

November 2, 2014

Mr. Ken Levine

Director

Sunset Advisory Commission

1501 North Congress, 6th floor

Austin, TX 78701

On behalf of the Houston Council of the Blind (HCB), I'd like to recognize you and the Commission staff for pursuing the task which you were assigned. However, we also believe it necessary to express our concern related to specific portions of the HHSC and System Issue Staff Report. In particular, HCB as assembled on November 2, 2014, in concert registers its opposition to Recommendation 1.1.

Based on extensive consultation and observation of such consolidated entities in other states, we have it on good authority that such agency structures pose major obstacles for individuals to receive adequate rehabilitative services. In addition, an individual seeking specific rehabilitative and independent living services would have problems distinguishing between offerings concealed under an inappropriate bureaucratic label of Medical and Social Services. We also have observed that in such consolidations, the loss of expertise necessary for certain disabilities is glaring and consumers ultimately end up suffering most.

HCB stands with other disability organizations in the hope that this recommendation will be reconsidered and a more proper structure can be developed.

Again thank you for the work of the Commission.

The Houston Council of the Blind

Rev. Michael E. Garrett

First Vice-President, Advocacy Chairman