

Senate Concurrent Resolution 202

Sponsored by Senators COURTNEY, KNOPP; Senators BOLES, FINDLEY, GIROD, HEARD, THATCHER, Representatives BONHAM, DRAZAN, HELT, RESCHKE, ZIKA (Presession filed.)

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**.

Commemorates 100th anniversary of federal Rehabilitation Act and celebrates success of vocational rehabilitation in supporting Oregonians with disabilities to join workforce.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1
2 Whereas the federal Soldier's Rehabilitation Act of 1918 introduced a new concept in disability
3 support: training for injured veterans as preparation for new jobs matching their abilities; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

26 Whereas due to the system becoming overwhelmed, Congress in 1973 responded with a com-
27 pletely new Rehabilitation Act, which directed VR to primarily serve people with significant phys-
28 ical or mental disabilities, with counselors and consumers now working in close partnership to
29 individualize services and develop a formal individualized employment plan; and

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

NOTE: Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter *[italic and bracketed]* is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 emphasize jobs in the community; and

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

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

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

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

15 Whereas Title II covers research and training issues; and

16 Whereas Title III authorizes funding for special projects and demonstrations related to VR ser-
17 vices and training, which includes funding for a variety of academic scholarships, development
18 projects and educational programs; and

19 Whereas Title IV establishes a National Council on Disability; and

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

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

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

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

32 Whereas Oregon VR provides services to employers as part of its dual-consumer model, includ-
33 ing recruitment and retention support, customized disability awareness training, worksite accom-
34modation referrals and support in developing internships or work experience programs for job
35 seekers; and

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

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

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

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

44 That we, the members of the Eightieth Legislative Assembly, commemorate the 100th anniver-
45 sary of the federal Rehabilitation Act, which created vocational rehabilitation, and we celebrate its

1 success supporting Oregonians with disabilities to achieve employment and join the workforce.

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