



# House of Representatives

General Assembly

**File No. 150**

February Session, 2016

House Bill No. 5438

*House of Representatives, March 23, 2016*

The Committee on Human Services reported through REP. ABERCROMBIE of the 83rd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the bill ought to pass.

***AN ACT DELETING OBSOLETE STATUTORY PROVISIONS  
CONCERNING WORKSHOPS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.***

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

1 Section 1. Section 17b-656 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2016*):

3 Whenever any products made or manufactured by or services  
4 provided by persons with disabilities through community  
5 rehabilitation programs [described in subsection (b) of section 17b-655]  
6 or in any workshop established, operated or funded by nonprofit and  
7 nonsectarian organizations for the purpose of providing persons with  
8 disabilities training and employment suited to their abilities meet the  
9 requirements of any department, institution or agency supported in  
10 whole or in part by the state as to quantity, quality and price such  
11 products shall have preference over products or services from other  
12 providers, except (1) articles produced or manufactured by  
13 Department of Correction industries as provided in section 18-88, (2)  
14 emergency purchases made under section 4-98, and (3) janitorial or

15 contractual services provided by a qualified partnership, pursuant to  
16 the provisions of subsections (b) to (d), inclusive, of section 4a-82. [All  
17 departments, institutions and agencies supported in whole or in part  
18 by the state shall purchase such articles made or manufactured and  
19 services provided by persons with disabilities from the Department of  
20 Rehabilitation Services. Any political subdivision of the state may  
21 purchase such articles and services through the Department of  
22 Rehabilitation Services.] A list describing styles, designs, sizes and  
23 varieties of all such articles made by persons with disabilities and  
24 describing all available services provided by such persons shall be  
25 prepared by the Connecticut Community Providers Association.

26 Sec. 2. Subsection (d) of section 10-295 of the 2016 supplement to the  
27 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
28 thereof (*Effective October 1, 2016*):

29 (d) The Commissioner of Rehabilitation Services may expend up to  
30 ten thousand dollars per fiscal year per person twenty-one years of age  
31 or over who is both blind or visually impaired and deaf, in addition to  
32 any other expenditures for such person, for the purpose of providing  
33 community inclusion services through specialized public and private  
34 entities from which such person can benefit. The commissioner may  
35 determine the criteria by which a person is eligible to receive  
36 specialized services and may adopt regulations necessary to carry out  
37 the provisions of this subsection. For purposes of this subsection,  
38 "community inclusion services" means the assistance provided to  
39 persons with disabilities to enable them to connect with their peers  
40 without disabilities and with the community at large.

41 Sec. 3. Section 46a-33b of the general statutes is repealed and the  
42 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2016*):

43 Upon the request of any person or any public or private entity, the  
44 Department of Rehabilitation Services shall provide interpreting  
45 services to assist such person or entity to the extent such persons who  
46 provide interpreting services are available. Any person or entity  
47 receiving interpreting services through the department shall reimburse

48 the department for such services at a rate set by the Commissioner of  
49 Rehabilitation Services. The commissioner [shall] may adopt  
50 regulations in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54 to establish  
51 the manner of rate setting.

52 Sec. 4. Section 17b-650 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
53 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2016*):

54 As used in this section and sections [17b-650] 17b-650a to 17b-663,  
55 inclusive; [, and sections 10-298b and 10-298c:]

56 (1) "Person with a disability" means any individual with a disability,  
57 excluding blindness, as such term is applied to Title I of the  
58 Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 USC 701 et seq., as amended from time  
59 to time;

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

64 (3) "Community rehabilitation program" means a program that  
65 provides directly for or facilitates the provision of vocational  
66 rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities, as defined in the  
67 Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 USC 701 et seq., as amended from time  
68 to time;

69 (4) "Products are made or manufactured by or services are provided  
70 by persons with disabilities" if not less than seventy-five per cent of the  
71 hours of direct labor required for such products or services are  
72 performed by persons with disabilities.

73 Sec. 5. Section 10-309 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
74 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2016*):

75 The Department of Rehabilitation Services may place in  
76 remunerative occupations persons whose capacity to earn a living has  
77 been lost or impaired by lessened visual acuity and who, in the

78 opinion of the Commissioner of Rehabilitation Services, are susceptible  
79 of placement, and may make such regulations as are necessary for the  
80 administration of the provisions of this section and sections 10-306 to  
81 [10-310] 10-308a, inclusive.

82 Sec. 6. Sections 10-298a, 10-298b, 10-298c, 10-298d, 10-300, 10-300a,  
83 10-304 and 10-310 of the general statutes are repealed. (*Effective October*  
84 *1, 2016*)

|   |                        |                  |
|---|------------------------|------------------|
| This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections: |                        |                  |
| Section 1   | <i>October 1, 2016</i> | 17b-656          |
| Sec. 2  | <i>October 1, 2016</i> | 10-295(d)        |
| Sec. 3  | <i>October 1, 2016</i> | 46a-33b          |
| Sec. 4  | <i>October 1, 2016</i> | 17b-650          |
| Sec. 5  | <i>October 1, 2016</i> | 10-309           |
| Sec. 6  | <i>October 1, 2016</i> | Repealer section |

**HS**      *Joint Favorable*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

***OFA Fiscal Note******State Impact:*** None***Municipal Impact:*** None***Explanation***

The bill, which deletes obsolete language regarding Bureau of Education and Services to the Blind workshops<sup>1</sup> and makes various clarifying and conforming changes, has no fiscal impact.

***The Out Years******State Impact:*** None***Municipal Impact:*** None

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<sup>1</sup> These workshops closed in 2003.

**OLR Bill Analysis****HB 5438*****AN ACT DELETING OBSOLETE STATUTORY PROVISIONS CONCERNING WORKSHOPS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill makes the following changes in statutes concerning the Department of Rehabilitation Services' (DORS) programs:

1. eliminates DORS workshops for blind people,
2. eliminates labelling and registering requirements for goods made by blind people,
3. eliminates a requirement that entities supported in whole or in part by the state that purchase products or services provided by persons with disabilities (excluding blindness) do so through DORS, and
4. specifies the types of services provided to individuals who are both deaf and blind.

By law, DORS may expend up to \$10,000 per fiscal year per person for services for individuals who are over age 21, blind or visually impaired, and deaf. The bill specifies that services provided through this expenditure are community inclusion services, conforming to agency practice. Under the bill, community inclusion services assist people with disabilities to connect with their peers without disabilities and with the community.

The bill also allows, rather than requires, DORS to adopt regulations to establish reimbursement rates for people or entities receiving interpreting services for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2016

**DORS WORKSHOPS FOR THE BLIND**

The bill removes provisions allowing DORS, within available appropriations, to maintain and develop workshops to train and employ blind people to provide services and produce products used by state agencies and departments and municipalities. (According to DORS, the agency has not operated such workshops since 2003.) It removes the following related requirements:

1. that products and services provided by such workshops (a) receive preference for state agency and department purchasing, with certain exceptions; (b) are exempt from license requirements and fees, as are those produced by the Connecticut Institute for the Blind;
2. that DORS (a) distribute a catalog describing workshop products and services and (b) maintain a sales and service account as a separate account within the General Fund to deposit money DORS receives through the workshops and make related payments;
3. that the administrative services commissioner establish prices for all workshop products and services, determine whether they meet agency standards, and authorize state agencies, departments, and institutions to purchase them;
4. that those who violate workshop purchasing requirements be reported to the governor who may take any action deemed necessary.

The bill also removes a provision allowing DORS, within available appropriations, to fund employment and vocational training at community rehabilitation facilities. By law, unaffected by the bill, DORS may establish, operate, foster, and promote the establishment of rehabilitation facilities and make grants to various organizations to do so.

**LABELLING GOODS PRODUCED BY THE BLIND**

The bill eliminates a prohibition on labelling, representing, or designating goods as having been manufactured by any blind person or entity serving the blind unless at least 75% of the total hours of labor used to produce the goods were rendered by blind individuals. The bill eliminates related provisions that:

1. require any person, institute, agency, or nonprofit corporation which manufactures or produces goods that meet the labelling requirement register with DORS annually; and
2. establish a penalty of not more than \$100 for anyone violating labelling and registering provisions.

**GOODS AND SERVICES PROVIDED BY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

By law, and with certain exceptions, any department, institution, or agency supported by the state must give preference in purchasing to goods and services that (1) are produced by individuals with disabilities (excluding blindness) through community rehabilitation programs or workshops established, operated, or funded by nonprofit and nonsectarian organizations and (2) meet quality, quantity, and price requirements. The law also allows subdivisions of the state (e.g., municipalities) to purchase such goods and services. The bill removes the requirement that such purchases be from DORS. (Presumably, purchases could be made from the workshops or programs.)

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable  
 Yea 16 Nay 0 (03/10/2016)