Overview of proposed changes to the Vocational Rehabilitation Act
As of 7/29/2013

Throughout: emphasis on *high expectations* and *competitive integrated employment* for individuals with disabilities, particularly for youth/students with significant disabilities.

Introductory section/definitions: new definitions for competitive integrated employment, supported employment, customized employment strategies, pre-employment transition services to reflect 21st Century workforce needs.

Title I: Vocational Rehabilitation:

Strengthen reporting requirements regarding individuals served and successes.

Extend supported employment availability to 24 months.

Increased opportunities for connection with other programs – educational (IDEA transition), home and community based waiver programs, assistive technology, ticket to work.

Presumption of benefit: individual applicants presumed to be able to benefit from an employment outcome from VR. VR responsible for exploring individual's capacity through trial work experiences, including supported employment, and to become employed in competitive integrated employment. Individualized determination of ineligibility, based on data, rather than on presumptions or stereotypes.

Pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities including school based preparatory experiences, job exploration counseling, work based learning experiences and counseling in opportunities in transition or postsecondary program at an institution of higher education. Local pre-employment transition coordinator in each local VR office and national coordinators at Dept. of Education and Dept. of Labor.

Set aside 15% of a state's vocational rehabilitation funds to serve young people with disabilities who are transitioning from school to the workforce.

Rename the Rehabilitation Services Administration the Disability Employment Services and Supports Administration (DESSA) and moves the new DESSA from the Department of Education to the Department of Labor, to better align the disability workforce development system with the broader workforce development system.

Title II: Research and Training

Improve the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research's (NIDRR's) dissemination requirements.

Align NIDRR's mission and role by renaming NIDRR the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) and moving NIDILRR to the Administration for Community Living at the US Department of Health and Human Services.

The Chair of the Interagency Committee on Disability Research is no longer the head of NIDILRR and instead will be the Secretary of Health and Human Services or her designee.

Title III: Special Projects, Technical Assistance, and Demonstrations

Authorizes national technical assistance to assist states with their transition efforts.

Title IV: National Council on Disability

Reduce size of NCD from 15 members to 9 members, which will save approximately $60,000 per year and enable NCD to allocate more resources to its research and policy mission.

Title V: Rights and Advocacy

Encouraging competitive integrated employment for young people with disabilities.

Title VI: Employment Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities

Divided program for supported employment in order to prioritize serving youth with the most significant disabilities.

Title VII: Independent Living

Increased focus on enhancing statewide reach, unserved, and underserved populations.

Moving the Independent Living program out of RSA and into the Administration for Community Living at HHS, and improving oversight and accountability requirements for Centers for Independent Living and Statewide Independent Living Councils.

Title VIII: Miscellaneous

Authorizes the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) at the US Department of Labor and renames ODEP the Office of Disability Employment Policy, Services, and Supports.

Public education campaign on employment of individuals with disabilities, tax credits.