

provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 16. The rule of strict construction shall not be applied to the operation of this act, and this act shall be liberally construed to carry out the purposes hereof.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 17. This 1972 amendatory act shall be submitted to the people for their adoption and ratification, or rejection, at the general election to be held in this state on the Tuesday next succeeding the first Monday in November, 1972, in accordance with the provisions of section 1, Article II of the state Constitution, as amended, and laws adopted to facilitate the operation thereof.

Passed the House February 20, 1972.

Passed the Senate February 19, 1972.

Filed in Office of Secretary of State February 22, 1972.

CHAPTER 83

[Engrossed House Bill No. 9]

ESTATES OF ABSENTEES

AN ACT Relating to estates of absentees; amending section 11.80.010, chapter 145, Laws of 1965 and RCW 11.80.010; and adding new sections to chapter 11.80 RCW.

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

Section 1. Section 11.80.010, chapter 145, Laws of 1965 and RCW 11.80.010 are each amended to read as follows:

Whenever it shall be made to appear by petition to any judge of the superior court of any county that there is property in such county, either real or personal, that requires care and attention, or is in such a condition that it is a menace to the public health, safety or welfare, or that the custodian of such property appointed by the owner thereof is either unable or unwilling to continue longer in the care and custody thereof, and that the owner of such property has absented himself from the county and that his whereabouts is unknown and cannot with reasonable diligence be ascertained, or that the absentee owner is a person defined in section 2 of this 1972 amendatory act, which petition shall state the name of the absent owner, his approximate age, his last known place of residence, the circumstances under which he left and the place to which he was going, if known, his business or occupation and his physical appearance and habits so far as known, the judge to whom such petition is presented shall set a time for hearing such petition not less than six weeks from the date of filing, and shall by order direct that a notice of such hearing be published for three

successive weeks in a legal newspaper published in the county where such petition is filed and in such other counties and states as will in the judgment of the court be most likely to come to the attention of the absentee or of persons who may know his whereabouts, which notice shall state the object of the petition and the date of hearing, and set forth such facts and circumstances as in the judgment of the court will aid in identifying the absentee, and shall contain a request that all persons having knowledge concerning the absentee shall advise the court of the facts: PROVIDED, HOWEVER, That the court may, upon the filing of said petition, appoint a temporary trustee, who shall have the powers, duties and qualifications of a special administrator.

If it shall appear at such hearing that the whereabouts of the absentee is unknown, but there is reason to believe that upon further investigation and inquiry he may be found, the judge may continue the hearing and order such inquiry and advertisement as will in his discretion be liable to disclose the whereabouts of the absentee, but when it shall appear to the judge at such hearing or any adjournment thereof that the whereabouts of the absentee cannot be ascertained, he shall appoint a suitable person resident of the county as trustee of such property, taking into consideration the character of the property and the fitness of such trustee to care for the same, preferring in such appointment the husband or wife of the absentee to his presumptive heirs, the presumptive heirs to kin more remote, the kin to strangers, and creditors to those who are not otherwise interested, provided they are fit persons to have the care and custody of the particular property in question and will accept the appointment and qualify as hereinafter provided.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. There is added to chapter 11.80 RCW a new section to read as follows:

Any person serving in or with the armed forces of the United States, in or with the Red Cross, or in or with the merchant marine or otherwise, during any period of time when a state of hostilities exists between the United States and any other power and for one year thereafter, who has been reported or listed as missing in action, or interned in a neutral country, or captured by the enemy, shall be an "absentee" within the meaning of this chapter.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. There is added to chapter 11.80 RCW a new section to read as follows:

(1) If the spouse of any absentee owner, or his next of kin, if said absentee has no spouse, shall wish to sell or transfer any property of the absentee which has a gross value of less than five thousand dollars, or shall require the consent of the absentee in any matter regarding the absentee's children, or any other matter in which the gross value of the subject matter is less than five

thousand dollars, such spouse or next of kin may apply to the superior court for an order authorizing said sale, transfer, or consent without opening a full trustee proceeding as provided in this chapter. The applicant may make the application without the assistance of an attorney. Said application shall be made by petition on the following form, which form shall be made readily available to the applicant by the clerk of the superior court.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF

.....,)
Plaintiff,) NO.
)
vs.) PETITION FOR SUMMARY RELIEF
)
.....,)
Defendant.)
.....)

Petitioner,, whose residence is, and, Washington, and who is the of the absentee,, states that the absentee has been since, when Petitioner desires to sell/transfer of the value of, because The terms of the sale/transfer are Petitioner requires the consent of the absentee for the purpose of

.....
Petitioner

(Affidavit of Acknowledgment)

(2) The court may, without notice, enter an order on said petition if it deems the relief requested in said petition necessary to protect the best interests of the absentee or his dependents.

(3) Such order shall be prima facie evidence of the validity of the proceedings and the authority of the petitioner to make a conveyance or transfer of the property or to give the absentee's consent in any manner described by subsection (1) of this section.

Passed the House February 19, 1972.
Passed the Senate February 19, 1972.
Approved by the Governor February 22, 1972.
Filed in Office of Secretary of State February 23, 1972.