

By the Committee on Governmental Rules & Regulations and
Representatives Wallace, Casey, Sobel, Kilmer and Trovillion

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to state government; creating
3 the "Florida Customer Service Standards Act";
4 specifying measures that state departments and
5 agencies are directed to implement with respect
6 to interaction with their customers; providing
7 for funding and enforcement; specifying that
8 failure to comply with the act does not
9 constitute a cause of action; providing an
10 effective date.

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12 WHEREAS, confidence in the government's ability to
13 solve problems has been deteriorating for the past three
14 decades; in 1963, the national public's confidence level rated
15 75 percent, compared to 1993, when confidence levels rated as
16 low as 17 percent, and

17 WHEREAS, there is a need for customers to be treated
18 with courtesy and respect, to have simplified access to
19 services, to have services that are efficient, to have
20 communications and correspondences that are clear and easily
21 understood, and to save money, and

22 WHEREAS, the State of Florida is dedicated to improving
23 the service standards practiced by state departments and
24 agencies, NOW, THEREFORE,

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26 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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28 Section 1. Florida Customer Service Standards Act.--
29 (1) SHORT TITLE.--This section may be cited as the
30 "Florida Customer Service Standards Act."

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1 (2) PURPOSE.--It is the purpose of this section to
2 direct state departments and agencies to practice and employ
3 all the measures set forth in this section.

4 (3) DEFINITION.--As used in this section, "customer"
5 means any member of the public who utilizes or requests
6 services or information provided by a state department or
7 agency or who is required by statutory directive or mandate to
8 interact with the department or agency. "Customer" does not
9 include those persons currently under criminal prosecution or
10 subject to administrative action, or incarcerated as the
11 result of a criminal conviction.

12 (4) MEASURES TO BE IMPLEMENTED.--State departments and
13 agencies shall:

14 (a) Provide an ombudsman, designated facilitator,
15 consumer advocate, or some other designated employee of the
16 department or agency, who shall be responsible for
17 facilitating the resolution of complaints and problems not
18 resolved through normal administrative channels within the
19 department or agency, including any customer complaints
20 regarding unsatisfactory treatment by department or agency
21 employees. The employee designated under this section should
22 be readily identifiable to the customer.

23 (b) Provide available information and accurate
24 responses to questions and requests for assistance in a prompt
25 manner, and utilize telephonic or electronic methods to
26 facilitate delivery of information or assistance to the
27 customer.

28 (c) Acknowledge receipt of a telephonic or electronic
29 inquiry by the end of the next business day.

30 (d) Provide direct local or toll-free telephonic or
31 direct electronic access to the department or agency

1 ombudsman, designated facilitator, consumer advocate, or other
2 designated employee of the department or agency in order that
3 the public may interact with the department or agency
4 remotely. Where practicable a local contact is preferable.

5 (e) Employ mechanisms to elicit customer feedback
6 regarding customer service and satisfaction.

7 (f) Employ a system by which customer service
8 complaints, requests, and resolutions are tracked.

9 (g) Provide statistical data on customer service
10 complaints, requests, and resolutions, as well as data
11 obtained through the customer feedback mechanisms, in
12 departmental and agency annual reports or other performance
13 publications.

14 (h) Utilize data collected in customer feedback and
15 tracking mechanisms when conducting management and budget
16 planning activities.

17 (i) Provide access to an employee's direct supervisor
18 within 5 business days when a customer has received
19 unsatisfactory treatment by a department or agency employee or
20 has not received acknowledgement of receipt of a telephonic or
21 electronic inquiry.

22 (j) Create a uniform departmental grievance process
23 for customers whose issues were not resolved through normal
24 administrative channels or by the ombudsman, designated
25 facilitator, consumer advocate, or other designated employee
26 of the department or agency.

27 (k) Implement a merit plan, based on criteria
28 established under customer service standards, to reward good
29 customer assistance by employees.

30 (l) Provide training to employees on improving
31 customer service and on the role of the ombudsman, designated

- 1 facilitator, consumer advocate, or other designated employee
2 of the department or agency.
- 3 (m) Include in the departmental or agency strategic
4 plan a program outline or goal regarding customer service.
- 5 (n) Conduct interagency discussion on methods of
6 providing and improving customer service.
- 7 (5) FUNDING.--Departments and agencies shall utilize
8 available resources to achieve the provisions of this section.
- 9 (6) ENFORCEMENT.--Departments and agencies should
10 enforce the provisions of this section through existing
11 disciplinary policies.
- 12 (7) FAILURE TO COMPLY.--A department's or agency's
13 failure to comply with this section does not constitute a
14 cause of action.

15 Section 2. This act shall take effect October 1, 2000.

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18 HOUSE SUMMARY

19 Creates the Florida Customer Service Standards Act.
20 Specifies measures that state departments and agencies
21 are directed to implement with respect to interaction
22 with their customers.
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