

**Enrolled**

**Senate Concurrent Resolution 202**

Sponsored by Senators COURTNEY, KNOPP; Senators BOLES, FINDLEY, GIROD, HEARD, THATCHER, Representatives BONHAM, DRAZAN, GORSEK, HELT, KENY-GUYER, MITCHELL, NERON, REARDON, RESCHKE, SOLLMAN, WILLIAMS, ZIKA (Presession filed.)

Whereas the federal Soldier's Rehabilitation Act of 1918 introduced a new concept in disability support: training for injured veterans as preparation for new jobs matching their abilities; and

Whereas in 1920 Congress passed the Civilian Vocational Rehabilitation Act (Rehab Act), expanding the veterans' program to include anyone with a physical disability, which was the beginning of the public vocational rehabilitation program (VR); and

Whereas World War II led to a further expansion of the rehabilitation system; and

Whereas 1943 amendments to the Rehab Act expanded VR to include services to people with mental health and intellectual and developmental disabilities, which gradually doubled the number of people finding jobs through VR; and

Whereas the 1943 amendments also allowed states to create separate VR agencies for people with blindness; and

Whereas in response to public feedback, VR began to change the kinds of services provided and, in addition to training and guidance, VR also began paying for equipment, such as wheelchairs or hearing aids, that improved the ability of a person with a disability to find a job; and

Whereas beginning with the 1954 amendments to the Rehab Act, the federal government started funding scientific research into disabilities and rehabilitation, eventually leading to the creation of the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research; and

Whereas VR became a national success story because it has a clear definition of its target group (people with disabilities who could return to work with help) and a clear definition of success (employment of those people); and

Whereas on average, for every dollar spent on training and support initially, people with disabilities paid seven dollars in state and federal taxes when they entered the workforce; and

Whereas 1965 amendments expanded the Rehab Act to include drug abuse, alcoholism, repeated jail sentences and many other conditions; and

Whereas due to the system becoming overwhelmed, Congress in 1973 responded with a completely new Rehabilitation Act, which directed VR to primarily serve people with significant physical or mental disabilities, with counselors and consumers now working in close partnership to individualize services and develop a formal individualized employment plan; and

Whereas 1986 amendments responded to the growing disability rights movement by emphasizing community inclusion and consumer choice, as well as shifting away from institutional settings to emphasize jobs in the community; and

Whereas 1992 amendments created State Rehabilitation Councils, which are citizens' advisory bodies in each state to increase the voice of consumers in the policy and operations of state agencies and increase the role of the consumer in planning the consumer's own services; and

Whereas the 1992 amendments also required that agencies set minimum training standards for all VR counselors, sped up the eligibility process, provided that VR agencies were to presume that everyone with a disability could benefit from VR services and specified that agencies could not deny services to someone just because the individual's disability was significant; and

Whereas the 1992 amendments also required partnerships between VR and state and federal agencies that provide employment-related services and, as a result, the Rehab Act eventually became part of the federal Workforce Investment Act; and

Whereas Title I of the Rehab Act describes the basic structure of the system, establishes the role of state VR agencies, authorizes a special program for Native Americans and establishes two advocacy programs: Client Assistance Programs and State Rehabilitation Councils; and

Whereas Title II covers research and training issues; and

Whereas Title III authorizes funding for special projects and demonstrations related to VR services and training, which includes funding for a variety of academic scholarships, development projects and educational programs; and

Whereas Title IV establishes a National Council on Disability; and

Whereas Title V is the civil rights section of the Rehab Act and addresses the rights and advocacy of people with disabilities and describes how the federal government and the projects it funds will protect the rights of people with disabilities and not allow discrimination; and

Whereas Title VI establishes the Projects With Industry grant program to promote corporate hiring of qualified people with disabilities into competitive jobs as well as the Supported Employment program to help people with the most significant disabilities find competitive and community-based jobs; and

Whereas Title VII establishes several support systems for independent living by people with disabilities; and

Whereas the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 reauthorized the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (including the 1973 Rehab Act), defined competitive integrated employment and required increased VR investment in services for youth with disabilities; and

Whereas Oregon VR provides services to employers as part of its dual-consumer model, including recruitment and retention support, customized disability awareness training, worksite accommodation referrals and support in developing internships or work experience programs for job seekers; and

Whereas Oregon VR continues to support the Youth Transition Program, which provides services to students in approximately 120 high schools across this state; and

Whereas Oregon VR served more than 17,000 Oregonians with disabilities and provided more than 18,000 pre-employment transition services in the 2018 fiscal year; and

Whereas Oregon VR continues its mission to support Oregonians to get, maintain and advance in employment consistent with their strengths, priorities, needs and abilities and to achieve economic self-sufficiency in their community; now, therefore,

**Be It Resolved by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon:**

That we, the members of the Eightieth Legislative Assembly, commemorate the 100th anniversary of the federal Rehabilitation Act, which created vocational rehabilitation, and we celebrate its success supporting Oregonians with disabilities to achieve employment and join the workforce.

Adopted by Senate February 12, 2020

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Lori L. Brocker, Secretary of Senate

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Peter Courtney, President of Senate

Adopted by House February 21, 2020

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Tina Kotek, Speaker of House