



Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council

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Legislative & Public Awareness Committee Draft Minutes for March 22, 2022 Members Present (P) Not Present (NP)

Anthony McCloskey (P)
Michele Leahy (P)
Jeanette Alexander (P)

Deb Arcoleo (NP)
Juliet Marsala (NP)

Passle Helminski (P)
William Del Toro Vargas (NP)

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Staff Present: Cheryl Novak

PaRC Staff Present: Chris Todd

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND PAST MINUTES

There was no quorum.

Discussion and Possible Action Items:

Nomination / Election of Committee Chair and Co-Chair

- Members were not able to nominate for Committee Chair as there was no quorum and will table the discussion for the next meeting.

Discussion of State and Federal Legislation Submitted by Committee Members and Legislative Staff for Review

- Members reviewed the Watchlist via Zoom screen share and were provided the documents via email. Mr. Chris Todd (staff) presented the documents for member review.

- Ms. Michele Leahy inquired about legislation listed on the Federal Watchlist that covers the eligibility of spouses of veteran's educational benefits. Inquired about Federal legislation that proposes raising the 15-dollar minimum wage and explained the negative affects it may have on Social Security benefits unless it also includes provisions to increase substantial gainful activity, cost of living, and other associated issues. Inquired if there is a bill being proposed that increases the SSI \$2,000 limits. Asked staff to research and share with members legislation that may include those issues.
- Mr. Anthony McCloskey informed members the legislation proposes to remove the current 10-year limit placed on the eligibility of spouses of veterans to receive those benefits. Inquired if legislation was not proposed would it be appropriate for members to recommend that.
- Ms. Passle Helminski stated that would be appropriate, recommendations have been shared many times, instructed staff about searching for legislation.

Discussion for Upcoming PaRC Meetings with Federal Legislators in April 2022

Determine Meeting date/times

Determine which Legislative Offices to contact/poll

Discuss / plan member talking points to cover

- Members provided dates to poll members that are not present to hold Federal Legislative meetings via Zoom for the morning of May 3 or May 5, 2022.
- Members agreed they would like to cover items on the Federal position papers and elements of the ABLE Act.
- Members would like to poll for meetings with both Pennsylvania Senators, Senator Casey, and Senator Toomey. Members would also like to meet with their own Representatives from their own district and stated they would like for staff to be able to use their name when sending invitations and polling members of Congress from their district.

Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at 10:15 AM.