

**From:** [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)  
**To:** [Cecelia Hartley](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Sunset HHS Report  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 05, 2014 12:08:38 PM

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**From:** Larry  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 05, 2014 9:31 AM  
**To:** Sunset Advisory Commission  
**Cc:** Alternate ID Sen. Jane Nelson; Four Price; Brian Birdwell; [juan.hinajosa@senate.state.tx.us](mailto:juan.hinajosa@senate.state.tx.us); Dan Patrick; Charles Schwertner; Cindy Burkett; Harold V. Dutton; Larry Gonzales; [richard.pena@house.state.tx.us](mailto:richard.pena@house.state.tx.us)  
**Subject:** Sunset HHS Report

Mr. Ken Levine, Director,

Sunset Advisory Commission

Austin, Texas

Dear sir:

My name is Larry Johnson. I am totally blind, 81 years old, a member of the American Council of the Blind of Texas, and a satisfied user of the services of DARS Division for Blind Services.

I wish to voice my strong opposition to the Sunset Commission's recommendation 1.1 which would consolidate the present five HHS system agencies, including the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, into one single agency. Such consolidation would create a system that will make access to rehabilitation services for people who are blind or visually impaired significantly more difficult. The nature of rehabilitation services for blind and visually impaired persons requires specially trained rehabilitation professionals and an agency management support team who understands the specific circumstances and challenges faced by individuals who experience vision loss. The proposed organizational structure that places rehabilitation services under a generic term like "medical and social services" would marginalize the critical direct services required by blind and visually impaired individuals to be successful at finding employment. Attempts in other states to consolidate agencies and agency missions have had a detrimental impact on services to blind and visually impaired individuals. I sincerely hope that the Commission will rethink and revise this recommendation and allow the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative

Services to continue as a stand-alone agency dedicated to promoting employment opportunities for Texans who are blind or visually impaired, thus transforming them from tax users into tax payers.

Thank you.

Larry P. Johnson, MA, PHR