REPORT
of the
SPECIAL COMMISSION
Relative to
THE NEEDS OF CERTAIN HANDICAPPED
PERSONS IN THE AREA OF
TRANSPORTATION, EDUCATION AND
TRAINING AND RELATED MATTERS

(under Chapter 86 of the
Resolves of 1972 and
most recently revived and continued by
Chapter 1 of the Resolves of 1976)

August 5, 1976.
INTERIM REPORT

of the

SPECIAL COMMISSION ON THE HANDICAPPED

Recommendation to raise the salary of
the Commissioner of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

July 1976.
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Seventy-Two.

RESOLVE CREATING COMMISSION

Chapter 86

Resolved, That a special commission, to consist of two members of the senate, three members of the house of representatives, and two persons to be appointed by the governor, is hereby established for the purpose of making an investigation and study relative to the needs of the physically handicapped in the area of transportation, education on the secondary and college level, employment and rehabilitation. Said commission shall, in the course of its investigation and study, consider the occupational and physical therapy needs in the rehabilitation field and the number of opportunities available to meet these needs in proportion to the total number of physically handicapped citizens in the commonwealth and evaluate the adequacy of the occupational training programs for physically and mentally handicapped persons in state institutions. Said commission shall also study the subject matter of current senate document numbered 836, authorizing the Massachusetts rehabilitation commission to provide for the furnishing of extended sheltered employment to certain physically or mentally handicapped persons.

Approved July 9, 1972
MEMBERSHIP

Appointed by the President of the Senate:
Sen. JOHN W. BULLOCK, of Arlington (Chairman)
Sen. ROBERT HALL, of Lunenburg

Appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives:
Rep. FRANCIS C. LAPOINTE, of Chicopee (Chairman)
Rep. RICHARD E. KENDALL, of Falmouth
Rep. GEORGE C. YOUNG, of Scituate

Appointed by the Governor:
Ms. MAUREEN WINN, of Winchester
Ms. ROSEMARY BARSZCZ, of Ludlow

Staff:
Ms. Judith Oppenheim, Director
Mr. Alan Patashnick, Research Assistant
The Special Commission on the Handicapped was created by Chapter 86 of the Acts of 1972 to provide an investigation and study relative to the needs of certain handicapped persons in the area of transportation, education and training and related matters. At the same time, it was resolved that this Commission would study and investigate needs of the physically handicapped in the fields of employment and rehabilitation. “Said Commission shall, in the course of its investigation and study, consider the occupational and physical therapy needs in the rehabilitation field and the number of opportunities available to meet these needs in proportion to the total number of physically handicapped citizens in the Commonwealth and evaluate the adequacy of the occupational training programs for physically and mentally handicapped persons in state institutions.”

During the continued course of its existence, the Commission has focused on several primary goals:

1. To facilitate the implementation of the Architectural Barriers Bill and to oversee the renovations to the State House and other state-owned buildings which will render them accessible to the physically handicapped;

2. To break down the attitudinal barriers which bar the handicapped from engaging in meaningful activity necessary for the maintenance of self-sufficiency and living a life of dignity within the mainstream of American life;

3. To ensure that the handicapped may fully enjoy the rights which have been granted them by the Legislature, and to assure that action be taken when these rights are abused;
4. To improve and expand the delivery of client services and benefits by the various agencies within state government to those residents of the Commonwealth with special needs.

In its efforts to fulfill its mandate and perform its functions as outlined above, the Special Commission on the Handicapped feels that it must rely on the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission to perform many of the functions vitally important to physically handicapped persons. It is the consensus of this Commission that, in order to attract an individual possessing the skills and managerial ability necessary to direct an agency of the size and scope of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC), the salary of the Commissioner must be raised from its present level to $30,000.

Respectfully submitted,

Senator John W. Bullock
Representative Francis C. Lapointe
Representative Richard E. Kendall
Representative George C. Young
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INTERIM REPORT

An Act to Raise the Salary of the Commissioner of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

EXHIBIT A

Findings of the Special Commission on the Handicapped to support the above resolution
The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission is one of the largest agencies serving the handicapped in the state government system, with an operating staff of over 1,000 people and a budget in excess of $27,000,000. In recent years the expansion of the agency’s staff, its budget, the magnitude and complexity of federal requirements and programs, and the expenditures related to grant programs have all greatly increased the administrative demands of the position. A salary for the Commissioner of this agency must be commensurate with the demands of the position.

Since the Commission’s components include (1) vocational rehabilitation programs, (2) extended employments programs, (3) Office of Deafness, and (4) disability determination services, the Commissioner must secure and manage federal and state resources essential to meet the needs of the state’s handicapped citizens.

Over the past several years the scope and responsibility of the position has grown tremendously. The Commissioner is responsible for the overall administration of federally financed services and assistance programs. A big effort is required to maintain records and prepare reports required by the various agencies of the federal government, and it is the Commissioner’s responsibility to see that all the demands and requirements of the federal government are met.

The Commissioner is also charged with heavy administrative responsibilities: to analyze and prioritize needs, translate them into budget requests, to defend and sustain the requests; and, once the requests are approved, to translate the budget into efficient and effective programs, the results of which must be fully documented for the appropriate federal and state agencies.

The Commissioner must also respond to and serve as the intermediary between handicapped persons and their representatives, workshops and other service providers, private and other state agencies serving handicapped persons, the Executive branch, the Legislature, and a variety of federal government agencies.

The Commissioner must also exhibit political skills to deal with federal and state agencies; he must demonstrate high administrative and leadership abilities to provide a mission and purpose to the staff; he must have bureaucratic skills to effectively manage the agency; and he must possess fiscal skills to manage federal and state monies and to report on and analyze programs when required to do so.

To attract a competent and talented individual possessing the above skills, a salary worthy of the position must be established.
There are several other factors directly related to the current salary level which bear mentioning here:

1. There are a number of Commissioners and other agency heads within the state government who earn higher salaries than the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commissioner, even though they direct smaller agencies. Within the Secretariat of Human Services, for example, both the Commissioner of Youth Services (salary: $26,935) and the Director of the Office for Children (salary: $28,000) earn substantially more — despite the fact that, added together, the budgets and staffs of their agencies are smaller than those of the Rehabilitation Commission.

2. Compared with the salaries paid to his counterparts in other states, the salary of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commissioner ranks 46th. Yet the cost of living in Boston is among the highest in the country.

3. There are currently four employees of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission who earn salaries higher than the Commissioner's. This is not only an awkward situation, but if any one of the four earned promotion to Commissioner, he or she would have to take a salary cut.
AN ACT RELATIVE TO THE SALARY OF THE COMMISSIONER OF REHABILITATION.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1. The second sentence of section 75 of Chapter 6 of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking out the words "twenty-three thousand eight hundred and sixty", inserted by Section 7 of Chapter 422 of the acts of 1974, and inserting in place thereof the following: "thirty thousand."