

SENATE BILL 143

By Ketron

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 33,
relative to payment to service providers by the
division of mental retardation services.

WHEREAS, individuals with developmental disabilities including mental retardation, autism, cerebral palsy and Down's syndrome are often considered Tennessee's most vulnerable citizens; and

WHEREAS, such individuals may rely on assistance from others for daily living activities, habilitation, job training and other life skills to keep them connected to their communities; and

WHEREAS, the professionals who provide this support are under compensated even compared to those with similar jobs within state government which has caused problems in recruiting and retaining staff, thus limiting this workforce; and

WHEREAS, to ensure the high quality of direct support professionals, Tennessee must consider the needs of the mentally and physically disabled as well as those who provide supportive services day-to-day; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 33-1-309(d), is amended by adding the following at the end of the subsection:

The methodology shall phase in over three (3) years, salaries and benefits for direct care staff that are at least commensurate with the salaries and benefits of the direct care staff at the development centers.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.