
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 1055 (File 492, as amended by Senate "A")*

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES.

SUMMARY

This bill makes various changes and updates to the statutes governing the Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS). More specifically, it:

1. consolidates redundant gift acceptance and use provisions that allow ADS to accept gifts and bequests;
2. replaces the current Assistive Technology Revolving Fund, which makes direct loans, with a program to make and guarantee loans for the same purposes;
3. updates the format of a required informational resource about the voter application process;
4. changes the name of the Advisory Board for Persons Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and eliminates required appointments for its eight ex-officio members; and
5. deletes an obsolete reference to the Department of Social Services taking over programs of the former Department on Aging, as they were instead merged into ADS (CGS § 17a-301b).

The bill also makes technical and conforming changes.

*Senate Amendment "A" changes the name of the Advisory Board for Persons Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing to the Advisory Board for Persons Who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Deafblind and makes several minor and conforming changes to allow deafblind board representation.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2021

§§ 1, 2, 6 & 7 — GIFT ACCEPTANCE AUTHORIZATION

The bill consolidates under one provision, the ADS commissioner's existing authority to accept and use gifts under three separate provisions in statute. It specifies that she may accept and use gifts, grants, reimbursements, or bequests made by will or otherwise for carrying out the donor's purposes or the laws governing ADS, provided they are made under conditions that she judges proper and consistent with state and federal law. If she accepts them, they must be held, invested, reinvested, and used according to the conditions of the gift, grant, reimbursement, or bequest.

The bill eliminates two similar provisions authorizing the ADS (formerly the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)) commissioner to accept and use gifts, grants, bequests, personal property, and reimbursements for the donor's specified purposes, if any, or to support its programs. It also eliminates an authorization for ADS (formerly DRS) to expend its appropriation to engage consultants.

§ 3 — ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY LOANS

Current law authorizes the ADS commissioner to establish and administer the Assistive Technology Revolving Fund, which makes direct loans to people with disabilities, senior citizens, or their family members to purchase necessary assistive technology and adaptive equipment and services.

The bill instead authorizes her to establish and administer state financing activities as outlined in the federal Assistive Technology Act. This is to be known as the Assistive Technology Loan Program, which must make and guarantee loans to people with disabilities, older adults, or their family members, for the same purposes as the current fund.

§ 4 — VOTER INFORMATIONAL RESOURCE

Current election law requires ADS to produce a videotape

presenting the oath statement on voter application forms in voice and sign language and provide it to the secretary of the state. The secretary must then provide a copy to municipal registrars of voters upon request. This statement specifies each voter eligibility requirement, contains an attestation that the applicant meets each requirement, and requires his or her signature under penalty of perjury. The bill instead requires ADS to produce an accessible version (e.g., an online video) of the oath statement, in consultation with the secretary, and provide it to her. In turn, the secretary must make it available to registrars of voters.

§ 5 — ADVISORY BOARD APPOINTMENTS

The bill changes the name of the Advisory Board for Persons Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing to the Advisory Board for Persons Who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Deafblind. It makes several minor and conforming changes in the statutes governing the advisory board to allow board representation by service providers who work with individuals who are deafblind.

Current law requires the governor to appoint the board's 16 members, eight of whom are members by virtue of holding another office. The bill eliminates the requirement that he appoint these ex-officio members, thus enabling their immediate board participation upon assuming their outside positions.

Related Bill

sHB 6637 (File 712), favorably reported by the Human Services Committee, makes the similar changes to the Advisory Board for Persons Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 19 Nay 0 (03/31/2021)