

By Senator Latvala

19-1470-00

See HB

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 uses or requests services
6 or information provided by a state department or agency or who
7 is required by statutory directive or mandate to interact with
8 the department or agency. "Customer" does not include those
9 persons currently under criminal prosecution or subject to
10 administrative action, or incarcerated as the result of a
11 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 facilitating
17 the resolution of complaints and problems not resolved through
18 normal administrative channels within the department or
19 agency, including any customer complaints regarding
20 unsatisfactory treatment by department or agency employees.
21 The employee designated under this section should be readily
22 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 use telephonic or electronic methods to facilitate
26 delivery of information or assistance to the customer.

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

29 (d) Provide direct local or toll-free telephonic or
30 direct electronic access to the department or agency
31 ombudsman, designated facilitator, consumer advocate, or other

1 designated employee of the department or agency in order that
2 the public may interact with the department or agency
3 remotely. Where practicable a local contact is preferable.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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