

From: [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)
To: [Cecelia Hartley](#)
Subject: FW: Sunset Review of DARS services to blind children and adults
Date: Thursday, June 05, 2014 5:30:33 PM

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From: Nancy Toelle
Sent: Thursday, June 05, 2014 2:36 PM
To: Sunset Advisory Commission
Subject: Sunset Review of DARS services to blind children and adults

I am writing to voice my concern with the Recommendation for Issue #1 of the Sunset review, which maintains that having a separate agency for the blind and visually impaired constitutes duplication of services. I disagree vigorously with that contention, and feel it could only have been made by people who are ignorant of the specialized training needs of visually impaired and blind adults, especially those who are older or newly blinded. Believe me, when a generic vocational rehab. worker encounters the multitude of issues relating to blindness, work, and independent living, they are at a loss as to the first thing to do. The simple issue of access to media befuddles those who are not properly trained, as there is not a "one size fits all" answer to media questions for any person. It is impracticable to train all generic VR workers to have the level of skills developed through targeted training and years of experience, as the current system provides. What we find when funding and services are pooled generically, our low incidence population is not a priority for either funding or service.

With regard to recommendation #3, it ignores the reality of where our blinded adults live, their proximity to independent living facilities, and the loss of home services that allow them to remain in their own homes, which is much more cost effective. This is a growing population all over the state, though there are limited facilities to meet these needs and they are not in all parts of the state.

I'm asking the Sunset Commission to listen to public comment made by those who have experience with issue relating to education and rehabilitation of blind and visually impaired children and adults. As a former teacher of students with visual impairments who has over 40 years of experience working with children and adults, I implore the Sunset Commission to recognize the needs that are unique to this population and to maintain specialized services.

Sincerely, Nancy M. Toelle, Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments