

By Senator Laurent

17-777-00

See CS/HB 163

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

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

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

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

- (1) Work with the Americans with Disabilities Act
coordinator to assist elderly persons with disabilities.
- (2) Make recommendations to the court regarding the
need to expedite a case in which an elderly person is a party.
- (3) Coordinate access to agencies that provide
services to elderly persons.
- (4) Provide education to elderly persons concerning
the operation of the judicial system.

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 that shall be provided to each
21 elderly person, or family member representing an elderly
22 person, asking for feedback on the elder division's
23 performance and the usefulness of services provided.

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

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SENATE SUMMARY

Authorizes the chief judge of each judicial circuit to create an elder division for cases that involve parties who are at least 60 years of age and who require special assistance or accommodation. Appropriates funds to the Tenth, Twelfth, and Thirteenth Judicial Circuits to establish pilot programs. Requires any circuit that implements a pilot program to report to the Governor, Legislature, and Supreme Court.