

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH  
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



**PA 21-151**—sSB 1055  
*Human Services Committee*

**AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGING AND  
DISABILITY SERVICES**

**SUMMARY:** This act makes various changes and updates in the statutes governing the Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS). More specifically, it:

1. consolidates gift acceptance and use provisions that allow ADS to accept gifts and bequests;
2. replaces the 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; and
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.

The act also makes technical and conforming changes, including repealing an obsolete statute that referred 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).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2021

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

The act consolidates under one provision, the ADS commissioner's existing authority to accept and use gifts under three separate statutory provisions. 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.

To effectuate the consolidation, the act eliminates two similar provisions that authorized 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**

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

The act 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 prior fund.

### § 4 — VOTER INFORMATIONAL RESOURCE

Prior election law required ADS to make 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 then had to give a copy to municipal registrars of voters upon request. The statement specifies each voter eligibility requirement, has an attestation that the applicant meets each requirement, and requires his or her signature under penalty of perjury. The act 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 act 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 statute governing the board's membership to allow representation by service providers who work with individuals who are deafblind.

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

#### *Background - Related Act*

PA 21-72 (§ 5) makes the same changes to the Advisory Board for Persons Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.