



News

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER
1986



PUBLIC FORUM ON REHABILITATION ACT DALLAS - DECEMBER 10TH



The Rehabilitation Act reauthorization has finally been passed into law and the new Commissioner of the federal Rehabilitation Services Agency, Justin Dart, is holding a series of public forums around the country. Although the Act is law, how this law will be implemented remains to be seen and Dart is seeking comments from consumers as he begins this critical process. More seasoned members of the disability rights community will remember implementation has not always been a speedy process and it took demonstrations across the country before much of the 1965 version of the Act was implemented.

The Rehabilitation Act covers vocational rehabilitation services and a lot more. Also included are the independent living centers, research and training programs, special recreational and educational programs and more. Of course one of the once most crucial aspect of the bill was Section 504 and related sections. These were once considered disabled people's key to civil rights and equality, but with the watering down of enforcement and narrowed scope of interpretation of these sections, high hopes have been dampened.

The new Rehab Act has several ammendments of concern to disability rights advocates. Employability, rather than employment will be the new goal. Supported employment, for those not able to enter into competitive employment without support, has been added. This and several other

measures within the new Rehab Act will encourage services for more severely disabled persons. There is a whole section outlines provisions and call for a supported work state plan.

An "impartial hearing officer" has been added to the review of determinations made by rehab counselors or coordinators, although the Director of any designated state unit retains final authority. The Client Assistance Program may now provide information to any handicapped persons.

Research and training will cover cost effective development and marketing of technological devices. A study of health insurance practices will also be done. Rural independent living and Projects with Industry will receive more attention under the new amendments. Also the Architechtrual Transportation Barriers Compliance Board will now cover access to electronic equipment.

The new Rehab Act also calls for development of a state Independent Living Council to oversee Independent Living Services. The new evaluation standards and review process for the centers are also outlined. The Helen Keller National Center and the Presidents Committee on Employment of the Handicapped are both reauthorized. The National Council on the Handicapped has been reauthorized and is required to give an annual report (starting January 30, 1988) to the President and Congress on implementation of their report Toward Independence.

Last but not least, some remedies to the erosion of the civil rights provisions have been made in the reauthorization. "A state shall not be immune under the 11th Ammendment of the Constitution... from suit in Federal Court for a violation of Section 504...."

The public hearing will be held December 10th at the Holiday Inn Brookhollow, in Dallas, Texas.

For more information contact Steve Lane Regional Representative for Rehab Services Admin. 214/767-2961.



SESQUICENTENNIAL DAY FOR TEXANS WITH DISABILITIES

The State Capitol will be the setting for a special observation of the role Texas citizens with disabilities have played during the 150 years of this state. Sponsored by the Texas Council on Disabilities, the "Sesquicentennial Day for Texans With Disabilities" observation will be held December 13 and will draw attention to the abilities of persons with disabilities.

The ceremonies will feature performances by the Texas School for the Deaf choir, the Texas School for the Blind Jazz Band, and the Austin State School Band. Judge Bob L. Thomas, Council chairman from Waco, will preside over the ceremonies which will also include presentations by various state leaders.

A highlight of the day's events will be a display of art prepared by special education students from throughout the state. Representatives from various consumer organizations and state agencies working with disabled persons will also be on hand.

"The basic purpose of the December 13 observation is to remind all citizens that the history of Texas is filled by contributions by various people, including persons with disabilities," says Terry Goodman, executive director of the Council. "As we draw to the end of this great Sesquicentennial year, we want to create greater public awareness of the role disabled citizens play in our communities, the work place, and throughout our environment," she adds.

Activities start at 10:00 a.m. and anyone interested in attending this event is invited. For more information, contact Betty Huffman with the Texas Commission for the Blind at 459-2612 or Cindy Counts with the Governor's Committee for Disabled Persons at 445-8741.

Staff Hired for CTD/CAP Project

We are pleased to introduce and welcome to CTD the new staff members working on the Client Assistance Program contract: Norah Schwartz, Outreach Organizer, will work out of the CTD Central Office supervising the work of the five Outreach Workers at the Independent Living Centers: Mique Davis in Austin, Rey Garcia in El Paso, Lee Sanders in Houston, Becky Villarreal in San Antonio and Kelly Yarbrough in Dallas. The staff has just completed the initial training and are becoming more familiar with their local community. You'll be hearing more from all of us in 1987 as we begin the outreach activities to spread the word about the Client Assistance Program in Texas.



"Poster Adults, Come Forth!"

For five years, Marilyn J. Phillips has been collecting oral histories from people with disabilities. She's now interested in how former poster children remember and reflect on their experiences as "media figures." A professor at Morgan State University and former March of Dimes poster child herself, Phillips, has a fellowship to continue her search, and is looking for former poster children who'd like to be interviewed. Contact Marilyn J. Phillips at 1140 Martin Place, Ann Arbor, MI 48104 (313) 761-9816.





FEDERAL UPDATE



* With the change of party control in the Senate, committee chairs will be reassigned. The new leaders of committees which deal with many disability issues will be: Appropriations - John Stennis Chair, and Mark Hatfield Ranking Minority Member (RMM), Judiciary-Joeseph Biden Chair, and Strom Thurmond RMM; Labor and Human Resources-Edward Kennedy Chair, and Orrin Hatch RMM; Veteran's Affairs - Alan Cranston Chair, and Frank Murkowski RMM; and Small Business- Dale Bumpers Chair, and Lowell Weiker, Jr. RMM. Senator Weiker, a Republican and vocal advocate on many disability issues, will no longer be chairing the Senate Subcommittee on the Handicapped. The most likely heir to this position is Paul Simon (D-IL). Simon is a supporter but not as outspoken. The new leadership will take over at the start of the 100th Congress.

* On November 10th, President Reagan, signed signed into law the Employment Opportunities for Disabled Americans Act. This is the legislation Representative Steve Bartlett from Dallas so strongly supported. It will allow disabled persons now receiving SSI benefits to return to work but continue to retain eligibility for either or both SSI and Medicaid, up to certain income levels. SSI limits are set federally at \$757 a month. Medicaid caps are set by each state and in Texas the limit is \$1,000 a month. This leeway, a-long with publicity about the program is expected to lessen many of disabled people's present disincentives to work.

*Budget blues are just beginning again at the federal as well as the state levels. The federal agency heads have submitted budgets which total \$155 billion, \$36 billion over the Gramm Rudman-Hollings deficit cap of \$108 billion. Both the President and the Office of Management and Budget will be reviewing the requests, based primarily on maintaining current service levels, before Reagan submits his proposal to Congress.

* Three important court decisions have recently been made. One allows disabled students denied their rights under the Education for all Handicapped Childrens Act to receive educational services which were previously denied, rather than simply limiting these students to receiving compensation for money already spent on education. A second court decided that 202 funded Housing complexes may deny housing to disabled persons since the language clearly allows for buildings for just elderly or single disability groups. The third decision was that Social Security cannot exclude psychiatric causes of pain in determining disability.



ADVOCATES TAKE NOTE

CTD and the Texas Rehabilitation Association, TRA, are co-sponsoring a Legislative Seminar January 27, 1987. The workshop is designed to give participants a chance to familiarize themselves with legislative issues affecting disabled people as well as brushing up on their advocacy skills. In addition Lt. Governor Hobby has been invited to give an overview of the economic and political situation in Texas.

The seminar will be held in Austin at the Hyatt Wednesday morning from 9:30am through lunch, and a reception will be given in the evening, so come along and bring a friend.

We will be sending out a flyer on the seminar, but in the meantime if you would like more information contact Stephanie Thomas at the CTD Central Office 512/443-8252(v/TDD).

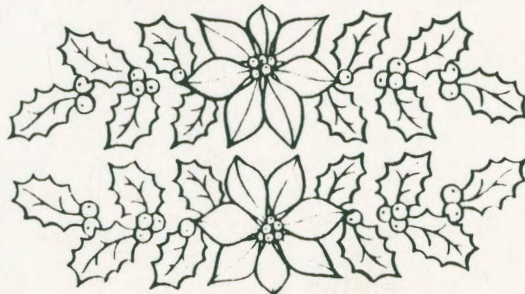
GIFT IDEAS



**** An exciting new magazine is now available for hearing impaired persons and their families and friends. Articles are informative and take a progressive approach with a fresh outlook on issues important to hearing impaired people. The Voice is full of information about the latest in technological advancements in assistive devices, on-going research, the psychology of hearing loss, and legislation, as well as sensitive stories shared by hearing impaired persons and those who love them. Their annual Christmas Gift Guide serves as an excellent reference source for assistive devices throughout the year. Subscription is \$10 for six issues annually. A sample issue may be ordered for \$2.00. The Voice, 2939 Hollandale, Dallas, Texas 75234.

*** New in Braille and on Cassettee

The Microwave Times - A Bi-Monthly (6 issues a year) Cooking Magazine. Featuring: Average of 45 Recipes per issue, Tips and Techniques of Microwave Cooking, also What's New in Microwave Accessories is now available in braille, approximately 88 pages per issue (\$34.00 yearly) and on tone-indexed cassette, with a 6-slot storage album included (\$31.00 yearly). All subscriptions must be prepaid, mail to CL Productions, 2905 Berkshire Drive, Mesquite, Texas 75150 or phone (214)681-2771. Reduced prices for quantity orders upon request.





Coalition of Texans with Disabilities

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