

**ACT OF LAW
on
THE AFFAIRS OF THE HANDICAPPED**

The President of Iceland
makes known: The Althing has passed this Act of Law and I have
confirmed it with my approval.

**SECTION I
Objectives and Definition**

Art. 1

The objective of this Act of Law is to ensure to the handicapped equality and living conditions comparable with those of other citizens, and to provide them with conditions that enable them to lead a normal life.

In carrying out the objectives of this Act, the federate organizations of the handicapped and their member associations shall be guaranteed an influence on the defining of policies and on decisions regarding the affairs of the handicapped.

Art. 2

Those who are entitled to services according to this Act are the mentally or physically disabled who need special services and support for this reason. This refers to mental retardation, psychiatric illness, physical disability, blindness and/or deafness. Handicaps can also be the consequence of chronic illness as well as of accidents.

SECTION II
Administration and Organisation

Art. 3

The Minister of Social Affairs is in charge of supreme administration of the affairs of the handicapped according to this Act of Law. The Ministry of Social Affairs shall handle policy-making, the drawing up of Comprehensive Plans and supervision of the execution of the Act.

Art. 4

A special board shall counsel the Ministry of Social Affairs on the affairs of the handicapped. It shall be called the Board of Administration on the affairs of the handicapped and shall be appointed by the Minister for a period of four years at a time. The Board is composed of five members. The Iceland Federation of the Handicapped (IFH, Öryrkjabandalag Íslands), the National Federation for the Aid of the Mentally Handicapped (NFAMH, Landssamtökin Proskahjálp), and The Association of Local Authorities in Iceland (Samband íslenskra sveitarfélaga) appoint one member each. The Minister appoints two members without nomination, one of these to be the Chairman of the Board.

The Board of Administration shall submit proposals to the Minister of Social Affairs for specialized services to the handicapped on a national level, independent of the division into operational regions according to Art. 5. The Board of Administration is also entrusted with the direction of the Investment Fund of the Handicapped (Framkvæmdasjóður fatlaðra), cf. Art. 38.

Art. 5

The country shall be divided into operational regions insofar as the affairs of the handicapped are concerned, these regions to follow the division into electoral districts.

The operational regions may be divided into special service areas. Such service areas may be based on individual communities, county committees or local authorities' unions, cf. the Local Authorities Act, or on public health districts, cf. the Health Services Act.

Art. 6

Each operational region, cf. Art. 5, shall have a functioning Regional Board for the affairs of the handicapped.

The Regional Boards shall have the following tasks:

1. To submit proposals to the Ministry of Social Affairs and to the Regional Office regarding services and contribute to their coordination within the region.
2. To ensure that the services, operations and activities of institutions subject to these laws, are in accordance with the objectives of the Act.
3. To give comments to the Ministry of Social Affairs on regional plans, cf. Art. 12, item 4, on the development of services for the handicapped, cf. Art. 41 and on new or altered activities, cf. Art. 45.
4. To watch over the rights of the handicapped, in accordance with Section XV., including ensuring that the handicapped receive the services they are entitled to.
5. To take the initiative regarding increased responsibility of local authorities in the affairs of the handicapped, cf. the provisions of Art. 13 on service agreements.

The Regional Board is composed of seven members, appointed by the Minister for a period of four years. The National Federation for the Aid of the Handicapped (NFAMH - Landssamtökin Proskahjálp) and The Iceland Federation of the Handicapped (IFH - Öryrkjabandalagið) shall appoint one member each and regional local authorities' organisations shall appoint three, one of which shall be the Social Affairs Director in the region.

The Director of Education and the Chief District Medical Officer shall also sit on the Board.

The Regional Board elects its chairman.

The Minister of Social Affairs issues regulations on the activities of the Regional Boards.

SECTION III. General Services

Art. 7

The handicapped shall be entitled to all general services provided by the State and by local authorities. It shall be endeavoured at all times to provide services for the handicapped in accordance with general laws in the field of education, health and social services. Should a handicapped person's service needs not be covered within the limits of general services, the said handicapped person shall receive services in accordance with this Act.

SECTION IV. Support services

Art. 8

Services for the handicapped shall be provided with the aim of enabling them to live and function in a normal community along with other people. These support services shall be provided in each region in the manner most appropriate for each locality. They shall be based on the following needs of the handicapped:

1. The need of the handicapped for services in their homes, which consist in increasing their possibilities of keeping house on their

own. These services are regulated i.a. according to the provisions of Section X.

2. The need of the handicapped for habilitation, rehabilitation and work, which i.a. consists in their being able to support themselves and take an active part in society. These services are regulated by i.a. the provisions of Sections XI and XII.
3. The need of the handicapped for psychiatric services, counsel, social support and social interaction, including the enjoyment of recreational and cultural activities.
4. The need of handicapped children for care and training along with the necessary assistance to their families so that they can provide the children with safe and stimulating conditions for growing up. These services are i.a. in accordance with Sections VIII and IX.

SECTION V Service institutions

Art. 9

Service institutions for the handicapped shall be operated with a view to meeting their specific needs, in order to enable them to lead an independent life.

The following service institutions shall be operated in each region as needed:

1. Habilitation and rehabilitation centres.
2. Day-care centres for the handicapped.
3. Sheltered workshops.
4. Toy libraries.
5. Short-term foster homes.

The Minister of Social Affairs has the authority to add further service institutions or eliminate others, subject to prior comment from the Board of Administration.

The Minister of Social Affairs grants licenses for the operation of new institutions, as well as for major changes in the activities of functioning institutions, upon proposals from the Regional Boards and the Board of Administration.

SECTION VI Residence

Art. 10

The handicapped shall have the option of choosing their residence, in conformity with their needs and wishes, insofar as possible. The residences of the handicapped that are covered by this Act, may be:

1. Social housing
2. Protected housing
3. Group homes
4. Residential institutions
5. Children's homes
6. Half-way homes

The Minister of Social Affairs grants operational licenses according to items 3.-6 of this Article.

Residences for the handicapped according to this Act shall be located in residential districts, cf. municipal planning laws..

Art. 11

Applications for services in institutions according to items 1.-3. of Art. 9, as well as those for residences acc. to items 2.-6. of Art. 10, shall be sent to the relevant Regional Offices for the affairs of the handicapped, cf. Art. 12. An application is considered valid when presented by a handicapped person or his/her guardian. The Regional Offices assess the need of the handicapped person for services and his/her residence wishes in consultation with the corresponding diagnostic and counselling party. The Regional Offices make decisions as to services and forms of residence in collaboration with the applicant and his prospective cohabitants. In the

case of institutions operated by others than the State, the agreement of the operating party must be obtained. The form of residence acc. to items 2-6 of Art. 10 cannot be decided without the need for services having previously been assessed.

In the event of disagreement as to the outcome of an application, the Regional Board shall deal with the matter.

SECTION VII Implementation of the services

Art. 12

Within each operational region cf. Art. 5, an office shall be operated for the affairs of the handicapped, except where local authorities take full charge of the services, cf. Art. 13. Regional Offices for the affairs of the handicapped shall be entrusted with the following tasks:

1. The operation of institutions for the handicapped on behalf of the State, as well as providing other services and activities for the handicapped on behalf of the State, according to this Act.
2. The responsibility for projects concerning the affairs of the handicapped for which money is granted from the Investment Fund, cf. Art. 40, and which are not carried out on behalf of local authorities or independent institutions.
3. The gathering of information on the need for services for the handicapped, according to this Act.
4. The supervision of the drawing-up of a three-year Regional Plan for the development of services to the handicapped and submission of this to the Regional Board for comments.
5. The furnishing of advice and services to the Regional Board, so that its members may be able to fulfil their role in the best possible way.

6. The supervision of assessments of the need of the handicapped for services, cf. Art. 2, in consultation with the diagnostic party.
7. Cooperation and consultation with Chief District Medical Officers and Educational Officers on the affairs of the handicapped.
8. Cooperation with local authorities regarding social services and the accessibility to transport of the handicapped.
9. The assessment of handicapped children's need for care according to the Act on Social Security.
10. Ensuring that psychiatric services and social service counselling are available to the handicapped within the region.

The Minister of Social Affairs appoints Regional Office Managers after having obtained the comments of the Regional Boards. The Managers shall be given formal Letters of Appointment.

The Minister of Social Affairs shall establish regulations on the operation of Regional Offices.

Art. 13

The Regional Boards shall take the initiative regarding work on agreements between the State and local authorities on the latter taking full or partial charge of services to the handicapped, whether on a community level, within a union of local authorities, or on county commission level. The Ministry shall seek the opinion and comments of the Board of Administration on such agreements. These agreements shall define the services that local authorities are expected to provide, payment of costs out of State funds and contributions to institutions from the Investment Fund of the Handicapped (Framkvæmdasjóður fatlaðra), subject to this being provided for in Comprehensive Plans, cf. Art. 41.

When local authorities take full charge of services to the handicapped, within special service areas, cf. Art. 5, payments shall be based on the number of handicapped in the area and their need for services on the one hand, and on provable operational costs of individual institutions on the other hand.

When local authorities take charge of separate service factors, payments shall be based on provable operational costs. The Minister of Social Affairs establishes regulations on agreements with local authorities according to this Article.

Art. 14

Licenses for local authorities, associations and independent institutions to establish and operate institutions according to Art. 9, or homes for the handicapped according to items 3.-6. of Art. 10, are granted by the Minister of Social Affairs after he has obtained the comments of the relevant Regional Board. The Minister of Social Affairs has the authority to make special service agreements with associations and independent institutions, cf. item 3 of Art. 13.

Art. 15

Regional Boards shall exercise supervision of institutions for the handicapped. Representatives of the Regional Boards shall be granted access to institutions and homes of the handicapped, for which license has been granted according to Art. 14, for supervision purposes and to obtain information on all aspects of their operation and activities. The Regional Boards shall supply guidance on any factors that may be improved. The Minister of Social Affairs can deprive an operator of his operational license, at the suggestion of the Regional Board and the Board of Administration, if he has not, within set time limits, fulfilled their requirements, or those of the Ministry, regarding whatever is found wanting in the operation concerned.

SECTION VIII

The State Diagnostic and Counselling Centre

Art. 16

The State shall operate one diagnostic and counselling centre, the State Diagnostic and Counselling Centre. Its tasks are:

1. The assessment, examination and diagnosis of handicapped people who have been referred to the Centre or apply to it on their own initiative.
2. The production, testing and evaluation of the appropriate plans of therapy and training. Counselling and guidance for parents/guardians or other parties to the therapy.
3. Long-term therapy for individuals requiring it, as long as this is not available in other institutions or elsewhere.
4. Referrals to other therapists and to institutions for the purpose of providing the client concerned with such service and training as required at any given time. The Diagnostic and Counselling Centre has an obligation to supply therapists with guidance and counselling whenever this is requested.
5. The operation of a toy library. Loans of toys to parents and guardians, including counselling and guidance. Also professional assistance and counselling in developing and operating other toy libraries in the country.
6. Providing professional assistance to Regional Offices and delivering comments on services and accommodation in institutions when requested.
7. Registration and storage of data concerning the handicapped in collaboration with social, educational and health authorities.
8. Theoretical research in the field of handicaps and professional advice regarding studies of the conditions of the handicapped in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Regional Offices.

The Minister of Social Affairs shall establish regulations containing further provisions on the role and tasks of the State Diagnostic and Counselling Centre.

The Director of the State Diagnostic and Counselling Centre shall have expert knowledge of issues concerning the handicapped and shall be

responsible for professional work and relations with other institutions. A Manager shall be in charge of the Centre's financial running and daily operations. The Minister of Social Affairs appoints the Director and the Manager, having received the proposals of the Board of the institution.

The Board of the State Diagnostic and Counselling Centre is constituted by five members. Öryrjabandalag Íslands and Landssamtökin þroskahjálpi shall each nominate one member, the Board one, the Minister appointing two without nomination, one of whom shall be Chairman.

SECTION IX

The Affairs of Children and Families of the Handicapped

Art. 17

If symptoms appear after birth, indicating that a child may be handicapped, a preliminary assessment should be arranged. If such preliminary assessment reveals the need for further diagnosis or means of therapy, this shall be notified to the State Diagnostic and Counselling Centre, or other appropriate parties, who will then seek adequate solutions in consultation with the parents.

Art. 18

Health service, educational and social workers should pay special attention to children's mental and physical condition. If they discover that a child shows symptoms of a handicap, they shall inform its guardians accordingly. This shall be dealt with in accordance with Art. 17.

Art. 19

Handicapped children shall be entitled to attend a kindergarten, or playschool, operated by local authorities. They can attend public playschools, where necessary support services are provided, or specialized sections, cf. the Playschool Act no. 48/1991.

Art. 20

Handicapped children shall be entitled to toy library services. In addition to loans from the toy library, developmental and play training shall be supplied. Toy libraries shall give educational counselling and guidance as to the use of toys for training purposes.

Art. 21

The families of handicapped children shall be ensured the services of support families as needed. The stay of a handicapped individual with a support family shall be laid down in an agreement on the basis of a specified period. These services are dealt with according to regulations.

Art. 22

Parents shall be entitled to having short-term foster homes for their handicapped children when needed. Short-term foster homes are intended to give the handicapped a short-term stay for rest purposes or in the event of a difficult domestic situation, such as due to illness or other stress factors.

Art. 23

It shall be endeavoured to give handicapped children the option of a summer vacation stay when needed. Such summer vacations are intended to give the handicapped the opportunity for a change of environment and a stay outside their homes for their enjoyment and as a break from routine.

SECTION X

Personal support

Art. 24

Local authorities shall, within possible means, give the handicapped the

option of personal support services. Personal support is understood as person-to-person support and assistance which chiefly aims at breaking through social isolation, for instance by assistance in enjoying cultural and social events.

Art. 25

In special circumstances, handicapped individuals shall be given further personal support, consisting in various kinds of assistance concerning the multiple functions of daily life, if such assistance is needed to prevent institutionalization. Regional offices make decisions as to further personal support according to authorized budget expenditures at each given time, upon prior opinion from the Regional Board.

SECTION XI **Social habilitation and rehabilitation**

Art. 26

The handicapped shall enjoy social habilitation and rehabilitation with the aim of reducing the effects of the handicap and increasing the habilitation of the handicapped for work and participation in daily life. Special habilitation and rehabilitation centres shall be operated, as well as day-care centres for the handicapped, which can furnish developmental therapy, work training and/or occupational training. Work and occupational training shall also be given at sheltered workshops, cf. Art. 30.

As regards medical rehabilitation, this is dealt with according to the Health Services Act.

Art. 27

The handicapped may be granted assistance for social habilitation and rehabilitation as follows:

1. A grant towards the purchase of tools or equipment or other

facilitation on account of work at home or independent activities after rehabilitation.

2. A grant towards payment of tuition costs, which are not paid according to the provisions of other Acts of Law.

Regional Offices or local authorities, cf. Art. 13, are in charge of the assessment of needs according to items 1.-2.

The Minister of Social Affairs establishes regulations on the execution of these provisions, such as the requirements that must be met in order to be eligible for this assistance, and the guidelines for the amounts granted.

SECTION XII Employment

Art. 28

Each operational region shall have a selective placement service, with the purpose of obtaining suitable work for the handicapped. In connection with this placement service, occupational counselling shall be provided. Where local authorities operate a special employment bureau, this bureau shall be entrusted with the operation of a selective placement service for the handicapped under a special agreement.

Art. 29

The handicapped shall be given assistance in holding jobs on the general labour market when necessary. This shall be done through special personal support at the workplace as well as through information and instruction for other workers.

The handicapped shall be given work training in general enterprises and/or institutions where this can be arranged. In those instances a special agreement shall be made, with i.a. a definition of the training period and payment of costs.

Art. 30

In each operational region the handicapped shall be offered sheltered work on the labour market. Sheltered work can consist in work that is organised with regard to handicaps. Special sheltered workshops for the handicapped may also be operated. Sheltered workshops shall on the one hand provide remunerated training for the handicapped to enable them to work on the general labour market. On the other hand, they shall provide remunerated regular jobs for the handicapped.

Art. 31

The Ministry of Social Affairs shall take the initiative, in consultation with the organizations of the handicapped and the organized labour and employers' associations, to have regular surveys conducted on the status of the handicapped in the labour force and have these followed up by suggestions for improvements.

Art. 32

The handicapped shall be given priority regarding work for the State and local authorities if their qualifications for a given post are greater or equal to those of other applicants. If a Regional Board is of the opinion that the rights of a handicapped person have been disregarded in the granting of an employment position, the Board can request a written explanation for the decision regarding the appointment from the appointing authority.

SECTION XIII Housing

Art. 33

It shall be endeavoured to offer the handicapped social housing, i.e. rented social housing, tenant-purchase scheme housing and social

ownership-apartments, according to the State Housing Board Act. Money from the Investment Fund of the Handicapped may be used for the purpose of providing the financing party's contribution towards the construction or purchase of social housing for the handicapped intended for rent, cf. item 4 of Art. 40.

SECTION XIV Accessibility to transport and transport services

Art. 34

Local authorities shall attend to matters regarding the accessibility to transport of the handicapped in an organized manner, i.a. through drawing up plans for improved access to public buildings and service institutions in accordance with the provisions of construction laws and regulations, cf. also planning laws and regulations. Regional Offices shall forward pointers to construction committees as regards improvements in the field of accessibility to transport.

A local authority may appoint a coordinating committee on the accessibility of the handicapped, with the participation of the associations of the handicapped, for the purpose of making proposals for the order of priority of projects in the field of accessibility.

Art. 35

Local authorities shall provide transport services for the handicapped. The aim of such transport services for the handicapped shall be to enable those who cannot make use of public transport to hold jobs, pursue studies and enjoy leisure activities. Local authorities shall establish rules for the operation of transport services for the handicapped.

The handicapped shall also be entitled to transport services operated by local authorities for the purpose of driving to service institutions according to items 1.-4. of Art. 9, and on account of other specialized services granted to the handicapped.

SECTION XV
Watching over the rights of the handicapped

Art. 36

The Regional Boards for the affairs of the handicapped shall watch over the rights of the handicapped to services according to this Act of Law as well as other laws, as appropriate. Employees who provide services to the handicapped and who work in institutions for the handicapped shall guard their interests and see to it that their rights are respected.

Art. 37

In order to further ensure the rights of handicapped individuals staying in homes for the handicapped according to items 3.-6. of Art. 10, regarding their private affairs and the handling of their valuables, Regional Boards shall appoint a special Confidential Representative for the handicapped in each region.

The Confidential Representative supervises the conditions of the handicapped and the directors of the homes concerned shall give him all necessary relevant information. In the case of registered information on personal affairs or information on private valuables of a handicapped person, the said person's agreement shall be sought.

If the handicapped person believes that his/her right is being infringed, he/she can inform the Confidential Representative, who shall give him/her the necessary support and immediately investigate the matter. After such an investigation, the Confidential Representative evaluates whether the case should be brought before the Regional Board. The same procedure applies if the Confidential Representative has reason to believe that the rights of the handicapped person are not being respected.

If relatives of the handicapped, associations of the handicapped or others concerned with the condition of the handicapped believe that the rights of a handicapped person staying in a home for the handicapped according to items 3.-6. of Art. 10 are not being respected, they shall

notify the Confidential Representative who shall immediately investigate the matter. After such an investigation, the Confidential Representative evaluates whether the matter should be brought before the Regional Board.

The Regional Board ensures that matters according to this Article are dealt with in an appropriate manner in each instance, in accordance with the law. The Confidential Representative shall assist the handicapped person in dealing with the matter, if so requested.

SECTION XVI The Investment Fund of the Handicapped

Art. 38

The Investment Fund of the Handicapped, which was established by the Act on the Affairs of the Handicapped no. 41/1983, shall be kept in the custody of the Ministry of Social Affairs and administered by the Board of Administration, cf. Art. 4. When the Board of Administration deals with matters concerning the Investment Fund of the Handicapped, a representative appointed by the Budget Commission of the Althing shall sit on the Board.

The Fund's Board makes proposals to the Minister as to allocations from the Fund.

Art. 39

The Fund's income is constituted by:

1. The full and unimpaired receipts of the Inheritance Fund.
2. The allocation of the State Treasury according to the decision of the Althing on the annual Budget.
3. A special contribution from the State Treasury according to the decision of the Althing, for the development of services for the

mentally handicapped for the next five years subsequent to the coming into force of this Act of Law.

4. Free contributions and other incidental income.
5. Interest income

Art. 40

The Investment Fund of the Handicapped has the following functions:

1. The Fund shall finance the establishment costs of service institutions for the handicapped, cf. Art. 9, and homes for the handicapped acc. to items 3.-6. of Art. 10, which are operated by the State.
2. The fund finances service institutions and homes for the handicapped operated by local authorities, cf. item 1, as further defined in agreements, cf. Art. 13.
3. The Fund is authorized to grant subsidies to associations and independent institutions in order to set up service institutions and homes for the handicapped, cf. item 1.
4. The Fund is authorized to grant to the financing parties for social rent apartments and tenant-purchase housing being let out, cf. the State Housing Board Act and items 1. and 2. of Art. 10 of the present Act of Law, subsidies towards payment of the contribution which the financing parties are obliged to furnish according to the State Housing Board Act. This grant may amount to half the contribution of the financing party where local authorities are concerned, but may cover the entire contribution in the case of other financing parties. The contribution of the Investment Fund according to this provision is redeemable if an apartment is employed for purposes other than for the benefit of the handicapped.
5. Up to 10% of the money at the Fund's disposal may be used to improve access to public buildings, with the purpose of enabling the physically disabled and the blind to use them in a normal fashion.

The Fund's contribution shall not exceed one half of the cost of each individual project.

6. It is permitted to spend up to 25% of the money available to the Fund for extraordinary maintenance projects, which cannot be classified as operational maintenance as understood in the Budget, on those homes for the handicapped and service institutions of the handicapped cf. items 1.-3., which have been constructed/ bought and belong within the scope of this Act. The allocation of money spent on maintenance projects shall be in the hands of the Ministry of Social Affairs.
7. In addition to projects according to items 1.-6., the Investment Fund of the Handicapped is authorized to contribute money to other projects deemed necessary for the benefit of the handicapped, such as alterations in general workplaces employing handicapped people. The Fund is further authorised to grant money towards surveys and plans regarding the affairs of the handicapped.

SECTION XVII
Financing and operations
Initial costs

Art. 41

Regional Offices for the affairs of the handicapped handle the drawing up of regional plans for services to the handicapped, these plans to be submitted to the Regional Boards for comments. The Ministry of Social Affairs is charged with drawing up comprehensive plans on the basis of the regional plans and the proposals of the Board of Administration on projects concerning specialized services on a national level.

Art. 42

The Board of Administration makes annual proposals for contributions from the Investment Fund of the Handicapped in conformity with the Comprehensive Plan acc. to Art. 41.

Art. 43

The Investment Fund of the Handicapped covers all initial costs of service institutions acc. to Art. 9 and of homes of the handicapped acc. to items 3.-6. of Art. 10, operated on behalf of the State and according to agreement with local authorities, cf. Art. 13.

Art. 44

Contributions from the Investment Fund to local authorities, to associations of the handicapped and to independent institutions, shall be paid out according to a special agreement with the Ministry of Social Affairs.

Such an agreement should specify that the housing in question may not be rented out except with the consent of the Ministry of Social Affairs, and this condition shall be officially registered. The contribution is redeemable if the dwelling is allocated to others than the handicapped, cf. item 3 in Art. 40.

Operations

Art. 45

The Regional Offices shall make annual budget proposals and send these to the Ministry of Social Affairs. In the case of operations run by local authorities, cf. Art. 13, these shall send their budget proposals to the relevant Regional Office for comments. The same applies to associations and independent institutions operating homes for the handicapped. Proposals for new or modified activities shall be sent to the Regional Boards for comments.

Art. 46

Budget proposals for support services shall be made with reference to Art. 8.

Art. 47

Budget proposals for service institutions acc. to Art. 9 and homes for the handicapped acc. to items 3.-6. of Art. 10 shall be based on an evaluation of the need for the services. Such an evaluation shall be undertaken when the operation starts and after that on an annual basis.

Art. 48

Services and other operational costs according to this Act of Law shall be paid out of the State Treasury. However, local authorities are responsible for the costs of personal support services, cf. Art. 24, accessibility to transport matters, cf. Art. 34, and transport arrangements, cf. 35. As to costs for the playschool attendance of handicapped children cf. Art 19, this shall be dealt with according to the Playschool Act No. 46/1991. Nevertheless, the State Treasury shall pay costs in excess of general payments for handicapped children in the playschools.

Art. 49

Incidental income through professional activities of institutions which enjoy State contributions through the Budget shall be deducted from the operational costs.

Art. 50

The Minister is empowered, through regulations, to decide that a fee shall be charged for services according to Art. 21 and 22, provided that the party in question is enjoying special care indemnities or disability pension and income guarantees according to the Law on Social Security.

Art. 51

The transport of the handicapped to and from service institutions according to items 1.-4. of Art. 9 and on account of other necessary services granted specially to the handicapped shall be paid by the local

authorities. This provision is not valid however, for driving to and from summer vacation homes and short-term foster homes.

The Minister of Social Affairs shall establish rules on the payment of transport expenses of the handicapped from anywhere in the country outside the Reykjavík area and to The State Diagnostic and Counselling Centre, these costs to be paid out of the State Treasury. In this, account shall be taken of rules regarding transport expenses of patients within the country according to the Laws on Social Security, as appropriate.

Art. 52

The operational costs of Regional Offices, Regional Boards and the Board of Administration shall be paid out of the State Treasury.

Art. 53

Independent institutions and institutions operated by local authorities and associations according to this Act of Law, which receive contributions from the State Treasury, shall deliver to the Ministry of Social Affairs, the relevant Regional Board, The State Accounting Office and the National Audit Bureau their annual accounts, signed by a chartered auditor, along with a report on the activities for the preceding year.

SECTION XVIII

Various provisions

Anyone working in accordance with these laws shall observe the utmost discretion regarding whatever he/she may ascertain in the course of his/her work.

Art. 55

The Minister of Social Affairs establishes, through regulations, further provisions regarding the execution of this Act of Law.

SECTION XIX
Entry into Force

Art. 56

The present Act of Law enters into force on September 1st, 1992. As of that time, the Act on the Affairs of the Handicapped no. 41/1983, cf. Art. 1 and 32 of Act of Law No. 87/1989, is abolished. However, the second paragraph of Art. 35 and the earlier paragraph of Art. 51 shall come into force on January 1st, 1993.

Transitional Provisions

I.

Notwithstanding the provisions of Art. 56, the disbursement of money from the Investment Fund of the Handicapped shall be in accordance with the presently valid laws until the end of 1992.

II.

This Act of Law shall be revised within four years from the date it comes into force, taking into account the revision of the Law on Social Services Provided by Local Authorities No. 40/1991, and after consultation with the Federation of Local Authorities and the federate organisations of the handicapped. The revision of this Act of Law shall aim at increasing the responsibility of the local authorities in the affairs of the handicapped.

Done in Reykjavík, June 2nd, 1992
Vigdís Finnbogadóttir
(L.S.)

Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir