

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
BEFORE THE
TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION
AUSTIN, TEXAS

PUBLIC MEETING)
FOR THE TEXAS)
WORKFORCE COMMISSION)

COMMISSION MEETING

THURSDAY, AUGUST 9, 2007

BE IT REMEMBERED THAT at approximately
9:00 a.m., Thursday, the 9th day of August, 2007, the
above-entitled matters came on for hearing at the
Texas Workforce Commission, TWC Building, 101 East
15th Street, Room 244, Austin, Texas, before DIANE
RATH, RON LEHMAN and RONALD G. CONGLETON,
COMMISSIONERS, and LARRY TEMPLE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
of the Texas Workforce Commission; and the following
proceedings were reported by Janis Simon, a Certified
Shorthand Reporter of:

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P R O C E E D I N G S

THURSDAY, AUGUST 9, 2007

(9:00 a.m.)

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1

CHAIR RATH: Okay. We'll go ahead and come to order, and I think we have some Tax cases first.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2

Discussion, Consideration and Possible Action Regarding Whether to Assume Continuing Jurisdiction on Unemployment Compensation Cases, Wage Claim Cases, and/or Tax Liability Cases and Reconsideration of Unemployment Compensation Cases, Wage Claim Cases, and/or Tax Liability Cases, if Any
No discussion.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3

Discussion, Consideration and Possible Action Regarding Tax Liability Cases Listed on the Texas Workforce Commission Docket 31

The Commission considered and took action on all tax liability cases listed on Docket 31.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4

Discussion, Consideration and Possible Action Regarding Higher Level Appeals in Wage Claim Cases Listed on the Texas Workforce Commission Dockets

1 31 and 32

2 The Commission considered and took action on
3 all Wage Claim Cases listed on Dockets 31 and 32.

4 AGENDA ITEM NO. 5

5 Discussion, Consideration and Possible
6 Action Regarding Higher Level Appeals in Unemployment
7 Compensation Cases Listed on the Texas Workforce
8 Commission Dockets 31 and 32

9 The Commission considered and took
10 action on all Unemployment Compensation Cases listed
11 on Dockets 31 and 32.

12 (The Commission paused and continued
13 with the remainder of the agenda.)

14 CHAIR RATH: Okay. We'll go ahead and
15 come to order, again, and resume the rest of our
16 agenda.

17 AGENDA ITEM NO. 6

18 CHAIR RATH: Is there anyone signed up
19 for public comment?

20 MS. PARKER: No, ma'am.

21 CHAIR RATH: Thank you.

22 AGENDA ITEM NO. 7

23 CHAIR RATH: And, Mr. Leonard, Child
24 Care Performance Targets, please.

25 MR. LEONARD: Good morning. For the

1 record, Adam Leonard, Performance, Analysis and
2 Reporting. Today I'm bringing to you staff
3 recommendations for a methodology -- for the
4 methodology to be used to establish Child Care targets
5 for Board Contract Year '08.

6 You will remember that at the end of
7 June we brought to you an initial proposal for a new
8 methodology to be used for the coming year. And then
9 we went out and sought board input, which we got via
10 some conference calls and also via e-mail. And they
11 gave us some, actually, very important input that
12 caused us to make a few revisions to the initial
13 proposal that we brought to you in June, and so today
14 this is the -- would be the revised proposal that
15 includes their input, as well as some consideration
16 around Rider 19.111 from the most recent legislative
17 session.

18 I just wanted to emphasize, for those
19 listening, that today what we're asking you to do is
20 approve the methodology, not the specific targets that
21 are within the example in the spreadsheet because, of
22 course, right now these are planning estimates that we
23 used in the examples here. And so at the point that
24 you were to approve the allocations for the boards,
25 then those would be what's -- what are used for the

1 targets. And assuming that the planning estimates and
2 the final allocations end up being the same, then we
3 would expect, of course, the targets would look like
4 what you're seeing today. But this wasn't requesting
5 approval for the targets themselves at this time.

6 In terms of the input that we got, the
7 two major things that we realized, based on their
8 input, that we didn't really consider was, first,
9 recent rate actions by the boards. As you know, in
10 the last year, boards were given a lot more
11 flexibility to set their rates and many of them did so
12 but did so late enough in the year that, when we were
13 looking at a full year of billing data, the new
14 billings that might have been taking advantage of
15 those higher rates were not fully represented.

16 And the second issue had to do with
17 looking at copayments, because what drove the look in
18 this, in terms of trying to look at board
19 reimbursements to providers and to see whether or not
20 we're meeting or -- or how close we are to market
21 rates, we needed to look at the full reimbursement the
22 providers were receiving, not just the amounts that
23 the agency or -- and the boards were paying.

24 So, in this model, we've gone ahead and
25 taken some -- made some changes to address the recent

1 rate actions by the boards, to look at the copays in
2 our analysis and also, again, to look at 19.111. And
3 so I thought I would just walk through briefly the
4 methodology -- oh, I've briefed you this before; the
5 boards have heard this in conference calls -- but just
6 to hit the highlights again.

7 Starting on Page 2 of your handout, the
8 most -- the -- the first step is really trying to
9 predict an '08 baseline set of rates, if you will.
10 That is to say, assuming boards took no further action
11 from this point forward how much would their
12 reimbursement rates be at this point, to make sure
13 that they would be able to afford -- the targets would
14 not be so great that they wouldn't be able to afford
15 to pay the rates that they've already approved in the
16 last year.

17 And so the way that we did that was we
18 started by establishing an '07 baseline, which was
19 kind of the prerate action from last year. So, the --
20 the rates at the very beginning of the year. And the
21 way we did that was we looked at rates for each of the
22 various categories of care, meaning the -- the -- the
23 type of the center or the provider, the duration of
24 the care, full-day/half-day, the age of the child.

25 And we looked at that in September of

1 max rates were, the rates after the boards had taken
2 their actions last year, and assumed that there would
3 be a similar relationship between the actual rate in
4 '08 and the actual maximum in '08 and that that
5 relationship would be the same as what we saw in the
6 '07 max and the '07 actuals. So, that set an '07 --
7 or an '08 baseline that we used to make sure, again,
8 that we had taken into account all those rate actions
9 that the boards had taken last year.

10 The next thing we did was we determined
11 how much money should be considered available for
12 direct care cost, the money that goes out of pocket
13 from the agency or the system into rates or
14 reimbursements to the providers. And the first step
15 there -- and this is another change -- is we looked
16 at -- we removed, I should say, \$9 million associated
17 with Rider 19.111, and we did that proportionately so
18 that if a board had 10 percent of the total
19 allocation, then they would have 10 percent of the \$9
20 million removed.

21 And so that was really just kind of set
22 aside, if you will, for later in the process to be
23 used specifically for rate actions. We wanted to be
24 able to show that the \$9 million that was anticipated
25 by the rider for rate actions was not being allocated

1 in any way to targets. It was being used exclusively
2 for that purpose.

3 From there then we get back to something
4 that's a little more similar to the initial
5 methodology I proposed to you several weeks ago or, I
6 guess, at the end of June, and that was looking at
7 using the '06 admin and ops percentages by the boards
8 with the exception of about five boards that had
9 particularly low admin and ops percentages and we gave
10 them a little bit of room to increase. But these are
11 the exact same percentages we used in the first
12 revision or -- or addition of the methodology, and --
13 so we subtracted the admin and ops from the remainder
14 of the funds available for direct care and determined
15 how much money actually was available for direct care.

16 So, in other words, we take the
17 allocation eventually. Now, it's a planning estimate.
18 We subtract the -- the share of the \$9 million.

19 We subtract a share for admin and ops
20 that is based on the '06 number of admin/ops, and then
21 the amount left over is the amount that's available
22 for direct care. So, that's what we're -- kind of
23 our -- in our zero sum game of figuring out how much
24 child care we can afford to buy, that's one of our
25 constraints, is how much is left over for direct care.

1 Now, of course, as you know, to the
2 degree that boards are able to find opportunities to
3 improve their efficiency in admin and ops, that would
4 free up additional funds that could be used for direct
5 care, either buying more care or increasing rates
6 further or at all for some of the boards, since not
7 every board did take rate actions in '07.

8 Let's pause for a moment there and see
9 if you had any questions on those first two steps.
10 Like I said, I briefed before. I want to make sure
11 that I wasn't skipping anything.

12 (No response)

13 MR. LEONARD: Okay. Then, the final
14 major step is to set the board targets to aggregate up
15 to roughly the LBB combined target of 116,465, and the
16 way that we did this is we essentially back into the
17 numbers using the amount of money that each board has
18 available, the total 116,4 as the goal we're trying to
19 get to and then adjusting some of the reimbursements
20 to the boards to allow those boards who had not
21 already taken rate actions to take some kind of
22 action.

23 And so what happened here is the amount
24 that was used in this exercise was the greater of one
25 of three values, either their '08 baseline, which was

1 used in -- generally in the case that a board did not
2 take action in '07. They -- 2 percent above what
3 their '08 baseline was, because they hadn't taken any
4 kind of action, and apparently 2 percent is about the
5 number you back into that gets us to 116,4, or 73 and
6 a half percent of the mean market rate.

7 Now, there were several boards that we
8 used that for. Now, you may remember in the initial
9 proposal we did something like that. We wanted to
10 make sure that every board had the opportunity to
11 raise their rates at least a certain amount and that
12 some boards got to raise it a little more than others,
13 the ones who were furthest from the mean market rate.

14 So, this approach mirrors that basic
15 concept. It just takes into account the actions the
16 occurred in this year, instead of just the actions
17 that would occur in the future, because we hadn't
18 accounted for the fact that they had already taken so
19 many actions this year when we did the first draft.

20 Finally, the fourth step is really more
21 of an -- really more of a demonstration exercise,
22 where we look to see what the impact of the \$9 million
23 would be in -- in terms of reimbursements. And, of
24 course, as you know, boards are going to have some
25 flexibility as to how they do that. They may choose

1 you may have about the methodology. And if you have
2 none, then we would ask for approval of the
3 methodology at this time, and we'll come back to you
4 in the next week or so with actual specific target
5 recommendations when allocations come forward.

6 CHAIR RATH: Thank you. Adam, I really
7 want to thank both you and everyone at Workforce,
8 Reagan, I mean, everyone that worked on this, because
9 it was very complex. Y'all worked extraordinarily
10 hard and went through all sorts of reiterations to
11 come up with this.

12 And I think it is -- is very important
13 that we had significant input from the boards, and
14 y'all have truly responded with this proposal. I
15 mean, I think it does reflect all of the concerns,
16 comments and input that was received. So, I'm -- I'm
17 very pleased with that.

18 And, also, I know how hard that y'all
19 are working to give the boards the flexibility they
20 need and, yet, respond to all the issues that we have
21 had brought before us. And I have to say I continue
22 to be appalled that, you know, we have some areas that
23 are spending 26 percent on Child Care admin and ops.
24 I think that's just unconscionable.

25 And, clearly, it's able to be driven

1 down, because many boards are -- are able to drive
2 that down through really hard core negotiations or
3 finding that the RFPs they get aren't acceptable and
4 reprocurring. So, I think that is isn't just an
5 automatic blessing and rubberstamping, that sometimes
6 perhaps the management of that Child Care contract
7 needs to be with a concern to -- to exactly what it is
8 costing.

9 So, I think that you've arranged for
10 a -- a method that clearly indicates our focus on
11 driving down and the necessity of driving down
12 because, clearly, I don't think any one of us wants to
13 have to sit and answer to the Legislature for those
14 kinds of overhead expenses. And I think the
15 Legislature would be very direct in their response to
16 what that means.

17 So, I -- I do appreciate that. I think
18 we have worked really hard the past year to come up
19 with initiatives that will assist in driving that cost
20 down. I think when we look at the child validation
21 and the automated payments, hopefully, by next year
22 we'll be able to implement that. And that, I think,
23 will have a profound affect on it, and I'm really
24 excited about that.

25 But, meanwhile, we all have an

1 obligation to be wise stewards and -- and be very,
2 very sensitive to what we're doing and -- and making
3 sure we have a system that's available for the workers
4 of this state. So, I'm -- I really commend everyone
5 that worked on this and -- and look forward to seeing
6 it put in operation this year.

7 Any other questions?

8 COMM. CONGLETON: I agree totally with
9 you, especially on the admin part of it, and look
10 forward to seeing what this can do. So, I have no
11 further questions.

12 COMM. LEHMAN: And I appreciate it, too.
13 I'll echo -- I'll echo the Chair's and my
14 colleague's -- both Commissioners' comments about the
15 hard work that you and your staff did. This program
16 is much -- well, it's very complex. Let me just put
17 it that way, and the amount of gyration and
18 variability in the numbers you could come back with
19 are -- is substantial.

20 So, I am very comfortable because of the
21 number of briefings we've had and the number of
22 discussions we've had about where your methodology is
23 taking us. I'm pleased that the providers have the
24 opportunity to earn additional revenues with informed
25 board actions where appropriate. I'm interested in a

1 couple of things that -- that I'll watch for the
2 future; and that is, there are several boards that I
3 think have managed their cost very, very well --

4 CHAIR RATH: Uh-huh.

5 COMM. LEHMAN: -- and I want to commend
6 them. And as a result, they have significant
7 opportunities to raise rates now. But I suspect
8 they're going to continue to manage that program well
9 and be equitable and fair across the -- across the
10 system, either to putting more kids in care, to
11 adjusting rates where appropriate and to cutting their
12 administrative costs even further.

13 So, I'm going to kind of watch that for
14 the future. I do agree with my colleagues that
15 cutting or reducing or optimizing administrative cost
16 is a critical focus for the future on this, and so I
17 think we're all going to be interested in watching and
18 seeing how that works. But, otherwise, I'm very
19 comfortable with what you've got, and -- and I
20 appreciate all the hard work.

21 CHAIR RATH: Then, if there's no
22 disagreement, I think we have a consensus to approve
23 this methodology.

24 MR. LEONARD: Thank you. And -- and I
25 do want to thank the folks in Workforce and in my

1 staff and also the boards who really spent a lot of
2 time looking at this and providing us feedback. I
3 think that the product reflects all of their input.
4 Thank you.

5 CHAIR RATH: Very good. Thank you.

6 AGENDA ITEM NO. 8

7 CHAIR RATH: Okay. Next, Trust Fund
8 Projection, Mr. Townsend.

9 MR. TOWNSEND: Good morning,
10 Commissioners. For the record, my name is Randy
11 Townsend, Chief Financial Officer, presenting the
12 Trust Fund -- Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund
13 projection for October 1st, 2007. This has been
14 prepared with information as of August 1st.

15 As of August 1st, we're estimating the
16 Trust Fund balance will be 2 billion 106 million on
17 October 1st. That would be 1 billion 234 million
18 above the floor. It would also be 363 million above
19 the ceiling on that date.

20 I -- I think I probably need to point
21 out to you from the last projection this represents an
22 increase of about 75 million higher above the ceiling
23 we had presented last time. There's really two main
24 changes that occurred from our last projection.

25 The first is our estimate for the

1 observations I typically share with you each month on
2 this. For the -- for the net benefits paid for the
3 last six completed weeks -- and that was ending July
4 21st, we had -- of 2007, we had averaged 21.9 million
5 per week. That was down slightly, about .4 percent,
6 from one-year-ago six-week average for net benefits
7 paid of 22 million.

8 Finally, on the initial claims, we
9 averaged 11,987 for the six weeks ending July 21st.
10 That was about 4.3, 4.4 percent below the one-year-ago
11 six-week average of 12,535 for initial claims.

12 And that concludes my presentation, if
13 you have questions or comments.

14 CHAIR RATH: Good.

15 Any questions for Mr. Townsend?

16 COMM. LEHMAN: No. Thank you for the
17 clarification.

18 COMM. CONGLETON: I have no questions.

19 MR. TOWNSEND: All right. Thank you.

20 CHAIR RATH: Just continuing good news.

21 So, thank you very much.

22 AGENDA ITEM NOS. 9 & 10

23 CHAIR RATH: Okay. We will now take --
24 and probably 9 and 10 can be discussed together, both
25 the deobligation and reallocation of Workforce funds,

1 Ms. Miller.

2 MS. MILLER: Good morning, Chair Rath,
3 Commissioners. I'm Reagan Miller with Workforce
4 Development. This morning we have recommendations for
5 your consideration on deobligations and reallocations.

6 This is the eighth month for all of the
7 programs, obviously with the exception of WIA formula.
8 So, this will be our final set of recommendations this
9 fiscal year for these contracted funds.

10 We do have some recommendations for you
11 for deobligations. We are recommending three -- three
12 deobligations for Choice and two deobligations for
13 FSE&T.

14 For Choices our recommendations are
15 \$388,399 from North Central, \$80,000 from North East
16 and \$63,443 from Rural Capital. For FSE&T our
17 recommendations are 109,611 from North Central and
18 35,580 from Rural Capital.

19 I'll talk about reallocations a little
20 bit. We aren't recommending any reallocations for
21 Choices at this time. We'd like to put those into the
22 state balance and consider some initiatives with those
23 next year.

24 But for FSE&T we are recommending
25 reallocating these funds that we're recommending to be

1 deobligated. I do want to note that we had more
2 recommendations than we had money for FSE&T. So,
3 we're basing our recommendations to you on the
4 following criteria:

5 The first thing that we did is we looked
6 at the number of customers served that each board had,
7 and we looked at boards that are exceeding a hundred
8 percent of where they were in Fiscal Year '06. And we
9 did this, because we believe this is a representation
10 of an increased level of service delivery that we
11 could use as a -- as a basis or a justification for
12 the request for additional funds.

13 And then we looked at what percent of
14 the current funds they've expended, and we're
15 recommending that boards that are above a 70 percent
16 threshold be funded at a hundred percent of their
17 request. We're recommending that boards that came in
18 with a request for a de minimis amount under 15,000 be
19 fully funded. And, finally, for the boards that were
20 below 70 percent, we recommend proportionately
21 redistributing the remaining funds based upon what
22 they would normally get through an allocation process.

23 This results in the following
24 reallocation recommendations for FSE&T: 40,000 for
25 Upper Rio, 29,000 for Concho Valley, 8,000 for Deep

1 East Texas, 48,135 for South East Texas and \$20,056
2 for Coastal Bend.

3 And I'd be happy to answer any questions
4 that you have.

5 CHAIR RATH: I appreciate the work, and
6 I think it's -- it's good to see a wider variety of
7 boards who are interested in additional Food Stamps,
8 because we have not seen that. And we've -- and I
9 think that it really does show the understanding of
10 how to invest, utilize and leverage those funds if we
11 go back four and five years and see how so many boards
12 didn't use it. And now they are not only using it,
13 they're -- can use more.

14 So, I think y'all have done a great job
15 with that.

16 COMM. LEHMAN: I have no questions.

17 COMM. CONGLETON: I have no questions.

18 CHAIR RATH: Is there a motion regarding
19 the deobligation and the reallocation?

20 COMM. LEHMAN: Move we accept staff
21 recommendations on both the deobs and the reobs.

22 COMM. CONGLETON: And I'll second that
23 motion.

24 CHAIR RATH: And I agree. Therefore, we
25 are deobligating \$531,842 for Choices and \$145,191 for

1 Food Stamps and reallocating the 145,191 for Food
2 Stamps as discussed.

3 MS. MILLER: Thank you, Commissioners.

4 CHAIR RATH: Thank you very much.

5 AGENDA ITEM NO. 11

6 CHAIR RATH: Okay. We don't have
7 anything on planning estimates and allocations today.

8 AGENDA ITEM NO. 12

9 CHAIR RATH: That brings us to Workforce
10 Board Nominees, and we have before us nominees from
11 Middle Rio, Permian Basin, Tarrant County and Brazos
12 Valley. Are there any motions, or is there a -- any
13 questions, or is there a motion?

14 COMM. CONGLETON: I have no questions.

15 COMM. LEHMAN: I'll enter a motion to
16 approve the nominees.

17 COMM. CONGLETON: And I'll second that
18 motion.

19 CHAIR RATH: And I agree.

20 I have to say there's a couple of
21 really -- Permian Basin has a new member that just has
22 an outstanding background, when we look at that
23 individual.

24 I would like to remind Middle Rio they
25 continue to need women and would like to welcome back

1 Elaine Klos at Tarrant County. She is such a -- a
2 wonderful individual with such a breadth of knowledge
3 that I'm grateful she's agreed to continue working
4 with us and serving her community.

5 So, all of the -- the nominees as
6 presented are approved.

7 AGENDA ITEM NO. 13

8 CHAIR RATH: And we don't have anything
9 on federal or state issues today.

10 AGENDA ITEM NO. 14

11 CHAIR RATH: And that brings us to
12 Mr. Temple.

13 MR. TEMPLE: Commissioners, we have one
14 staff report. John Fuller is going to give you an
15 update on a notice we got from DOL about some
16 availability of additional funds.

17 MR. FULLER: Good morning, Chair Rath,
18 Commissioner Lehman, Commissioner Congleton.

19 Is the mike on?

20 My name is John Fuller with the
21 Workforce Development Division, and thank you for the
22 opportunity to talk to you about the Texas Disability
23 Navigator Program -- okay. Thank you.

24 In June 2006 Texas received a two-year
25 federal grant effective July 1, 2006 through June

1 30th, 2008 to become part of an ongoing disability
2 program navigator initiative, a demonstration project
3 of the U.S. Department of Labor and the Social
4 Security Administration. 14 boards joined TWC to
5 implement this Texas Disability Navigator Program. We
6 received about \$1.5 million, and we requested boards'
7 input as to who would want to participate.

8 And of those 28 boards, 14 responded.
9 And so we have funded those 14 areas to move forward
10 in this initiative.

11 As I said, eight boards posted and hired
12 disability navigators directly. Six of those 14
13 contracted with center contractor or operators for the
14 navigator position to be able to institute that
15 program in their particular areas.

16 Our overall goals are to increase access
17 to workforce services and increase employment
18 opportunities for people with disabilities. The
19 navigators focus their activities in -- in three basic
20 areas:

21 One, building workforce capacity; that
22 is, to increase staff and partner knowledge and
23 confidence to more affectively serve people with
24 disabilities; two, strengthening collaborative
25 relationships within their communities to expand the

1 reach of workforce services and -- and facilitate
2 seamless service delivery; and, three, increasing the
3 employer business awareness of workforce services,
4 accommodations and available resources.

5 Throughout the implementation of an
6 initiative operation TWC continues to stress the
7 importance of sustainability efforts, because it's
8 very important that we not only start this effort and
9 get it -- get the people involved in building
10 collaborations and awareness around serving people
11 with disabilities, but that we find ways to sustain
12 this particular effort once it's out there. One of
13 the things we want to talk about is that DOL has --
14 has been very complimentary of Texas as far as
15 implementation and has recognized the early and
16 significant activities of Texas Disability Navigators.

17 One of the things about this program,
18 it's really a staff-intensive program, because what
19 these dollars do, it funds positions for these
20 navigators in the board areas to go out and do
21 training, awareness, build collaboratives within the
22 communities. And, in some cases, it took a while to
23 kind of get this off the ground for people to actually
24 get hired and get rolling.

25 While we thought we were really running

1 behind, when we look at in comparison to other states
2 and who have been involved in this particular
3 activity, we seem to be way ahead of what they've
4 done. And so DOL was very appreciative of what Texas
5 is doing and how fast they're able to implement this
6 particular program and get it going.

7 They also -- they also wanted to let us
8 know that they -- they were looking at some additional
9 dollars, and if we needed some additional dollars,
10 they would be interested in helping us to -- to fund
11 some things. What we are looking at really is that
12 right now the TWC board contracts really in three
13 months before the grant period ends -- that's to allow
14 Finance to do closeouts and those kind of things --
15 and DOL has indicated they will have some additional
16 funds coming for 2008, June 1 of 2008.

17 So, what happens is that it creates a
18 gap, and we are fearful that the people who are
19 occupied in these particular positions right now may
20 begin to leave, and we'll lose any momentum that we
21 have built up. And so DOL has said that, if we can
22 submit a request for funds, that they will be willing
23 to fund that gap period.

24 And what we are also going to do is
25 request from DOL an extension of about three months on

1 the grant period so that could move us to the end of
2 June on a TWC contract. We could also extend a TWC
3 contract, which would allow them to work right through
4 the period through June 30th and then be available
5 when the new funds come in for the new grant period.

6 And so what we are planning to do is
7 request an extension of three months, as well as to
8 request additional funds to fund that gap period.
9 We're working with Finance, and they're going to gen
10 up the numbers to indicate what it would probably take
11 to fund that three-year -- that three-month period.
12 And DOL has indicated that if we can e-mail them some
13 information and the request by the 10th, which is
14 tomorrow, really, then they would be willing to
15 consider that and -- and respond to that.

16 I just wanted to make that information
17 available to you, and I'll be glad to answer any
18 questions you may have.

19 CHAIR RATH: I -- I think -- I think
20 it's been a great program, and -- and it is
21 interesting that where we thought we were a little
22 slow that it really is moving forward very
23 positively --

24 MR. FULLER: Right.

25 CHAIR RATH: -- compared to some of our

1 sister states. And I'd be very much in favor of
2 drawing down extra dollars, and I think it's important
3 that this is a -- a tool that lets us really expand
4 our ability to serve anyone that walks in the door.

5 And I think that's something we always
6 have taken pride in, that we -- we serve a universal
7 population. And what we have heard consistently from
8 the advocates for the disabled community is their
9 support for that approach. And I think when we see
10 employers looking for a qualified worker, regardless
11 of -- or not having a label come on, that this is just
12 one more category of potential workers that are
13 becoming increasingly valuable in the competitive
14 world today.

15 And I think it does give us an
16 opportunity to better serve employers and, clearly, to
17 meet needs of a -- a very underserved population. And
18 I think the advocates have historically been very
19 supportive of being served by this community.

20 MR. FULLER: Just one thing. I would be
21 remiss if I didn't mention Janice Ferguson, who really
22 functions as our state lead for the Disability
23 Initiative, who has really done a -- a great job and
24 has really put her heart into making this initiative
25 successful.

1 CHAIR RATH: Thank you.

2 COMM. LEHMAN: Are the -- the boards
3 around the Dallas area engaged in this, any of them,
4 I don't recall, the -- of the 14?

5 MR. FULLER: Oh, I do have --

6 COMM. LEHMAN: I'm thinking of North
7 Central, Tarrant or Dallas.

8 MR. FULLER: Well, Dallas County is
9 involved in it. North Central does also have a
10 navigator in their area. Tarrant County as well. So,
11 all three of the -- the boards in the Metroplex are
12 engaged in this particular activity.

13 COMM. LEHMAN: I have a request from an
14 employer right now who is looking specifically to hire
15 people like this, and I need to put you in touch -- or
16 put your staff in touch with them.

17 MR. FULLER: Okay.

18 COMM. LEHMAN: I'll -- I'll do that.

19 But, yeah, I agree. I think the record
20 shows that employers appreciate people that have
21 unique challenges and disabilities because, often
22 times, those can be accommodated in the workplace for
23 superior results to what people would expect. So --

24 COMM. CONGLETON: Well, I appreciate our
25 efforts to do this for the -- the disabled. I

1 appreciate the employers who do hire those folks and
2 put them to work and -- and you, John, and the lady
3 you mentioned for her great work. So, I appreciate
4 all those facts.

5 MR. FULLER: Thank y'all.

6 CHAIR RATH: Okay.

7 MR. FULLER: Thank you very much.

8 CHAIR RATH: So, I think you hear
9 support for moving forward.

10 MR. FULLER: Thank you, Commissioners.

11 CHAIR RATH: Great.

12 Anything else?

13 MR. TEMPLE: Nothing else,
14 Commissioners.

15 CHAIR RATH: Very good.

16 Commissioner, do you have anything?

17 COMM. LEHMAN: (Shaking head)

18 CHAIR RATH: Commissioner?

19 COMM. CONGLETON: No, I have nothing --

20 COMM. LEHMAN: I would like to -- well,
21 I would -- I would thank all of -- thank you two and
22 the organization for rescheduling this meeting to
23 accommodate my vacation schedule.

24 (Laughter)

25 COMM. CONGLETON: I didn't know we did

1 it for that reason.

2 (Laughter)

3 COMM. CONGLETON: I would have opposed
4 that --

5 COMM. LEHMAN: In that case, I
6 rescind -- in that case, I rescind my thanks to you.

7 (Laughter)

8 CHAIR RATH: Very good.

9 AGENDA ITEM NO. 17

10 CHAIR RATH: If there's nothing else to
11 come before us, it's 10:14, and we're adjourned.

12 (Meeting adjourned: 10:14 a.m.)

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1 C E R T I F I C A T E

2 STATE OF TEXAS)
3 COUNTY OF TRAVIS)

4

5 I, JANIS SIMON, a Certified Shorthand
6 Reporter in and for the State of Texas, do hereby
7 certify that the above-mentioned matter occurred as
8 hereinbefore set out.

9 I FURTHER CERTIFY THAT the proceedings
10 of such were reported by me or under my supervision,
11 later reduced to typewritten form under my supervision
12 and control and that the foregoing pages are a full,
13 true, and correct transcription of the original notes.

14 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my
15 hand and seal this day of 2007.

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