

To: My representative, Senator Brian Birdwell and Chair Senator Jane Nelson

Thank you for an opportunity to speak directly with you through this letter of communication. We have been a CRP with TIBH since 2005. When we first came into this program, our goal as a company was to put people to work with various disabilities and help them be successful on their level of success. We presently have working for us over 75 persons of which 85% (over the required percentage) have documented disabilities. Over the years they came to us unable to find employment elsewhere and happy to be able to work as they are and where they are in society.

I was in the workforce myself for over 20 years and had retired to become a stay-at-home mom, but knew there was more to do to help others. One year, while living in California while my husband was working on a special project, one of my sons had a special needs child in his class. The young child, which I'll call Ben, was down-syndrome and had moody moments and outburst. But in the state of California the legislature there thought that it was not fair to have separate classes that Ben would not be able to grow with like students. They felt he needed to be with what we will call regular kids to grow. That was the least educationally productive year of my sons' life. Ben would have bad days like all people, but because of his challenges he was not able to express himself in a productive and undamaging way towards the whole class. On those days, and there were several (8-12 per month), no one was able to have class. I always felt he needed his space with others with challenges like or similar to his to help him learn the process to grow and learn how to interact, grow and be successful on his level.

Fast forward to today, we also have an Adult Day-Hab. For special needs and work with family members and the state program, DADS to ensure each individual is given the opportunity to be successful at their level. We have seen first-hand how over integrating can be damaging and how successful division with a plan can be.

That is exactly what being a CRP for TIBH affords us. Some individuals may seem to fit in any and all areas of work environments, but this is just not so. Repetition is a very secure arena for many of these individuals and security is vital to their success. One of the important things we must keep in mind is the need to keep them as individuals with special needs, addressing their special need. There is no across the board fix for this. It requires individual care by individual persons. Therefore our need to keep the overview of the Texas Council on Purchasing from People with Disabilities intact is vital. We that are on the grassroots of this plan are a mere leg of this three prongs support program. TIBH and the Council are the other prongs and together we make this work, for the reason it was created; putting people with special needs to work and allowing them to grow and be successful on the level where they are and not requiring them become a part of the masses of being like everyone else. By accepting their individual needs and supporting them where they are, they become the success there were created to be.

Therefore as a CRP that has benefitted over the years from a Council that has only the needs of our workers as their primary and only focus, we ask you to rethink your recommendation to abolish our support system. Reevaluate the many areas of their backgrounds that show why they are so good at what they do and why we need them. Again, thank you for your time.



Donna Griffin, Executive Director, Liberty Proclaimed Ministry (LPM)