

# SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

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Prepared By: Education Committee

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BILL: CS/SB 1704

SPONSOR: Education Committee and Senator Klein

SUBJECT: Assistive Technology

DATE: April 19, 2005

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Carrouth</u>	<u>O'Farrell</u>	<u>ED</u>	<u>Fav/CS</u>
2.	<u>Gordon</u>	<u>Cooper</u>	<u>CM</u>	<u>Favorable</u>
3.	_____	_____	<u>EA</u>	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

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## I. Summary:

This committee substitute relates to the Assistive Technology Advisory Council, an appointed group responsible for statewide policy development and advocacy of technology related assistance to persons with disabilities. The proposed changes would align the council's work to conform to recent revisions in federal law related to assistive technology for persons with disabilities. These changes to federal law are prescribed in Public Law No. 108-364, a reauthorization of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 which established assistive technology resource networks in states. The reauthorization emphasizes direct assistance to individuals with disabilities who need assistive technology devices.

The bill substantially amends s. 413.407, of the Florida Statutes.

## II. Present Situation:

Florida law currently requires establishment and continuance of an Assistive Technology Advisory Council (council) to provide oversight for statewide policy development and advocacy of technology related assistance to persons with disabilities. Section 413.407, F.S., currently prescribes terms of appointments and vacancies, and composition of appointments to the council. The council currently provides direction to Florida's Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology (FAAST), a project for coordination and delivery of assistive technology services and devices. The law also provides for appointments to committees within the council to focus on specific issues as they arise from individual mandates.

### III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Public Law 108-364 reauthorizes the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 which serves as the basis for The Florida Assistive Technology Council. This reauthorization of federal law redefines the primary purpose of the program from establishing assistive technology resource networks in states to directly helping individuals with disabilities who need assistive technology devices.<sup>1</sup> The committee substitute aligns the responsibilities of Florida's Assistive Technology Council to the new federal law by requiring the council to:

- Increase access to technology services;
- Initiate reuse of assistive technology devices;
- Initiate loan programs for such devices;
- Train and technical assistance to increase capacity and use of such devices;
- Initiating public awareness campaigns; and
- Coordinate and collaborating with other appropriate agencies and entities.

The committee substitute would also expand the composition of members to include family members or custodians of disabled persons and representatives from specific agencies that work directly with individuals with disabilities. It further specifies that a majority of the council members must be individuals or family members of persons with disabilities. The committee substitute provides for the appointment of retired, former council members who have been retired for at least one year. The committee substitute also expands the directives of individual focus committees to include a public policy and advocacy committee to review legislation and agency policies and to identify both facilitators of and barriers to assistive technology access and enhancements.

The effective date of the committee substitute is July 1, 2005.

### IV. Constitutional Issues:

#### A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

#### B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

#### C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

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<sup>1</sup> Council for Exceptional Children, Public Policy Update: CEC's Summary and Update, The Assistive Technology Reauthorization Act. 15 April 2005. <[http://www.cec.sped.org/pp/CEC\\_AT\\_Update\\_110304.pdf](http://www.cec.sped.org/pp/CEC_AT_Update_110304.pdf)>.

**V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:**

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None. Funding for both the Assistive Technology Advisory Council and FFAST are provided through federal dollars.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

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This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's sponsor or the Florida Senate.

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## **VIII. Summary of Amendments:**

None.

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