

By the Committees on Judiciary; Governmental Oversight and Productivity; and Senator Latvala

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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.

9 (b) "Department" means a principal administrative unit
10 within the executive branch of state government, as defined in
11 chapter 20, Florida Statutes, and shall also include the
12 Florida Public Service Commission.

13 (4) MEASURES TO BE IMPLEMENTED.--State departments
14 shall:

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

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

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

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

29 (e) Develop a process for review by upper-level
30 management of any customer complaints not resolved by the
31 department employee or employees designated to resolve

1 customer complaints. In evaluating the appropriateness of
2 response time, management may consider periodic, high volume
3 inquiries as a justifiable cause of delay.

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

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

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

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

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

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

20 (5) AGENCY OPERATING HOURS.--Departments shall be
21 staffed and open to the public for business on all regular
22 business days.

23 (6) FUNDING.--Departments shall use available
24 resources to achieve the purposes of this section.

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

28 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 CS/SB 1966
4 Deletes the exemption that narrowed the scope of who is a
5 customer for purposes of the act (i.e., persons under criminal
6 prosecution, persons in pending administrative hearings, and
7 persons in governmental custody).
8 Adds the Florida Public Service Commission to the list of
9 state entities who will be subject to the provisions of act.
10 Provides flexibility for longer response time by a department
11 when the volume of customer inquiries to the department are
12 high.
13 Requires the departments to be staffed and open to the public
14 during regular business hours.
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