

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 162

BY SENATOR BARROW

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Louisiana Workforce Commission to implement a study to assess the current rate structure for vocational rehabilitation services and compile data, based on research and a comparison analysis from other states, to develop a new reimbursement methodology and fee structure that adequately compensates Employment Services Vendors for the services and costs incurred to train, support, and secure employment for persons with disabilities.

WHEREAS, Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) assists persons with disabilities in their desire to obtain, maintain, or advance in employment opportunities and achieve independence in their communities by providing vocational rehabilitation services through partnerships with Employment Services Vendors (Vendors) and other community resources; and

WHEREAS, Vendors are organizations that provide vocational rehabilitation and employment services to persons with disabilities who are eligible to receive Louisiana rehabilitation services; and

WHEREAS, Vendors continue to provide vocational rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities across the state, often at the expense of the Vendors since fees paid by LRS do not fully cover the costs of services provided to LRS consumers; and

WHEREAS, Vendors routinely supplement LRS fees with alternative revenue streams as a result of an outdated fee structure that utilizes an inadequate reimbursement methodology that has not kept pace with inflationary factors, rising staff costs, and direct service costs; and

WHEREAS, the current fee structure places an extraordinary financial burden on Vendors, which can no longer be sustained, resulting in the potential to cease service provision to persons with disabilities, which places undue risks on the statewide vocational rehabilitation system and adversely impacts training, supports, and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the requested study and comparison analysis will provide current data from other states with successful payment models that can be utilized to develop a new reimbursement methodology that allows for a rate structure that adequately reimburses Vendors for the costs associated with the provision of employment-related services; and

WHEREAS, Vendors of services for people with disabilities are essential components of the state vocational rehabilitation system, and the services they deliver are vital to employment success; and

WHEREAS, equitable reimbursement to Vendors for the services they provide is necessary to ensure adequate employment support for persons with disabilities to enhance financial and personal independence, ensure quality of services, and strengthen the vocational rehabilitation system statewide.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby request the Louisiana Workforce Commission to implement a study to assess the current rate structure for LRS and compile data, based on research and a comparison analysis from other states, to develop a new reimbursement methodology and fee structure that adequately compensates Employment Services Vendors for the services and costs incurred for training, supporting, and securing employment for persons with disabilities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Louisiana Workforce Commission, and upon completion of the study, a written report be developed and submitted in response to this Resolution.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE