

---

SENATE BILL 5788

---

State of Washington

64th Legislature

2015 Regular Session

By Senators Cleveland, Billig, Padden, Keiser, Bailey, Frockt, Fraser, Darneille, Nelson, Becker, Hargrove, and Benton

Read first time 02/03/15. Referred to Committee on Health Care.

1 AN ACT Relating to the creation of two elder justice center  
2 demonstration sites; adding a new section to chapter 74.34 RCW; and  
3 creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the number of  
6 Washingtonians age sixty-five and older is projected to exceed one  
7 and one-half million by 2030. The number of residents age eighty-five  
8 and older is increasing at an even faster rate, and is expected to  
9 more than double over the next two decades. The legislature also  
10 finds that the number of seniors who are abused, exploited, or  
11 neglected every year is on the rise, with some research indicating  
12 that one in ten seniors has suffered some form of abuse or neglect at  
13 least once. The legislature finds that the number of reports to adult  
14 protective services in Washington has increased twenty-five percent  
15 since 2008, and the number of cases investigated has increased thirty  
16 percent, with twenty-one thousand cases forwarded for investigation  
17 in 2013. Complex and time-intensive financial exploitation cases now  
18 represent nearly one-third of all investigations. The legislature  
19 further finds that national researchers believe the majority of cases  
20 go unreported out of embarrassment, confusion about what happened, or  
21 fear of being cut off from family or loved ones. The legislature also

1 finds that recognition of and mechanisms for dealing with elder abuse  
2 and exploitation lag many years behind the strides that have been  
3 made in child abuse awareness and protection. The legislature  
4 therefore intends to establish two demonstration sites for elder  
5 justice centers modeled on the state's children's advocacy centers,  
6 with the goal of increasing community capacity to prevent and respond  
7 to abuse, neglect, and exploitation of Washington's growing  
8 population of elders and vulnerable adults.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 74.34  
10 RCW to read as follows:

11 (1) The department shall establish an elder justice center at two  
12 demonstration sites, one of which must be located in Clark county and  
13 the other located in Spokane county. The department may contract  
14 directly with the counties for the implementation of the  
15 demonstration sites in accordance with the requirements in this  
16 section.

17 (2) For the purposes of this section, "elder justice center"  
18 means a senior-focused center that serves to coordinate a  
19 multidisciplinary approach to the prevention, investigation,  
20 prosecution, and treatment of abandonment, abuse, neglect, and  
21 financial exploitation of vulnerable adults.

22 (3) An elder justice center must provide coordinated access to  
23 services including, but not limited to, advocacy and case review by  
24 multidisciplinary teams that include, but are not limited to, adult  
25 protective services, law enforcement officers, a prosecuting  
26 attorney, a victim advocate, and a program coordinator.  
27 Multidisciplinary teams also may include community agencies and  
28 systems that are involved with the prevention and response to elder  
29 abandonment, abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation.

30 (4) Each demonstration site shall develop a written protocol to  
31 address the coordination of investigations between the prosecutor's  
32 office, law enforcement, adult protective services, local advocacy  
33 groups, and any other local agency involved in the criminal  
34 investigation of vulnerable adult abandonment, abuse, neglect, and  
35 financial exploitation. The protocol must be developed by the county  
36 prosecuting attorney with the assistance of the other entities named  
37 in this subsection.

38 (5) The department shall submit, in compliance with RCW  
39 43.01.036, the following reports to the governor and the legislature:

1           (a) By January 10, 2016, a brief progress report describing the  
2 status of implementation at each demonstration site;  
3           (b) By January 10, 2017, an interim report outlining the  
4 structure and operation of each site; and  
5           (c) By December 1, 2018, a final report discussing the  
6 effectiveness of the elder justice center model in increasing  
7 community capacity to prevent and respond to abandonment, abuse,  
8 neglect, and financial exploitation of vulnerable adults. The final  
9 report also must contain recommendations for modifying or expanding  
10 additional demonstration sites.

--- END ---