



South Texas Lighthouse for the Blind

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October 16, 2014.

Sunset Advisory Commission
Mr. Ken Levine
PO Box 13066
Austin, TX 78711.

RE: Comments on Sunset Staff Report on Texas Council on Purchasing from People with Disabilities (TCPPD).

Dear Mr. Levine,

I am writing this on behalf of the employees of the South Texas Lighthouse for the Blind to express our concern and opposition to the Sunset Commission's recommendation to abolish the Texas Council on Purchasing from People with Disabilities (TCPPD).

The Texas State Use Program has been very successful in providing employment opportunities for Texans with disabilities, as can be shown by the 6,424 people with disabilities employed by the program, with an average hourly wage of \$9.93. We believe this success is the result of the effectiveness of the Council in providing the leadership to provide useful and productive employment activities to people who are disabled. By abolishing the TCPPD, we will essentially dismantle what has worked well for the over 6,000 people that are employed under this program.

We do not support Recommendation 1.2, which requires the Comptroller to establish an advisory committee. The TCPPD already has members which include State agency purchasers and People with Disabilities that can provide the expertise for the governance of the State use program. We do support reviewing the standards to ensure the State Use program is functioning as intended by the Legislature. The addition of two more staff positions to the Council would enhance further compliance.

We feel that abolishing the TCPPD would set back a program that many consider a success and other states would want to emulate. As an independent body appointed by the Governor, the TCPPD provides the expertise and knowledge to further the State Use program as the Legislature intended. There is always room for improvement in any program, even successful ones, and the TCPPD should be the advocate working with the Comptroller's Office in a fiscally responsible manner to ensure gainful employment for many Texans with disabilities.

Respectfully,

Nicky Ooi
President and CEO