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Dear Senator and Representative;

The role of the Florida Rehabilitation Council (FRC) is to review, analyze and advise the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to assist individuals with disabilities to achieve their career goals. We actively promote improvement and innovation for the program. The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 will require significant change in a number of areas including a greater emphasis on services for transition services for students with disabilities. DVR needs sufficient time to implement changes and establish performance measures which will be due in a new unified state plan with new and existing partners by March, 2016. This unified state plan will require federal approval.

The FRC 2013-2014 Annual Report showed a nearly 11% increase in the number of individuals who entered into gainful employment through the DVR program. This is a key measure for advancement of the agency mission. Although the average number of active customers served during the last state fiscal year decreased, this was directly related to lack of funding which necessitated the closing of categories under an order of selection and a waiting list for services from late 2013 through 2014. This is a context that must be understood in any analysis of performance measures. The year being scrutinized is a year unlike any in DVR history.

Following funding difficulties, the 2014 Florida Legislature approved an increase of state funding which allowed DVR to pull down the maximum available federal funds starting July 1, 2014. This action by the Florida Legislature was the first time in eight years that the state budgeted for DVR to pull down maximum federal dollars. This influx of new funding just became available on July 1, 2014 and is already showing positive results that will be documented in the next FRC annual report. It is imperative to note that for every dollar invested in rehabilitation customers, an estimated \$10.73 was returned to the economy.

The Florida Rehabilitation Council has provided DVR with consistent feedback and advocacy for quality rehabilitation services. We remain committed to this purpose and to have the Florida DVR program as one of the best in the nation. The Florida Rehabilitation Council will continue to encourage an innovative, fully funded and robust state agency to promote increased employment outcomes for individuals with diverse disabilities and we appreciate your support in this mission.

We have included our Annual Report and an information brief for your review and convenience.

Respectfully submitted,
The Florida Rehabilitation Council

Partnering to create opportunities to employ all people with disabilities in competitive jobs of their choice.
Affiliated with the Department of Education/Division of Vocational Rehabilitation