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SENATE BILL 5349

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State of Washington

65th Legislature

2017 Regular Session

By Senators Cleveland, Billig, Rivers, Conway, Keiser, Saldaña, Hasegawa, Frockt, and Kuderer

Read first time 01/20/17. Referred to Committee on Health Care.

1 AN ACT Relating to elder justice centers; adding a new section to  
2 chapter 74.34 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

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

1 and exploitation lag many years behind the strides that have been  
2 made in child abuse awareness and protection. The legislature  
3 therefore intends to advance the elder justice center  
4 multidisciplinary model to demonstrate that it is an effective and  
5 efficient means of coordinating state and local resources in order to  
6 increase community capacity to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect,  
7 and exploitation of Washington's growing population of elders and  
8 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 coordinate the implementation of an  
12 elder justice demonstration program which must include establishing  
13 an elder justice center in Spokane county and expanding the elder  
14 justice center located in Clark county. The department and the  
15 counties shall enter into memoranda of understanding or working  
16 agreements necessary for the demonstration program. The memoranda and  
17 agreements must support a collaborative, multidisciplinary approach  
18 to creating local partnerships, pooling of state and local resources,  
19 and establishing local protocols to achieve shared goals aimed at the  
20 prevention and investigation of vulnerable adult abandonment, abuse,  
21 neglect, and financial exploitation. The department shall provide  
22 technical assistance to the counties by assisting in the drafting of  
23 working agreements and memoranda and the development of protocols  
24 necessary for operation of the elder justice centers.

25 (2) For the purposes of this section, "elder justice center"  
26 means a senior-focused program that coordinates a locally tailored,  
27 collaborative, multidisciplinary approach to the prevention,  
28 investigation, prosecution, and treatment of abandonment, abuse,  
29 neglect, and financial exploitation of vulnerable adults. To the  
30 greatest extent feasible, the memoranda of understanding under this  
31 section should assure coordinated access to services including, but  
32 not limited to, advocacy and case review by multidisciplinary teams  
33 that include, but are not limited to, adult protective services, law  
34 enforcement officers, a prosecuting attorney, a victim advocate,  
35 representation from a local guardianship program, if available, and a  
36 program coordinator. Multidisciplinary teams also may include  
37 additional community-based agencies and systems that are involved  
38 with the prevention and response to elder abandonment, abuse,  
39 neglect, and financial exploitation.

1           (3) The department shall submit, in compliance with RCW  
2 43.01.036, the following reports to the governor and the legislature:  
3           (a) By January 10, 2018, a brief progress report describing the  
4 status of implementation at both elder justice centers;  
5           (b) By January 10, 2019, an interim report outlining the  
6 structure and operation of both elder justice centers; and  
7           (c) By December 1, 2020, a final report discussing the  
8 effectiveness of the elder justice center model in increasing  
9 community capacity to prevent and respond to abandonment, abuse,  
10 neglect, and financial exploitation of vulnerable adults. The final  
11 report also must contain recommendations for modifying or expanding  
12 additional demonstration programs.

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