



News

MARCH, 1987



BUDGET BATTLES COME TO A HEAD



Pressure is mounting as the legislative budget process moves toward completion. An unofficial deadline of the first week in April is quickly approaching. The Governor has said he will veto any new taxes. The Senate Finance Committee has proposed funding to keep services basically at the 1987 level. The House Appropriations Committee was proposing some cuts. However, both committees are going back to square one to make much deeper cuts since the Governor is still promising to veto any tax bills. Our advocacy has held the line so far, but new efforts are needed now!

Without raising revenues, without raising taxes, even budgets which double funding for disability services will mean nothing. Texas' constitution requires the state to operate on a balanced budget. Without revenue services will have to be cut and health and human services will probably receive the deepest cuts. It is vital you contact the Governor, the Speaker of the House (the leader of the House of Representatives) and the Lt. Governor (the leader of the Senate) at the addresses listed below. Let them know you support raising revenue to fund disability services. Let them know you are opposed to cuts in disability services.

The Honorable Bill Clements
Governor of the State of Texas
Capitol Building
Box 12068
Austin, Texas 78711

The Honorable Gib Lewis
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Capitol Bldg.
Box 2910
Austin, TX 78769

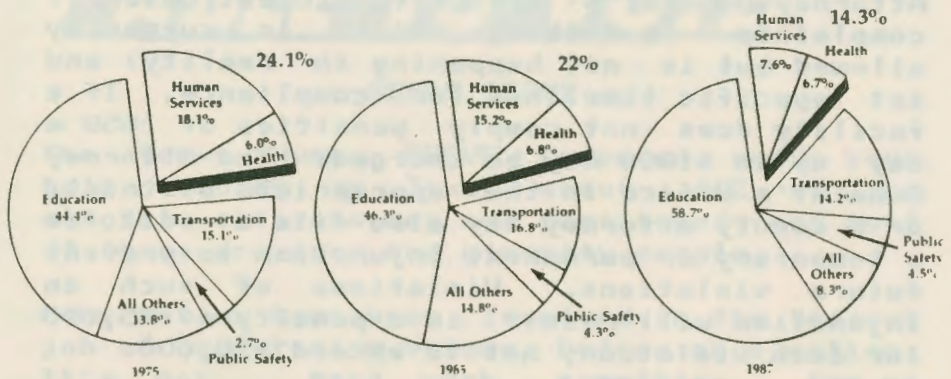
The Honorable William P. Hobby
Lieutenant Governor of the State of Texas
Capitol Bldg.
Box 12068
Austin, TX 78711



FUNDING FOR HUMAN SERVICES OUT OF CONTROL? TAKE A LOOK AT THE FACTS

Two thirds of the Texas budget is dedicated funds. In other words, this money is promised by laws or the state constitution for particular programs and cannot be reassigned without a constitutional ammendment or passage of a law to ammend the original law. So for the purposes of balancing the state's budget, the legislature has only the remaining one third to use. "Across the board cuts" are only across the board of this undedicated one third. These pie graphs show the distribution of this one third of the budget in 1975, 1985, and 1987. As you can see, funding has shrunk quite a bit. While many of the other programs funded under the undedicated funds also get dedicated funds, health and human services do not.

HUMAN NEEDS, STATE RESPONSE



State General Revenue Appropriations (Source: Legislative Budget Board)

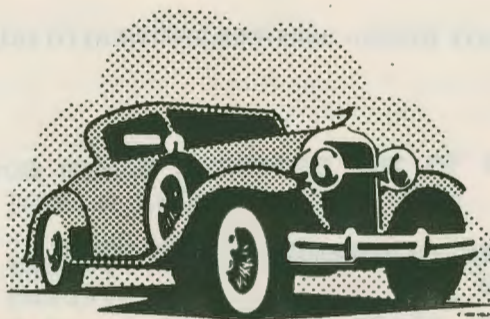
WHERE DO OUR STATE HUMAN SERVICES AND HEALTH DOLLARS GO?

ARCHITECTURAL BARRIERS ENFORCEMENT STRENGTHENED

Better enforcement of the architectural access laws will be the result, if a new bill introduced by Representative A.M. (Bob) Aiken, (D-Commerce) passes this session. House Bill 2295, filed March 13, 1987 would move the Architectural Barriers Office from the State Purchasing and General Services Commission, where it is now, to the Attorney General's Office.

The bill would authorize the Attorney General's Office to charge a fee of up to \$100 to review building plans. This would generate needed revenue for the Architectural Barriers Office which has seen its budget shrink drastically over the last three legislative sessions.

In addition HB 2295, which was developed out of recommendations from the CTD Delegate Assembly and the Attorney General's Disability Rights Task Force, would improve compliance with existing laws. It would allow the Attorney General's office to investigate all complaints (something which is currently allowed but is not happening in reality) and set specific timelines for compliance. If a facility does not comply penalties of \$50 a day up to \$1000 may be charged. The Attorney General's Office in the appropriate district, or a county attorney may also file a suit for a temporary or permanent injunction to prevent future violations. Violations of such an injunction will result in a penalty of \$5,000 for each violation, not to exceed \$20,000.



DRIVERS LICENSE HASSLES?

The Texas Department of Public Safety has the policy that driving is a privilege and not a right. Several disabled people have found this policy is given as a reason to require them to take more extensive testing for drivers license renewal even though their disability is not one that changes with time. Have you had this problem?

CTD is making an informal poll and would like to hear from you if this has happened to you. Please drop us a note or give us a call at the central office and let us know.

DISABLED ABLE TO VOTE

HUMAN SERVE

The Texas Human SERVE Campaign needs your help. Today in Texas about 40% of the eligible citizens are not registered--and most of those are poor and minority people.

Many of us have been involved in the tedious job of registering voters before an election. It's hot, hard work, something few of us cherish. However, we know the importance of the franchise.

Without having to resort to massive door to door registration, there are more effective and efficient methods of registering the disenfranchised. Agency-based registration means that all citizens that go through the doors of a state unemployment center, human service agency or drivers license office have an opportunity to register or update their registration.

And that's what SERVE wants to establish in all state agencies. A similar program is in place in Colorado, Arizona, Ohio, and Michigan, where citizens can register at drivers license offices. We think that should be taken a step further--all state agencies can and should participate.

Legislation is being introduced to do just that. Meetings with your Representative and Senators declaring support for the registration reform; educating the public of the need for changes in how citizens register to vote through radio and television talk shows; and letters to the local newspaper editor must begin now.

With a little time and a few resources, you can help craft a new enfranchisement program in Texas that begins to seriously attack one of the pervasive problems of today--lack of participation in elections. Simply put, people don't vote because they can't get registered. Let's make access to the ballot like it should be--fair and equitable for all! Join the DEMOCRACY NOW!! Campaign.

For more information contact, Texas Human SERVE, P.O. Box 3916, Austin, Texas 78764, 512/443-4884.

EMPLOYMENT RELATED ACTIVITIES FORUMS

A series of public forums have been scheduled around the state to help determine service gaps and barriers encountered by young, job-seeking, adults with developmental disabilities. The forums are a part of the newly formed Texas Planning Project for Employment Related Activities. The project is being implemented under a grant to the Association for Retarded Citizens of the United States by the Texas Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities.

"The major focus of this grant award is to develop a planning study to identify employment activities of the various schools, agencies and service providers in Texas," explained Project Director, R.A. Wade of Arlington. He noted that hundreds of individuals emerging from institutions and schools have many needs in the communities in which they hope to live happily and work productively.

Project directors hope to hear from disabled persons, and service providers regarding the exact nature of these needs in Texas. They also seek recommendations for policies and procedures to remove any gaps and barriers and to hear of other suggestions for improving employment related services.

Public forums are being held in the following Education Service Centers continuing through May 14. The complete schedule is:

<u>City</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>
Abilene	Tues. April 7	10am-2p.m.
Fort Worth	Thurs. April 9	2 - 5p.m.
Dallas/Rich	Tues. April 14	3 - 6p.m.
Kilgore	Thurs. April 16	3 - 6p.m.
Edinburg	Tues. April 21	3 - 6p.m.
Corpus Chris.	Wedns. April 22	1 - 4p.m.
Houston	Thurs. April 23	10am-2p.m.
San Antonio	Thurs. May 7	2:30-6p.m.
Austin	Thurs. May 14	10am-2p.m.

Participation at the forums is urged among parents and consumers, as well as representatives of schools, agencies and service providers. Ultimately, service systems hope to use the information emerging at the forums to improve service availability. Forum recommendations will seek to identify employment needs for technical assistance and training in overcoming gaps and barriers to services throughout Texas.

Both oral and written statements are invited at the forums. There will be a five minute limit for each oral presentation and all proceedings will be tape recorded. Interpreters will be provided for the hearing impaired. "The meetings will be structured as informally as possible so that an interchange of ideas will occur freely." Wade said. People unable to travel to the forums are invited to submit written testimony by mail. The information should be submitted to :

R.A. Wade, Project Director
Texas Planning Project
ARC National Headquarters
2501 Avenue J
Arlington, Texas 76006



Coalition of Texans with Disabilities

P.O. Box 4709
Austin, Texas 78765

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