

Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

SB 498 — Office of Public and Professional Guardians Direct-Support Organization

by Senator Garcia

SB 498 removes the scheduled repeal date of the law authorizing the Foundation for Indigent Guardianship, Inc. The foundation serves as a direct-support organization for the Office of Public and Professional Guardians. That office within the Department of Elder Affairs regulates professional guardians with certain disciplinary and enforcement powers. The office is required to review and, if determined legally sufficient, investigate any complaint that a professional guardian has violated the standards of practice established by the office.

In 2006, the foundation founded The Florida Public Guardianship Pooled Special Needs Trust with the sole purpose of helping people with disabilities qualify for or maintain means-tested public benefits, such as Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income, food assistance, and public housing while potentially benefitting Florida's statewide public guardianship program. Since that date, the foundation has distributed over \$1,000,000 to public guardianship programs.

The foundation also provides complimentary educational opportunities for the staff of public guardianship programs as well as other educational projects. These efforts are designed to raise awareness and educate the public about the needs of public guardians and those they serve and to assist the livelihood and general welfare of Florida-resident elders in need of a public guardian, as well as those persons with cognitive impairments who are indigent and have no family or friends to care for their needs.

If these provisions are approved by the Governor they will take effect July 1, 2018.

Vote: Senate 35-0; House 112-1