

government and its existing public institutions, and shall take effect immediately.

Passed the House March 4, 1987.

Passed the Senate April 7, 1987.

Approved by the Governor April 22, 1987.

Filed in Office of Secretary of State April 22, 1987.

CHAPTER 158

[Substitute House Bill No. 697]

LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM—STUDY TO BE CONDUCTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE BUDGET COMMITTEE—VOLUNTEER LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN ROLE CLARIFIED

AN ACT Relating to the long-term care ombudsman program; amending RCW 43.190-.060; creating new sections; and declaring an emergency.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Washington:

NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. The legislature finds and declares that there is a need to study and explore ways for the state long-term care ombudsman office to become more effective as a mechanism on the state level for investigating and resolving complaints made by or on behalf of residents of long-term care facilities relating to actions which may adversely affect the health, safety, welfare, and rights of these individuals, and in providing information to public agencies regarding the problems of residents of long-term care facilities.

In order to accomplish its statutory purpose, the office should be located in state government with due regard to both accountability and program integrity; and in the resolution of complaints, should conduct its operations in a responsible manner, consistent with the law, the needs of the state, and with respect for the office.

For the purposes specified herein, the legislature authorizes a study with recommendations by the legislative budget committee.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. The legislative budget committee shall conduct a study in consultation with the senate committee on human services and corrections and the house committee on health care to determine the effectiveness of the long-term care ombudsman program. The study shall include an analysis of the appropriateness of the placement of the office of the state long-term care ombudsman in state government, considering its authority to respond to complaints concerning long-term care facilities consistent with federal and state law. The study shall address its placement within the department of social and health services and alternative agencies such as the attorney general's office, the insurance commissioner, the state auditor, as an independent state agency or in association with an agency by contract.

The study shall also address the appropriateness of exempt status from the state civil service laws for the state ombudsman in consideration of the office's statutory responsibilities and the nature and importance of its mission.

This report, with recommendations shall be submitted to the legislature no later than December 1, 1987.

Sec. 3. Section 6, chapter 290, Laws of 1983 and RCW 43.190.060 are each amended to read as follows:

A long-term care ombudsman shall:

(1) Investigate and resolve complaints made by or on behalf of older individuals who are residents of long-term care facilities relating to administrative action which may adversely affect the health, safety, welfare, and rights of these individuals;

(2) Monitor the development and implementation of federal, state, and local laws, rules, regulations, and policies with respect to long-term care facilities in this state;

(3) Provide information as appropriate to public agencies regarding the problems of individuals residing in long-term care facilities; and

(4) Provide for training volunteers and promoting the development of citizen organizations to participate in the ombudsman program. (~~Volunteers shall not be used for complaint investigation or problem resolution activities authorized in subsection (1) of this section.~~) A volunteer long-term care ombudsman shall be able to identify and resolve problems regarding the care of residents in long-term care facilities and to assist such residents in the assertion of their civil and human rights. However, volunteers shall not be used for complaint investigations but may engage in fact-finding activities to determine whether a formal complaint should be submitted to the department.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 4. This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and safety, the support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and shall take effect immediately.

Passed the House March 12, 1987.

Passed the Senate April 7, 1987.

Approved by the Governor April 22, 1987.

Filed in Office of Secretary of State April 22, 1987.

CHAPTER 159

[Substitute House Bill No. 55]

SUSTAINABLE HARVEST OF TIMBER MODIFIED

AN ACT Relating to the sustainable harvest of timber from state-owned lands; amending RCW 79.68.040; adding new sections to chapter 79.68 RCW; and creating a new section.