



Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PaRC)

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Legislative & Public Awareness Committee Minutes for April 27, 2026, from 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM

Members Present (P)

Not Present (NP)

Christie Cyktor (P)
Passle Helminski (P)
Michelle Mitchell (NP)

Lynn Heitz (P)
Dorian Rhodes (P)

Julia Barol (NP)
Julianna Rodrigues (P)

OVR Staff Present: Chris Harbert

PaRC Personnel Present: Chris Todd, Michelle Gerrick

CALL TO ORDER

This meeting was conducted through Zoom. Ms. Christie Cyktor called the meeting to order after quorum was established.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND PAST MINUTES

MOTION was made by Ms. Julianna Rodrigues to approve the agenda and past meeting minutes. Ms. Lynn Heitz seconded the motion. All were in favor.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS:

Follow Up and Feedback Received from Meetings with Legislators and their Staff

- Members reviewed compiled notes and feedback from meetings that were held with State Legislators which provided information and education on the diverse issues affecting employment of people with disabilities. Topics of discussion included supported Legislation and language included within the PaRC State and Federal Position Papers, impacts of the State budget, the Governor's proposed budget for OVR, importance of funding for OVR, advocacy for the Centers for Independent Living (CILs), modernizing CIL funding streams, Direct Care Worker

Crisis, accessible transportation, and the Subminimum Wage/14c Certificates.

- Members discussed responding to questions and follow up discussions regarding the subminimum wage.

Potential Letter of Support Regarding VR Funding

- Members discussed drafting a letter of support regarding Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) funding for the Support Service Provider (SSP) program and Specialized Services programs for Adults (SS-A) and Children (SS-C). Members suggested including data for the letter of support including the number of customers served by the specific programs, the number of additional customers that would be served, current budget for those services, and any waiting lists for those services being provided by the Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services (BBVS) and the Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH).

Schedule next meeting

- Members requested that PaRC personnel poll the committee via email to determine the next meeting in late May or early June 2026.

Adjourn

MOTION was made by Ms. Passle Helminski to adjourn. Ms. Julianna Rodrigues seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.