

# TRAVIS ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND

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October 16, 2014

Sunset Advisory Commission

Mr. Ken Levine

P.O. Box 13066

Austin, Texas 78711

RE: Comments on the Sunset Staff Report for the Texas Council on Purchasing from People with Disabilities (TCPPD), October 2014

Dear Mr. Levine,

Thank you for the invitation for us to comment on the staff report noted above. It is our belief that the Texas State Use Program has been very successful and has met the expectations of the statute. Many other states have used the State Use Program in Texas as the model for their programs. The Texas program, of course, is modeled somewhat after the U.S. AbilityOne Program. We believe this work has worked well throughout the amazing growth of this program. While we understand the comptroller's office has an interest in the program and should receive input, we do not believe it would be to the best interest of the program or the State to task the comptroller with administering the program.

Therefore, we do not support the key recommendation to place oversight of the State Use Program at the comptroller's office and abolish the Texas Council on Purchasing from People with Disabilities. We do support keeping the Texas Council in place.

Also, we do not support the key recommendation to require the comptroller's office to establish an advisory committee to set goals for the State Use Program and standards for participating community rehabilitation program certification. We do support reviewing standards that are currently in place and modifying as necessary to assure that the State Use Program is operating as intended. We do support hiring additional staff for the Council to assist in administering the Program, including verification of compliance of participating community rehabilitation providers.

And finally, we do not support the key recommendation to direct the comptroller's office to study the cost to the State of continuing to administer the State Use Program. We do support the Texas Council working together with the comptroller's office to compare the cost to the State versus the value of the Program.

In summary, we do not support the key recommendations of the Sunset Staff Report but do support keeping the Council and the Program in place while improving communications between the Council and the comptroller's office, continuing to select individuals to be on the Texas Council in a manner that assures there is qualified representation for the people being served by the Program, increasing the Council paid staff to adequately administer the program, and having the Council provide to the comptroller's office results from the Program each year including data that can be used to determine the value of the Program to the State. We believe this will best serve the blind and disabled Texans the statute as intended by the State Use Program statute.

Best regards,

Jerry A. Mayfield  
Executive Director  
Travis Association for the Blind  
Austin Lighthouse