

JUN 05 2014

Don D Roy

June 3, 2014

Mr. Ken Levine  
Director, Sunset Advisory Commission  
P.O. Box 13066  
Austin, Texas 78711-3006

Subject: Comments on Sunset Staff Report

Dear Mr. Levine;

Please find below my comments on the staff report. These comments represent my opinion and are not made to represent those of the DARS Council.

*Summary: Review of the report elicited a concern that a focus on organization and structure took precedent over delivering services to the consumer.*

Texas programs for the blind, deaf, and vocational rehabilitation have long been praised within and outside of Texas. Care should be taken in this review process not to degrade these programs.

The needs of the individual with different disabilities are unique. To assist someone who is blind find ways to access and thrive with daily activities differs, quite remarkably, from those of one who is disabled as a result of polio, or traumatic brain injury, or who is deaf. To blur this distinction in the name of eliminating "stovepipe" organizational formats is, if nothing else, quite naïve. And such a position, if carried out to the extreme, will degrade the service provided to the person in need of the service. Why? Because to access the best advice and counsel for a given disability one has to eventually find the "stovepipe, even if it is just one individual or a group of individuals. It is rare, if not non-existent, in one individual or even a small group of individuals where one will find the needed expertise for all disabilities.

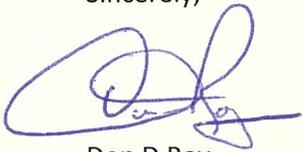
Therefore, I would urge the Sunset Review process to be careful in how it approaches the needed clarity and distinction between the three programs. To focus on eliminating administrative functional duplicity is one thing. That can be done by consolidating these **functions** (not programs) at the state and regional levels in a macro concept. It has long been apparent that the field organizational structure suffers from separating the offices by program rather than keeping the focus on function or service at the location and then breaking the programs out (i.e., "stove-piping them") under the DARS functional umbrella. The public should be able to easily identify the organization that provides the service, i.e. a DARS field office,

not a DBS or DRS field office and then be placed with the proper program group or individual that will provide the specific service-blind, deaf, voc. rehab. By aligning field organization with the state organization (DARS field office), if there exists a need for more than one disability service, the DARS field office could coordinate to provide both.

However, the PROGRAM direction at the state level and the program delivery at the consumer level should not be blurred by combining the organizations and people delivering the service. To do so would be to greatly increase the confusion and blurring of how and where to access the service needed. In other words be careful how you mess with Texas programs for delivering services to the blind, deaf and those in need of Vocational Rehabilitation Services. These programs have stood the test of time of over a half century and their distinction should be clearly maintained.

Thank you and the Commission for your hard work and providing the report in a professional and timely manner.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Don D Roy", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Don D Roy  
Council Member, Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services