

By: Zaffirini, et al.
(Smithee)

S.B. No. 667

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to establishing a guardianship compliance program.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Chapter 72, Government Code, is amended by adding Subchapter G to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER G. GUARDIANSHIP COMPLIANCE PROGRAM

Sec. 72.121. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Guardianship proceeding" has the meaning assigned by Section 1002.015, Estates Code.

(2) "Program" means the guardianship compliance program established by this subchapter.

Sec. 72.122. ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM. (a) The office shall establish and maintain a guardianship compliance program designed to provide additional resources and assistance to courts that have jurisdiction over guardianship proceedings by:

(1) engaging guardianship compliance specialists who shall:

(A) review the guardianships of wards and identify reporting deficiencies by guardians;

(B) audit annual accounts required to be filed by guardians under Chapter 1163, Estates Code, or other law and report their findings to the appropriate courts;

(C) work with courts to develop best practices in managing guardianship cases; and

1 (D) report any concerns relating to a ward's
2 well-being or to the potential financial exploitation of a ward
3 discovered as a result of the specialists' work under this section
4 to the appropriate courts; and

5 (2) maintaining an electronic database to monitor
6 filings of:

7 (A) inventories, appraisements, and lists of
8 claims required under Chapter 1154, Estates Code, or Section
9 1203.203, Estates Code;

10 (B) annual reports required under Section
11 1163.101, Estates Code; and

12 (C) any other reports and accounts required of
13 guardians under Chapter 1163, Estates Code, or other law.

14 (b) A court is required to participate in the program,
15 including allowing guardianship compliance specialists to conduct
16 reviews and audits under the program, if the court is selected by
17 the office to participate in the program.

18 (c) A court may apply to the office in the manner and form
19 prescribed by the office for participation in the program.

20 Sec. 72.123. NOTIFICATION OF STATE COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL
21 CONDUCT. The director may notify the State Commission on Judicial
22 Conduct in writing if the office has reason to believe that a
23 judge's actions or failure to act with respect to a report received
24 from a guardianship compliance specialist indicating a concern
25 described by Section 72.122(a)(1)(D) constitutes judicial
26 misconduct.

27 Sec. 72.124. ANNUAL REPORT. Not later than January 1 of

1 each year, the office shall submit a report to the legislature
2 regarding the performance of the program. The report must include:

3 (1) the number of courts involved in the program;

4 (2) the number of guardianships reviewed by
5 guardianship compliance specialists;

6 (3) the number of reviewed guardianship cases found to
7 be out of compliance with statutory reporting requirements;

8 (4) the number of cases reported to a court because of
9 concerns relating to a ward's well-being or to the potential
10 financial exploitation of a ward; and

11 (5) the status of any technology developed to monitor
12 guardianship cases for purposes of the program.

13 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2017.