

AB 1170 (Cooley)

Employment Ombudsman for Californians with Disabilities

Bill Summary

AB 1170 creates the position of California Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) Blueprint Ombudsman within the California State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) in order to increase employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual or development disabilities.

Problem

For people with disabilities, employment offers economic self-sufficiency, an opportunity to use their skills, and more active participation in community life.

Employing people with disabilities has been shown to benefit businesses as a result of lower turnover and access to a larger pool of skilled workers. In addition, increasing job opportunities for those with disabilities lowers dependency on state and federal medical and disability benefits.

Nonetheless, a striking employment gap persists between Americans with and without disabilities. People with disabilities make up nearly one-fifth of the nation's population, yet the most recent national disability employment statistics show that only 20 percent of people with disabilities are participating in the workforce, compared to nearly 70 percent of people without disabilities.

Moreover, studies have consistently shown that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who do have jobs are frequently paid at below minimum wage and often work only a minimum number of hours a week.

Solution

California must support policies which increase employment opportunities with competitive earnings and chances for advancement for people with disabilities. To this end, AB 1170 creates the position of CIE Ombudsman within the State Council on Developmental Disabilities to assist

Californians and serve a liaison between the public and relevant state departments. Acting as the key contact person, the ombudsman will be a resource regarding the rights and services available to Californians with disabilities.

Additionally, the Ombudsman will aid and advise the Departments of Education, Rehabilitation and Developmental Services as they create public information programs regarding disability services.

Background

The California Competitive Integrated Employment Blueprint for Change was written by representatives from the Department of Education, the Department of Rehabilitation and the Department of Developmental Services to expand "competitive integrated employment" opportunities for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities. The Ombudsman created in AB 1170 will be the point person in helping citizens and state departments navigate the complexities of this blueprint.

Competitive Integrated Employment is employment that offers competitive earnings, an integrated location, and opportunities for advancement.

Support

- State Council on Developmental Disabilities (Sponsor)

For More Information

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