
OLR BILL ANALYSIS

SB 1012

AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS FROM THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR THE BLIND AND THE COMMISSION ON THE DEAF AND HEARING IMPAIRED TO THE DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES

SUMMARY:

This bill transfers (1) all of the powers, functions, and duties of the Board of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB) to the Department of Social Services (DSS) and State Department of Education (SDE) and (2) all powers, duties, and functions of the Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired (CDHI) to DSS. It makes numerous technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2011

BESB AND CDHI FUNCTIONS TRANSFERRED TO DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Transfers of Functions (§§ 1-3)

The bill transfers to DSS: (1) BESB's Vocational Rehabilitation and Business Enterprise programs and adult and management services functions and (2) all powers, duties, and functions of CDHI. DSS constitutes a successor agency to BESB and CDHI, as defined in state law. The bill transfers the functions, powers, and duties of BESB's Children's Services program to SDE, making that department a successor agency. Currently, BESB and CDHI are within DSS for administrative purposes only.

The bill provides that any BESB or CDHI order or regulation in force on July 1, 2011 continues in force and effect until a law amends,

repeals, or supersedes it.

The transfer does not affect any action or proceeding pending on that date, and DSS or SDE, as the case may be, is deemed substituted in such action without motion or order.

The bill authorizes DSS or SDE, as the case may be, to conduct and complete any contracts, rights of action, or matters BESB or CDHI has undertaken or begun at the time of the transfer, provided they are done in the same manner and under the same terms and conditions and with the same effect as if they had been handled by BESB or CDHI.

BESB-Specific Changes (§§ 8, 13)

Oversight Board's Role. The bill changes the role of the BESB oversight board from the central policy making authority in providing services to the state's blind and visually impaired to an advisory body to DSS and SDE.

It also eliminates the board's function of monitoring the activities of the agency in carrying out its mission to provide educational and rehabilitative services to all blind and visually impaired state residents. And it eliminates a requirement that the board report annually to the governor and legislature on BESB's compliance with benchmarks.

Annual Reports. The bill requires DSS, instead of BESB, to submit to the governor an annual report on activities that DSS provides to blind and visually impaired individuals during the preceding year.

CDHI - Specific Changes (§§ 34-35)

The bill allows DSS to provide necessary services to the deaf and hearing-impaired. This may include free interpreter and message relay services. It eliminates CDHI's authority to implement state policies and authorizes it to advise DSS on state policies affecting the deaf and hearing impaired in their relationship to the public, health care, and educational opportunities.