

By the Committee on Judiciary and Representatives Peaden
and Byrd

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to elder divisions; creating s.
3 26.57, F.S.; authorizing the chief judge in the
4 Tenth, Twelfth, and Thirteenth Judicial
5 Circuits to create an elder division for
6 certain purposes; establishing division duties;
7 providing an appropriation to establish pilot
8 programs in such circuits for such purposes;
9 providing reporting requirements; requiring
10 divisions to conduct surveys for certain
11 purposes; providing an effective date.

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

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15 Section 1. Section 26.57, Florida Statutes, is created
16 to read:

17 26.57 Elder division.--The chief judge of each
18 judicial circuit may create an elder division. The elder
19 division shall be available for cases involving parties who
20 are at least 60 years of age and who require special
21 assistance or accommodation. The elder division shall:

22 (1) Work with the Americans with Disabilities Act
23 coordinator to assist elderly persons with disabilities.

24 (2) Make recommendations to the court regarding the
25 need to expedite a case in which an elderly person is a party.

26 (3) Coordinate access to agencies that provide
27 services to elderly persons.

28 (4) Provide education to elderly persons concerning
29 the operation of the judicial system.

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1 (5) Gather information and provide documentation
2 concerning the special needs of elderly persons in the
3 judicial system.

4 (6) Evaluate the use of new technology, such as video
5 conferencing, to assist elderly persons who are impaired in
6 their ability to travel from their homes to the courthouse.

7 (7) Designate a person to act as liaison with the
8 Statewide Public Guardianship Office.

9 Section 2. The sum of \$1,050,000 is appropriated from
10 the General Revenue Fund, to be divided equally between the
11 Tenth, Twelfth, and Thirteenth Judicial Circuits to implement
12 pilot programs to test the efficacy of the elder division
13 program. Judicial circuits implementing the pilot program
14 shall provide a report to the Governor, the President of the
15 Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the
16 Chief Justice of the Supreme Court no later than December 31,
17 2001, describing the activities of the elder division, the
18 number of cases handled, the types of needs met, and the
19 overall effectiveness of the program. The elder division
20 shall create a consumer survey which shall be provided to each
21 elderly person or the elderly person's family member and ask
22 for feedback on the elder division's performance and the
23 usefulness of services provided.

24 Section 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a
25 law.

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