



## QUESTIONS FOR REHABILITATION SERVICES COMMISSIONER NOMINEE

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### COMMISSIONER OF REHABILITATION SERVICES (CGS § [17B-650A](#))

The commissioner manages the department, which is responsible for providing (1) services to individuals who are deaf or have hearing impairments; (2) services to individuals who are blind or have visual impairments; and (3) rehabilitation services, including the employee rehabilitation program for workers whose injuries are compensable under state workers' compensation law. The commissioner is also responsible for the Driver Training Program for Persons with Disabilities.

### QUESTIONS FOR NOMINEE

1. Legislation in 2011 created the Bureau of Rehabilitative Services (now the Department of Rehabilitation Services, or DORS) to provide services to individuals who are blind and visually impaired and deaf and hearing impaired. It also transferred to your department all of the administrative and programmatic functions of the (a) Board of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB), (b) Commission on Deaf and Hearing Impaired (CDHI), and (c) Department of Social Services' Bureau of Rehabilitative Services. In what ways are the services and the administrative processes different now that these three entities are now part of DORS? Has this change benefited service recipients and, if so, in what ways?
2. How have the governor's recent budget rescissions affected DORS and the services it provides?
3. Given the state's current fiscal crisis, in what ways do you think your department can reduce costs further while still providing valuable services to the individuals your department serves?
4. The Department's Business Enterprise Program is responsible for the development of business ventures for blind participants who desire to become entrepreneurs. What is the current scope of this program? Are there any changes you would like to make to the program in order to ensure its success?

5. Legislation last year concerning interpreter qualifications for the deaf or hard of hearing elicited public hearing testimony that implied that there was a shortage of qualified interpreters in educational settings and that, at times, unqualified individuals provided this service. Some advocates argued that the state needed some way to (a) monitor compliance with qualification and credentialing requirements and (b) assess penalties for interpreting without certification. How would you characterize the availability or provision of interpreters in educational settings? Should the state monitor compliance? Should there be penalties for interpreting without qualifications?
6. What do you see as DORS' strengths and weaknesses? What actions would you like to take during your next term to maximize those strengths and reduce the weaknesses?
7. What are your legislative priorities for the 2015 session? How are those different from last session?

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