

## Florida Takes Aim at Employment Barriers for Disabled

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8/24/2011

By Business and Legal Reports, Inc.

Gov. Rick Scott has signed a bill and issued an executive order (EO) designed to remove employment barriers facing Floridians with mental and physical disabilities.

Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 926 encourages Florida businesses to hire workers with developmental disabilities by granting new legal protections to firms that employ them. The legislation gives employers immunity from liability for negligent or intentional acts or omissions by individuals with developmental disabilities if the employee received services from a supported employment service provider, and the employer had no prior notice of the employee's actions that created the unsafe conditions in the workplace.

The law also allows a supported employment service provider to be immune from liability for the actions of clients with developmental disabilities while working. The law took effect July 1, 2011.

In addition, Gov. Scott has issued Executive Order 11-161 creating the Governor's Commission on Jobs for Floridians with Disabilities. The governor noted that between October 2008 and June 2011, the rate of job loss among workers with disabilities exceeded that of workers without disabilities by 9 percent. The commission will recommend ways to close that gap.

"As we work to grow Florida's private sector jobs by making our state the best place to start, grow, or move a business, we need to also make sure we are ensuring job opportunities for Floridians with disabilities," Gov. Scott said. "Through employment, persons with disabilities increase their independence and, therefore, enjoy a better quality of life."

The EO notes that more than 1 million Floridians, roughly 12 percent of the state's working-age population, live with some form of physical or mental disability. According to the American Community Survey, from 2005 to 2007, only 38 percent of working-age Floridians with disabilities were employed, compared with nearly 79 percent of all working-age Floridians.

*Contributed by [BLR, Inc.](#) Read plain-English analysis on [Disabilities \(ADA\) in Florida.](#)*

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