Texas Sunset Advisory Commission

Comments on Texas Council on Purchasing from People with Disabilities

On behalf of Disability Rights Texas

October 30, 2014

Thank you for soliciting public input during the Sunset process for Texas Council on Purchasing from People with Disabilities. These comments are on behalf of Disability Rights Texas (DRTx) and are being submitted by Jean Langendorf, Policy Specialist.

Federal law authorizes Disability Rights Texas, to both advocate and protect the rights of persons with disabilities. That is, Disability Rights Texas is involved in ensuring that individuals in the community (a) receive the services and protections that will enable them to function as independently as they possibly can, and (b) are given the opportunity to move to a less restrictive community-based placement. (See www.disabilityrightstx.org)

Issue 1 – Texas Council on Purchasing from People with Disabilities Does Not Ensure That the State Use Program Most Effectively Serves People with Disabilities.

We support efforts to improve the employment outcomes for people with disabilities by better oversight of the central nonprofit agency and the local community rehabilitation programs. An alignment with the policies established by the Employment-First Task Force would provide for more equitable opportunities and promote competitive employment of people with disabilities.

We support the elimination of sheltered workshops and the payment of subminimum wage. The Sunset Advisory Commission appropriately notes that 'state policy on employment clearly establishes a living wage in competitive employment as a state priority'. This practice should be stopped in Texas.

We support the creation of an advisory committee to help set the performance goals for the program and standards for community rehabilitation programs. The proposed structure includes important elements that can leverage self-advocate expertise.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public input. For more information, please contact Jean Langendorf at jeanl@drtx.org.