

By the Committee on Governmental Oversight and Productivity;
and Senator Latvala

302-1819A-00

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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 are
directed to implement with respect to
interaction with their customers; 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 to practice and employ all the
3 measures set forth in this section.

4 (3) DEFINITIONS.--As used in this section, the term:

5 (a) "Customer" means any member of the public who uses
6 or requests services or information provided by a state
7 department or who is required by statute to interact with the
8 department. The term does not include those persons who are
9 currently under criminal prosecution or subject to
10 administrative action or who are lawfully in state or local
11 government custody.

12 (b) "Department" means a principal administrative unit
13 within the executive branch of state government, as defined in
14 chapter 20, Florida Statutes.

15 (4) MEASURES TO BE IMPLEMENTED.--State departments
16 shall:

17 (a) Designate an employee or employees in the
18 department who shall be responsible for facilitating the
19 resolution of customer complaints, including any customer
20 complaints regarding unsatisfactory treatment by department
21 employees.

22 (b) Provide available information and accurate
23 responses to questions and requests for assistance in a prompt
24 manner.

25 (c) Acknowledge receipt of a telephonic or electronic
26 question or request by the end of the next business day, when
27 practicable.

28 (d) Provide direct local or toll-free telephonic or
29 direct electronic access to the department employee or
30 employees designated to resolve customer complaints.

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1 (e) Develop a process for review by upper-level
2 management of any customer complaints not resolved by the
3 department employee or employees designated to resolve
4 customer complaints.

5 (f) Develop customer-satisfaction measures as part of
6 the department's performance-measurement system.

7 (g) Employ a system by which customer complaints and
8 resolutions of those complaints are tracked.

9 (h) Provide statistical data on customer complaints
10 and resolutions of those complaints, and on
11 customer-satisfaction measures in annual reports or other
12 performance publications, and use this data when conducting
13 management and budget-planning activities.

14 (i) Provide training to employees on improving
15 customer service and on the role of the department employee or
16 employees designated to resolve customer complaints.

17 (j) Include in the departmental strategic plan a
18 program outline or goal regarding customer service.

19 (k) Conduct interdepartmental discussions on methods
20 of providing and improving customer service.

21 (5) FUNDING.--Departments shall use available
22 resources to achieve the purposes of this section.

23 (6) FAILURE TO COMPLY.--No cause of action shall arise
24 in favor of any person due to a department's failure to comply
25 with any provision of this section.

26 Section 2. This act shall take effect October 1, 2000.
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1 STATEMENT OF SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES CONTAINED IN
2 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
3 SB 1966
4 Adds that any person who is in "lawful state or local
5 government custody" is excluded from the definition of
6 customer, rather than only excluding those who are
7 "incarcerated as a result of a criminal conviction."
8 Provides that the act applies to "departments," rather than
9 both "departments and agencies", and defines "departments" as,
10 "the principal administrative units within the executive
11 branch, as defined in chapter 20."
12 Deletes "normal administrative channels" language.
13 Provides that departments may designate multiple employees
14 rather than one employee to resolve customer complaints.
15 Deletes requirement that departments respond telephonically or
16 electronically to inquiries.
17 Retains requirement that an acknowledgement of a customer's
18 telephonic or electronic requests be made the next business
19 day, but adds that this need only be done when practicable.
20 Requires the development of customer satisfaction measures as
21 part of the department's performance measurement system.
22 Requires the development of a process for upper level
23 management review of complaints not resolved by the designated
24 employee, rather than the development of a "grievance
25 process."
26 Retains requirement that customer complaints and resolutions
27 be tracked, but deletes tracking requirement for customer
28 requests.
29 Deletes required merit plan.
30 Deletes language requiring department to enforce act through
31 existing disciplinary policies.