

# TRC news & views

TEXAS REHABILITATION COMMISSION

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## Pickle Introduces New Social Security Proposals

U.S. Representative J. J. (Jake) Pickle of Austin has proposed several new amendments to the Social Security Act. On March 3, Pickle introduced House Resolution (H.R.) 5700, also called "The Disability Amendments of 1982."

In general terms, this bill would: 1) extend disability benefit payments to beneficiaries who "medically recover," 2) limit the evidence to be considered by administrative law judges, and 3) increase funding for vocational rehabilitation services to beneficiaries and former beneficiaries.

Several sections of the bill would extend the length of time beneficiaries could receive social security payments after they are declared "medically recovered" and no longer eligible for benefits. For claimants who appeal unfavorable decisions, payments could continue through the appeals process. All persons who had received benefits for at least three years could continue to receive payments for as long as six months after they have been determined "medically recovered." In cases where a Continuing Disability Investigation has determined

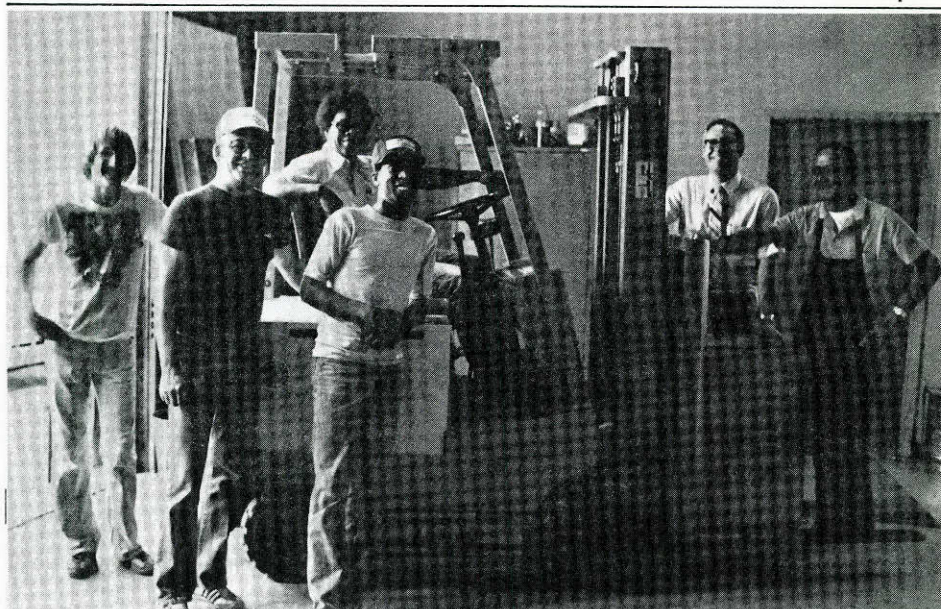
that a beneficiary had been "medically recovered" for several months, the Social Security Administration could not recover benefits it had already paid.

Other amendments would place new restrictions on the information that could be considered by administrative law judges who review evidence as part of the appeals process. Generally speaking, a judge would be required to consider the

same evidence as was available to the examiner who first determined the beneficiary ineligible. As the law reads now, beneficiaries can continue to add new evidence to their records throughout the appeals process.

Section 17 of H.R. 5700 would reestablish the vocational rehabilitation program that had been in effect until this fiscal year.

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The staff of TRC's Central Warehouse fairly beamed last month when a new arrival was delivered to their doorstep. The object of their admiration is a new forklift. The arrival of the forklift means the end of back breaking lifting required to move and stack boxes and heavy inventory. And, now that they can stack things higher than before, the staff expects to have more floor space. Warehouse workers pictured here are (left to right): Curtis Behrends, Stock Clerk; Jim Shaw, Warehouse Superintendent; Tommy Williams, Purchasing-Supply Officer; Jeff Davis, Stock Clerk; Milton Turnipseed, Purchasing and Supply Director; Asuncion (Sunshine) Galarza, Stock Clerk.

## TRC Upheld in District Court Case

A State District Court judge in Austin has upheld the Texas Rehabilitation Commission's authority to deny services to persons who are too severely disabled to be expected to enter or return to the work force. In a final judgement issued March 5, 200th District Court Judge Charles Mathews ruled in favor of the Commission in the Evelyn Thibodeaux vs. Texas Rehabilitation Commission case. The lawsuit was filed in July, 1981.

The suit originated in Houston when vocational rehabilitation services for the plaintiff, a TRC client, were terminated. The termination was based on the grounds that the client was so severely disabled she could not reasonably be expected to enter the work force. One of the eligibility criteria for any TRC client is that vocational rehabilitation services may reasonably be expected to benefit the person in terms of employability. The Commission's decision was later upheld in an administrative hearing. The lawsuit challenged the findings of that hearing.

Commenting on the favorable court decision, TRC Commissioner Max Arrell said the ruling came at a good time. "In these financially uncertain times, our counselors are faced with many difficult decisions in cases like this," Arrell said. "As much as we might like to, we cannot afford to provide services for anyone who is not likely to be able to work. Knowing that the court supported the Commission in this instance may give our counselors some confidence in handling these difficult situations."

FROM



## Former VR Counselors Learning New Skills

... by Bruce Rollman

Reduction in force (RIF) for agencies supported by public funds is an unfortunate fact of life that is occasionally mandated by budget cutbacks. TRC's Vocational Rehabilitation Division was no exception to this fact and recently underwent the trauma of a RIF. Some of the employees affected experienced a great deal of anxiety regarding their professional future. For six former VR counselors, however, the anxiety was abbreviated when they were selected to fill disability examiner vacancies in the Disability Determination Division.

Anna Crawford, Cristino Duran, Benny Garcia, Craig Harrell, James Shelby and Mary Zinni recently completed an extensive five week orientation course in disability determination.

Currently, they and five "auditors" from DDD's support service staff are participating in approximately 60 hours of in-depth medical training related to the 13 major body systems used in evaluating disability.

The former VR counselors are finding the transition to disability examiner easier than they might have expected. Familiarity with program and medical terms has given them a decided edge. Also, for many of the former counselors, being relocated in the Central Office is a chance to renew old acquaintances with TRC employees they once worked with in the field. The new disability examiners are enthusiastic about their new positions and looking forward to careers within DDD. Each is most appreciative of the consideration given them by TRC.



Six former vocational rehabilitation counselors have joined the ranks of the disability examiners. The counselors and their previous office assignments are (left to right): Mary Zinni, Career Development Center, Waco; James Shelby, Jr., San Antonio Central F.O.; Anna Crawford, Austin North F.O.; Cristino V. Duran, Harlingen F.O.; Benny Garcia, San Antonio East F.O.; and Craig Harrell, San Antonio North F.O. Pictured with the new disability examiners is Archie Malcolm, DDD Staff Development Director.

# From the Field

The folks in El Paso started off the month of March with a workshop for employers entitled "A Different Approach for Economic Gains." The private Industry Council funded the workshop which was jointly sponsored by PIC, TRC and the local subchapter of the Texas Rehabilitation Association. Peter Davids, IBM's Regional Personnel Director from Denver, Colorado, was the keynote speaker. Davids is well known for his efforts in hiring disabled persons.

Several agencies made presentations regarding their services, including the El Paso Center of the Deaf, State Commission for the Blind, El Paso Mental Health/Mental Retardation, TRC and IMPART. TRC Supervisor Bob Brown served as moderator of the day long session and program chairperson.

Three members of the Region III staff were the special guests at a recent luncheon hosted by the staffs of the Beaumont Calder and Beaumont Field Offices. The luncheon, held in conjunction with a Feasibility Training Workshop, was the Beaumont staff's way of saying, "We're happy to be in Region III and looking forward to working with our Regional Office staff in the future." The guests of honor were Training Officer Dwight Lindsley, Program Officer Les Doleshal and Administrative Officer Jim Wilson. The Beaumont/Port Arthur/Orange area became a part of Region III when Region VII was dismantled at the end of last year.

George Andreatos is in high spirits these days since the Harlingen Vocational Evaluation Center is still in operation. The recent reduction in funds forced TRC to withdraw funding for the center. However, the Tropical Texas Center, a Harlingen based Mental Health/Mental Retardation service agency, decided to sponsor and fund the program. TRC agreed to transfer the evaluation equipment needed to keep the program running. To get in touch with George, write: Harlingen Vocational Evaluation Center, 300 Camellia St., Harlingen, Texas 78550; or, call (512) 423-8094.

**United Way**  
OF METROPOLITAN DALLAS

# Merit Award

PRESENTED TO

*The Employees of  
Texas Rehabilitation Commission*

*for giving generously to  
make hope and help happen  
through the 1982 Campaign.*



  
Reece Overcash  
PRESIDENT



  
Richard M. Hart  
GENERAL CAMPAIGN CHAIRMAN

The United Way presented this merit award to TRC's Region VI for its outstanding participation in this year's fund drive. Region VI staff members increased their pledges over last year by 32 percent and donated 25 percent more money. Congratulations!

The Beaumont Calder Field Office staff is proud of their OP-1 Operator, Charlotte Hill, for her part in securing a special honor for a special lady. Charlotte nominated Sandy Bond Licht, a professional gospel singer/songwriter, for the "Community Handicapped Professional Woman of the Year" award. The Pilot Club of Beaumont, a charter club of Pilot International, selected Sandy for the award. Now, Sandy will compete for the District Award in April. Charlotte was an invited guest when the Beaumont City Council presented Sandy with a proclamation declaring Jan. 27, 1982, as "Sandy Bond Licht Day."



## Happy Easter



(Cont. from p. 1)

Texas, as you may recall, lost approximately \$6 million in social security rehabilitation funds when Congress more or less wiped out the program when establishing the federal budget for FY 1982. Pickle's amendment would reestablish the program with additional funding and fewer administrative constraints. Another provision of Section 17 would establish a new vocational rehabilitation program for social security beneficiaries whose payments are terminated due to their "medical recovery."

The Council of State Administrators for Vocational Rehabilitation testified on the bill before the Social Security Subcommittee late last month. The CSAVR supported most of the provisions of the bill, but recommended some technical changes to the wording. TRC Program Specialists Dan Eudy and Rick Phelan assisted in the preparation of the CSAVR testimony.

## Calendar of Events

April 1982

4-9	Management Training for Supervisors	Woodcreek Resort, Wimberley
18-22	Management Training For Supervisors	Woodcreek Resort, Wimberley
30-May 1	A Practical Approach to Head Injury	Dallas

## Farmworker Workshop Slated for May

Professionals who work with migrant workers will convene in McAllen in May for the National Rehabilitation Conference on Farmworkers in 1982. The three day conference, "Farmworker Outlook for the 80's," is sponsored by the Texas Rehabilitation Commission in cooperation with the Texas Commission for the Blind and the Governor's Office of Migrant Advocacy. Conference sessions will focus on modern day problems of

migrant workers and practical approaches to problem solving. The event is scheduled for May 11-13 at the Sheraton Fairway Resort Hotel. A number of human service agency directors, including TRC Commissioner Max Arrell, and other experts in migrant affairs have been invited to attend.

Conference coordinator Delvin E. Sparks says aside from the educational aspect of the conference, participants will gain from becoming acquainted with other people who work with migrants. This, he says, should help to reinforce the communication network in Texas and nearby states. For more information about the conference, contact Sparks at the Texas Rehabilitation Commission, 118 E. Riverside Dr., Austin, Texas 78704, (512) 445-8287.

## TRA Officers Slate Announced

The Texas Rehabilitation Association Nominating Committee has submitted its slate of officers for the coming year. Nominating Committee candidates are as follows:

**President Elect:** Richard Gruen, Randel Aaron.

**Vice President:** Bobby Simpson, Bob Marx.

**Secretary/Treasurer:** James Jones, Tricia Scott.

**Board Members at Large:** Dr. Tom Irons, John Heck, Ed White, Terry VanderMolen, Dr. Paul McCollum, Carolyn Hargrove.

To nominate other persons for the above positions, send their name with the signatures of 10 TRA members to Ray Vaughn, Chairman, TRA Nominating Committee, 118 E. Riverside Dr., Austin, Texas 78704.

In accordance with the TRA by-laws, nominations will not be accepted after April 24, 1982. The drawing for positions on the ballot will be held on April 30th at 8:30 a.m. in the Program and Facility Services Office, 118 E. Riverside Dr., Austin, Texas.

TRC News & Views is printed by the Texas Rehabilitation Commission for distribution to its employees and retirees throughout the state. Inquiries may be addressed to Kaye Beneke, Public Information Office, Texas Rehabilitation Commission, 118 E. Riverside Drive, Austin, TX. 78704; or telephone (512) 445-8745, (Tex-An) 887-8745.