
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 271 Session of
2015

INTRODUCED BY TARTAGLIONE, TEPLITZ, GORDNER, BREWSTER, BLAKE,
COSTA, VULAKOVICH, HUGHES, SMITH, LEACH AND RAFFERTY,
JANUARY 20, 2015

REFERRED TO STATE GOVERNMENT, JANUARY 20, 2015

AN ACT

1 Relating to the delivery of services and programs to persons
2 with disabilities; conferring powers and duties on the Office
3 of the Governor; establishing the Office for People with
4 Disabilities and Advisory Committee for People with
5 Disabilities; and providing for the powers and duties of the
6 office and advisory committee and for funding of the office.

7 TABLE OF CONTENTS

8 Chapter 1. Preliminary Provisions

9 Section 101. Short title.

10 Section 102. Legislative policy and declaration.

11 Section 103. Definitions.

12 Chapter 3. Office for People with Disabilities

13 Section 301. Establishment.

14 Section 302. Powers and duties of office.

15 Section 303. Power to contract.

16 Chapter 5. Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities

17 Section 501. Establishment.

18 Section 502. Membership.

19 Section 503. Powers and duties of advisory committee.

1 Chapter 7. Miscellaneous Provisions

2 Section 701. Funding.

3 Section 702. Effective date.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 CHAPTER 1

7 PRELIMINARY PROVISIONS

8 Section 101. Short title.

9 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Office for
10 People with Disabilities Act.

11 Section 102. Legislative policy and declaration.

12 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

13 (1) Persons with disabilities and their families and
14 guardians should have access to a full range of services and
15 programs, including equal access to all services and programs
16 provided for persons without disabilities, as well as
17 individualized and specialized services that meet the unique
18 needs of persons without discrimination.

19 (2) Persons with disabilities and their families and
20 guardians are often underserved. They have often been denied
21 access to individualized and specialized services available
22 to the community at large and have been denied services
23 necessary to their health, well-being, independence and
24 advancement.

25 (3) Persons with disabilities who could live and work in
26 the community live in institutions at State expense due to
27 inadequate funding for community support services. The result
28 is a loss both to these individuals and to this Commonwealth.

29 (4) Persons with disabilities and their families and
30 guardians should have the opportunity to choose and direct

1 the services and programs provided to them, and the community
2 of persons with disabilities should direct the development
3 and operation of the delivery system.

4 (5) Increased availability of community support services
5 and programs will enable persons with disabilities and their
6 families and guardians to be more independent and productive,
7 to remain in their homes and communities and to more fully
8 exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

9 (6) Services and programs provided by the Commonwealth
10 to persons with disabilities and their families and guardians
11 should be provided in a manner that promotes independent
12 living, enables people to obtain and maintain employment and
13 supports people in their homes and communities.

14 (7) A State-level office and advisory committee is
15 needed to advise and assist the Governor and the General
16 Assembly in developing policies addressing the concerns of
17 persons with disabilities and their families and guardians.

18 (8) Access to the office will enable people with
19 disabilities and their families and guardians to have their
20 concerns and issues addressed.

21 Section 103. Definitions.

22 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
23 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
24 context clearly indicates otherwise:

25 "Advisory committee." The Advisory Committee for People With
26 Disabilities established by this act.

27 "Consumer control." The right of a person with a disability
28 or an individual acting on behalf of a person with a disability
29 to maintain power and authority over decisions affecting the
30 provision of services, programs and community activities.

1 "Disability services." Services and programs provided to
2 persons with disabilities or their families or guardians to
3 enhance the ability of adults or children with disabilities to
4 live or work independently and to pursue their rights and
5 responsibilities as citizens.

6 "Functional limitations." Limitations that affect one or
7 more of the following activities of daily living:

- 8 (1) Mobility.
- 9 (2) Communication.
- 10 (3) Self-care.
- 11 (4) Work.
- 12 (5) Recreation.
- 13 (6) Independent living.
- 14 (7) Learning.
- 15 (8) Self-direction.

16 "Long-term." Likely to be of extended or lifelong duration.

17 "Office." The Office for People with Disabilities
18 established by this act.

19 "Person with a disability." A child or adult who has a
20 severe chronic condition resulting in substantial functional
21 limitation that is attributable to psychological, cognitive,
22 developmental, physical or sensory impairment or a combination
23 of psychological, cognitive, developmental, physical or sensory
24 impairment and is likely to continue indefinitely.

25 CHAPTER 3

26 OFFICE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

27 Section 301. Establishment.

28 The Office for People with Disabilities is established within
29 the Office of the Governor. The office shall be administered by
30 the Office of the Governor.

1 Section 302. Powers and duties of office.

2 The office shall:

3 (1) Assure that all citizens of this Commonwealth who
4 have disabilities and their families and guardians have
5 access to adequate and coordinated quality services and
6 programs.

7 (2) Establish interagency agreements and working
8 relationships with other governmental bodies and public and
9 private agencies to:

10 (i) Assure access to the full range of available
11 services and programs for persons with disabilities and
12 their families and guardians.

13 (ii) Advocate for consumer control.

14 (iii) Coordinate the delivery of nonduplicative
15 disability services and programs to persons with
16 disabilities and their families and guardians.

17 (3) Identify gaps in disability services and programs
18 and funding shortages in collaboration with the advisory
19 committee and report this information annually to the
20 Governor and to the General Assembly.

21 (4) Act as a system advocate to expand the availability
22 of disability services and programs and access to generic
23 services and programs.

24 (5) Plan for Statewide improvements in services and
25 programs for persons with disabilities and their families and
26 guardians.

27 (6) Develop, within one year of the effective date of
28 this section, and enforce all program requirements and
29 regulations necessary and appropriate for the proper
30 accomplishment of the duties imposed by this act. Development

1 of program requirements and regulations shall be accomplished
2 in collaboration with the advisory committee.

3 (7) Employ an executive director to carry out the duties
4 of this section.

5 Section 303. Power to contract.

6 The office may contract with Statewide disability-related
7 organizations to carry out the provisions of this act, provided
8 the contracts place contract activities under the direction and
9 control of consumers with disabilities.

10 CHAPTER 5

11 ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

12 Section 501. Establishment.

13 The Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities is
14 established within the Office for People with Disabilities and
15 shall serve in an advisory capacity to the office in matters
16 regarding persons with disabilities in this Commonwealth. The
17 advisory committee shall be administered by the Office for
18 People with Disabilities.

19 Section 502. Membership.

20 (a) Public official members.--The committee shall consist of
21 the following members, who shall serve by virtue of their public
22 position:

- 23 (1) Secretary of Human Services.
- 24 (2) Secretary of Labor and Industry.
- 25 (3) Secretary of Health.
- 26 (4) Secretary of Education.
- 27 (5) Secretary of Transportation.
- 28 (6) Secretary of the Budget.
- 29 (7) Secretary of Aging.
- 30 (8) Secretary of Policy and Planning.

1 (9) Adjutant General.
2 (10) Secretary of the Commonwealth.
3 (11) Director of the Office of Health Care Reform.
4 (12) Chairperson of the Pennsylvania Human Relations
5 Commission.

6 (13) Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Housing
7 Finance Agency.

8 (14) Executive Director of the Pennsylvania
9 Developmental Disabilities Planning Council.

10 (15) Executive Director of the Office for People with
11 Disabilities.

12 (16) Executive Director of the Intra-Governmental
13 Council on Long-Term Care.

14 (b) Nongovernmental members.--The committee shall consist of
15 nongovernmental members to be appointed by the Governor as
16 follows:

17 (1) The Governor shall appoint persons with
18 disabilities, including individuals from existing stakeholder
19 groups, in such number as the Governor deems appropriate.

20 (2) At a minimum, 60% of these members shall be persons
21 with disabilities or family members of persons with
22 disabilities.

23 (3) Advisory committee members shall be selected based
24 upon an evaluation of information received through formal
25 application.

26 (c) Voting.--

27 (1) The members appointed under subsection (a) shall not
28 hold voting privileges on any matter brought up for
29 consideration by the committee.

30 (2) The members appointed under subsection (b) shall

1 hold voting privileges on all matters brought up for
2 consideration by the committee.

3 (d) Terms.--

4 (1) The terms of the members under subsection (a) shall
5 be concurrent with their holding of public office.

6 (2) Members appointed under subsection (b) shall serve
7 at the pleasure of the Governor as long as they represent the
8 interest of the membership class for which they were
9 appointed and shall serve until their successors are
10 appointed.

11 (e) Chairperson.--The Governor shall appoint a
12 nongovernmental member of the committee to serve as chairperson
13 of the advisory committee.

14 (f) Expenses of members.--Members of the committee shall
15 receive no compensation for their services. Members who are not
16 employees of State government shall be reimbursed for expenses
17 incurred in the course of their official duties and in
18 accordance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Public Law 93-
19 112, 29 U.S.C. § 701 et seq.).

20 Section 503. Powers and duties of advisory committee.

21 (a) General rule.--The advisory committee shall:

22 (1) Make recommendations to the Governor on policies,
23 procedures, regulations and legislation that aid persons with
24 disabilities in this Commonwealth.

25 (2) Serve as the Governor's liaison to persons with
26 disabilities on policies procedures, regulations and
27 legislation that affect persons with disabilities in order to
28 ensure that State government is accessible, accountable and
29 responsive to persons with disabilities.

30 (3) Serve as a resource to all departments, commissions

1 and agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction to ensure that
2 these government entities are cognizant of the needs of
3 persons with disabilities and their respective services and
4 programs are accessible to those individuals.

5 (4) Work with the Governor and the agencies under the
6 Governor's jurisdiction to monitor the hiring, retention and
7 promotion practices of the Commonwealth relating to the
8 employment of people with disabilities in order to ensure
9 that there are no discriminatory practices within the
10 Commonwealth.

11 (5) Perform such other duties as the Governor may assign
12 in planning for services and programs for persons with
13 disabilities and their families.

14 (b) Studies and reports.--The committee may conduct studies
15 and issue reports upon request and as it deems necessary on
16 issues affecting persons with disabilities in this Commonwealth.

17 (c) Construction.--Nothing in this section shall be
18 construed to prevent the committee from establishing ad hoc work
19 groups or local committees to assist in research and other
20 duties necessary to carry out the mission of the office.

21 CHAPTER 7

22 MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

23 Section 701. Funding.

24 The Office of the Governor shall use Federal funds where
25 possible for the administration of the Office for People with
26 Disabilities and the Advisory Committee for People with
27 Disabilities and shall expend Federal funds, on appropriation by
28 the General Assembly, prior to expending any State
29 appropriations for the same or similar purpose. The Office of
30 the Governor shall utilize any available private funds to carry

1 out the provisions of this act.

2 Section 702. Effective date.

3 This act shall take effect in 60 days.