
HOUSE BILL 2379

State of Washington 64th Legislature 2016 Regular Session

By Representatives Moeller, Jinkins, and Appleton

Read first time 01/12/16. Referred to Committee on Judiciary.

1 AN ACT Relating to the creation of two elder justice center
2 demonstration programs; adding a new section to chapter 74.34 RCW;
3 and creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the number of
6 Washingtonians age sixty-five and older is projected to exceed one
7 and one-half million by 2030. The number of residents age eighty-five
8 and older is increasing at an even faster rate, and is expected to
9 more than double over the next two decades. The legislature also
10 finds that the number of seniors who are abused, exploited, or
11 neglected every year is on the rise, with some research indicating
12 that one in ten seniors has suffered some form of abuse or neglect at
13 least once. The legislature finds that the number of reports to adult
14 protective services in Washington has increased twenty-five percent
15 since 2008, and the number of cases investigated has increased thirty
16 percent, with twenty-one thousand cases forwarded for investigation
17 in 2013. Complex and time-intensive financial exploitation cases now
18 represent nearly one-third of all investigations. The legislature
19 further finds that national researchers believe the majority of cases
20 go unreported out of embarrassment, confusion about what happened, or
21 fear of being cut off from family or loved ones. The legislature also

1 finds that recognition of and mechanisms for dealing with elder abuse
2 and exploitation lag many years behind the strides that have been
3 made in child abuse awareness and protection. The legislature
4 therefore intends to establish two demonstration programs for elder
5 justice centers modeled on the state's children's advocacy centers,
6 with the goal of coordinating resources and increasing community
7 capacity to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, and exploitation
8 of Washington's growing population of elders and vulnerable adults.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 74.34
10 RCW to read as follows:

11 (1) The department shall establish two elder justice center
12 demonstration programs, one of which must operate in Clark county and
13 the other must operate in Spokane county. The department may contract
14 directly with the counties for the implementation of the
15 demonstration programs in accordance with the requirements in this
16 section.

17 (2) For the purposes of this section, "elder justice center"
18 means a senior-focused program that coordinates a multidisciplinary
19 approach to the prevention, investigation, prosecution, and treatment
20 of abandonment, abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation of
21 vulnerable adults.

22 (3) Both elder justice centers must coordinate access to services
23 including, but not limited to, advocacy and case review by
24 multidisciplinary teams that include, but are not limited to, adult
25 protective services, law enforcement officers, a prosecuting
26 attorney, a victim advocate, and a program coordinator.
27 Multidisciplinary teams also may include community agencies and
28 systems that are involved with the prevention and response to elder
29 abandonment, abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation.

30 (4) Both elder justice centers must develop written protocols to
31 address the coordination of investigations between the prosecutor's
32 office, law enforcement, adult protective services, local advocacy
33 groups, and any other local agency involved in the criminal
34 investigation of vulnerable adult abandonment, abuse, neglect, and
35 financial exploitation. The protocol must be developed by the county
36 prosecuting attorney with the assistance of the other entities named
37 in this subsection.

38 (5) The department shall submit, in compliance with RCW
39 43.01.036, the following reports to the governor and the legislature:

1 (a) By January 10, 2017, a brief progress report describing the
2 status of implementation at both elder justice centers;
3 (b) By January 10, 2018, an interim report outlining the
4 structure and operation of both elder justice centers; and
5 (c) By December 1, 2019, a final report discussing the
6 effectiveness of the elder justice center model in increasing
7 community capacity to prevent and respond to abandonment, abuse,
8 neglect, and financial exploitation of vulnerable adults. The final
9 report also must contain recommendations for modifying or expanding
10 additional demonstration programs.

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