

Committee Substitute for
Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 710

An act relating to state government; creating the “Florida Customer Service Standards Act”; providing definitions; specifying measures that state departments are directed to implement with respect to interaction with their customers; providing requirements regarding operating hours; providing that failure to comply with the act does not constitute a cause of action; providing exceptions; 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, 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.”

(2) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this section to direct state departments to practice and employ all the measures set forth in this section.

(3) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section:

(a) “Customer” means any member of the public who uses or requests services or information provided by a state department or who is required by statute to interact with the department.

(b) “Department” means a principal administrative unit within the executive branch of state government, as set forth in chapter 20, Florida Statutes, and also includes the Public Service Commission.

(4) MEASURES TO BE IMPLEMENTED.—State departments shall:

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

(b) Provide available information, except information which is confidential pursuant to any other state or federal law, and accurate responses to questions and requests for assistance in a prompt manner.

(c) Acknowledge receipt of a telephonic or electronic question or request by the end of the next business day.

(d) Provide local or toll-free telephonic or electronic access either through a centralized complaint-intake call center or directly to a department employee or employees designated to resolve customer complaints.

(e) Develop a process for review by upper-level management of any customer complaints not resolved by the department employee or employees designated to resolve customer complaints. In evaluating the appropriateness of response time, management may consider periodic, high volume inquiries as a justifiable cause of delay.

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

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

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

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

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

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

(5) OPERATING HOURS.—Departments shall be staffed and open to the public for business on all regular business days.

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

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

(8) EXCEPTIONS.—This section does not apply to a person who uses or requests services or information from a department when such service or information is related to that person's:

(a) Pending or current criminal prosecution;

(b) Current incarceration;

(c) Pending administrative action; or

(d) Current lawful state or local government custody.

Section 2. This act shall take effect October 1, 2001.

Approved by the Governor May 30, 2001.

Filed in Office Secretary of State May 30, 2001.