



Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PaRC)

55 Utley Drive, Camp Hill, PA 17011

Voice: (717) 975-2004 or (888) 250-5175 TTY: (717) 737-0158 Fax: (888) 524-9282

Email: parc@parehabilitationcouncil.org Website: parehabilitationcouncil.org

Legislative & Public Awareness Committee Minutes for December 5, 2024, from 2:30 PM to 3:30 PM

Members Present (P)

Not Present (NP)

Passle Helminski (P)
Sylenthia Dent (P)
Michelle Mitchell (NP)
Susan Tomasic (P)

Lynn Heitz (P)
Joan Goodman (P)
Julia Barol (P)

Christie Cyktor (P)
Jessica Keogh (NP)
William Paz De Melo (P)

PaRC Staff Present: Chris Todd, Michelle Gerrick

OVR Staff Present: Chris Harbert

CALL TO ORDER

This meeting was conducted through Zoom. Ms. Passle Helminski called the meeting to order at 2:30 PM once quorum was established.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Members agreed to amend the agenda item regarding the Working Dog Commemorative Coin Act (S. 711).

MOTION was made by Ms. Joan Myers Goodman to amend the agenda item to Discussion of Sponsors for the Legislative Impact of the Working Dog Commemorative Coin Act (S. 711). Ms. Lynn Heitz seconded the motion. All were in favor.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND PAST MINUTES

MOTION was made by Ms. Joan Myers Goodman to approve the amended agenda and past meeting minutes. Ms. Joan Goodman seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Discussion of Working Dog Commemorative Coin Act (S. 711)

- There were 70 sponsors for the Working Dog Commemorative Coin Act (S. 711)

including from Pennsylvania, Senator Fetterman and Senator Casey.

Discussion of previously tabled letter regarding full funding of OVR

- Mr. Chris Harbert reported that a letter regarding VR funding is being reviewed by the PA Department of Labor and Industry policy team. Upon approval the draft letter will be provided to the PaRC for review. If the PaRC provides edits and approval the document will then be reviewed by OVR leadership and passed to the 6 other states with the largest VR programs for their directors and State Rehabilitation Councils (SRCs) for further review. The other States will provide their own approval in this collaborative effort to educate and inform about the importance of Federal funding for VR.

Discussion and follow up from October meetings with Legislators

- Members reviewed notes and follow up from the October meetings with State Legislators and/or their staff.

Planning for meetings with Legislators

Dates/times

Legislative offices

Talking points

- Members agreed to hold in-person meetings with State Legislators and/or their staff in alignment with the May 7, 2025, Full Council meeting. Members agreed to provide invitation to newly elected members of the General Assembly, PaRC member local Representatives, Labor and Industry Committee members, and Legislators that have previously declined invitation to meet with PaRC. Members agreed that talking points should be providing education about VR and the importance of fully funding VR.
- Members agreed to hold in-person meetings with Federal Legislators and/or their staff in alignment with the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC) and Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) Spring Conferences scheduled for April 5 to 11, 2025 in Bethesda, Maryland. Members agreed to meet with Pennsylvania Representatives that are part of the Disability Caucus including Representative Fitpatrick, PA Senator Fetterman and Senator McCormick, Representative Kelly, Representative Perry, and sponsors of Senator Casey's legislation. Members suggested talking points to include HR9495 regarding non-profit organization funding that affects employment, the Transformation to Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) legislation that was introduced by Senator Casey, the Medical Device Accessibility Act, National Service Dog protection legislation that needs to be introduced, and education regarding the definition of CIE.
- Members discussed a letter of support for the final rule regarding the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking: Employment of Workers with Disabilities Under Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Ms. Julia Barol agreed to assist with drafting

the letter.

MOTION was made by Ms. Julia Barol to approve writing a letter in support of the final rule regarding the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking: Employment of Workers with Disabilities Under Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act to be forwarded to the Executive Committee. Ms. Michelle Mitchell seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Schedule next meeting

- Members agreed to meet on January 15, 2025 from 2:30 PM to 3:30 PM.

Public Comment

- Mr. William Paz De Melo provided Public Comment and explained the importance of meeting with Legislators that are within each of our local districts.

Adjourn

MOTION was made by Ms. Joan Myers Goodman to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Julia Barol seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.