabilitation of  
197 persons with disabilities, in studying the problems involved therein  
198 and in establishing, developing and providing such programs,  
199 facilities and services as it deems necessary or desirable.  
200 Notwithstanding any other provision of the general statutes, the  
201 Department of Rehabilitation Services shall not be required to pay that  
202 portion of the cost of a program of postsecondary education or training  
203 which is properly designated as expected parental or family  
204 contribution in accordance with state and federal law regarding  
205 eligibility for student financial aid.

206 Sec. 9. Section 17b-662 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
207 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2013*):

208 The right of a person with disability to maintenance under sections  
209 17b-650 to [17b-665] 17b-663, inclusive, as amended by this act, shall  
210 not be transferable or assignable at law or in equity.

211 Sec. 10. Sections 17b-665 and 46a-32 of the general statutes are  
212 repealed. (*Effective July 1, 2013*)

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2013</i>	10-297
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2013</i>	10-298
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2013</i>	17b-607(a)
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2013</i>	17b-612
Sec. 5	<i>July 1, 2013</i>	17b-650a
Sec. 6	<i>July 1, 2013</i>	17b-661
Sec. 7	<i>July 1, 2013</i>	17b-650
Sec. 8	<i>July 1, 2013</i>	17b-655(a)
Sec. 9	<i>July 1, 2013</i>	17b-662
Sec. 10	<i>July 1, 2013</i>	Repealer section

**Statement of Purpose:**

To delete dated references and make technical changes to statutes concerning the Department of Rehabilitation Services.

*[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]*