2020 LEGISLATIVE DRS REQUESTS

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There are two new requests for legislation we are proposing this year and one hold over from last year. They are:

**FY 2020 Legislative Session Requests**

**NEW 1) OMES: IT Security Audit exemption**

Issue: Under SB 584 agencies are required to undergo IT security audits. One of our divisions, the Social Security disability determination services division, is not allowed to undergo audits by OMES contractors due to the sensitive nature of the information they have. The division has direct access to the SSA system, which is only accessible by SSA personnel that are required to undergo federal background checks. SSA provides their own security audits. We asked for an exemption, but OMES does not feel they have the authority to exempt us. We would like an exemption from this requirement.

**2) Exemption from liability for action of Blind vendors**

Issue: The agency licenses blind vendors who have priority to run vending facilities in state and federal buildings. Once licensed, they operate their own businesses. Last year, a contractor of a blind vendor threatened to sue the agency for lost profits from a bid for a federal facility. The agency is seeking to protect the program from suits based on the actions of the blind vendors.

SB 321 is a carry-over bill from last session. It exempts the agency for the actions and contracts of the blind vendors we license. It was stalled in House Judiciary due to deadlines, but was not controversial. Rep. Townley is willing to pick it up again this year.

**NEW 3) Deaf/ASL teacher candidates testing exemption**

Issue: Deaf/ASL teacher candidates have not had the same exposure to language and vocabulary that hearing persons have experienced. As such, they have a more difficult time with the three required tests for teacher certification, the Oklahoma General Education Test (OGET), the Oklahoma Professional Teaching Examination (OPTE), and the Oklahoma Subject Area Tests (OSATs). The problem is that these tests are not accessible and do not test fluency in ASL, which is the language they will be teaching.

We are asking for an exemption for ASL teachers from the testing requirements for teacher certification. Under the legislation, a person who is deaf that would teach ASL can apply to the State Department of Education for an exemption from testing if they demonstrate fluency in ASL and complete a one-year mentorship with a certified deaf education teacher.

We would ask the Commission to approve our pursuit of these legislative requests.