

CONFERENCE CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 248 2d
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
EIGHTEENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Offered: 5/7/94

Sponsor(s): SENATE RULES COMMITTEE BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 "An Act relating to services for and protection of vulnerable adults; and
2 providing for an effective date."

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

4 * Section 1. AS 08.86.200(b) is amended to read:

5 (b) Notwithstanding (a) of this section, a psychologist or psychological
6 associate shall report to the appropriate authority incidents of child abuse or neglect
7 as required by AS 47.17.020, incidents of [ELDER] abuse of a vulnerable adult as
8 required by AS 47.24.010, and incidents of abuse of disabled persons disclosed to the
9 psychologist or psychological associate by a client. In this subsection "disabled
10 person" means a person who has a physical or mental disability or a physical or mental
11 impairment, as defined in AS 18.80.300.

12 * Sec. 2. AS 47.24.010(a) is amended to read:

13 (a) Except as provided in (e) and (f) of this section, the [THE] following
14 persons who, in the performance of their professional duties, have reasonable cause to

1 believe that a vulnerable adult suffers from abandonment, exploitation, abuse,
2 neglect, or self-neglect [AN ELDERLY PERSON HAS SUFFERED HARM] shall,
3 not later than 24 hours after first having cause for the belief, report the belief to the
4 department's central information and referral service for vulnerable adults
5 [HARM TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES]:

6 (1) a physician or other licensed health care provider;

7 (2) a mental health professional as defined in AS 47.30.915(11) and
8 including a marital and family therapist licensed under AS 08.63;

9 (3) a pharmacist;

10 (4) an administrator of a nursing home, residential care or health care
11 facility;

12 (5) a guardian or conservator;

13 (6) a police officer;

14 (7) a village public safety officer;

15 (8) a village health aide;

16 (9) a social worker;

17 (10) a member of the clergy;

18 (11) a staff employee of a project funded by the Department of
19 Administration for the provision of services to older Alaskans, the Department of
20 Health and Social Services, or the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual
21 Assault [OLDER ALASKANS COMMISSION];

22 (12) an employee of a personal care [HOMEMAKER PROGRAM] or
23 home health aide program;

24 (13) an emergency medical technician or a mobile intensive care
25 paramedic;

26 (14) a caregiver of the vulnerable adult.

27 * Sec. 3. AS 47.24.010(b) is amended to read:

28 (b) A report [OF HARM] made under this section may include the name and
29 address of the reporting person [REPORTING THE HARM] and must [SHALL]
30 include

31 (1) the name and address of the vulnerable adult [ELDERLY

1 PERSON];

2 (2) information relating to the nature and extent of the abandonment,
3 exploitation, abuse, neglect, or self-neglect [HARM];

4 (3) other information that the reporting person [REPORTING THE
5 HARM] believes might be helpful in an investigation of the case or in providing
6 protection for the vulnerable adult [ELDERLY PERSON].

7 * Sec. 4. AS 47.24.010(c) is amended to read:

8 (c) The department or its designees shall report to the Department of Law
9 any person required by (a) of this section to report who fails to comply with this
10 section. A person listed in (a) of this section who, because of the circumstances,
11 should have had reasonable cause to believe that a vulnerable adult suffers from
12 abandonment, exploitation, abuse, neglect, or self-neglect but who fails to comply
13 with this section is guilty of a violation as defined in AS 11.81.900(b).

14 * Sec. 5. AS 47.24.010(d) is amended to read:

15 (d) This section does not prohibit a person listed in (a) of this section, or any
16 other person, from reporting cases of abandonment, exploitation, abuse, neglect, or
17 self-neglect of a vulnerable adult [ECONOMIC OR PHYSICAL HARM TO AN
18 ELDERLY PERSON] that have come to the person's attention [IN A
19 NONPROFESSIONAL CAPACITY. THIS SECTION DOES NOT PROHIBIT ANY
20 OTHER PERSON FROM REPORTING ECONOMIC HARM TO AN ELDERLY
21 PERSON THAT THE PERSON HAS REASONABLE CAUSE TO BELIEVE IS A
22 RESULT OF THEFT, FRAUD, OR COERCION BY A CARETAKER OF THE
23 ELDERLY PERSON, OR PHYSICAL HARM TO AN ELDERLY PERSON THAT
24 THE PERSON HAS REASONABLE CAUSE TO BELIEVE IS A RESULT OF
25 ABUSE, NEGLECT, OR ABANDONMENT].

26 * Sec. 6. AS 47.24.010(e) is amended to read:

27 (e) If a person making a report under this section believes that immediate
28 action is necessary to protect the vulnerable adult [ELDERLY PERSON] from
29 imminent risk of serious physical harm due to abandonment, exploitation, abuse,
30 neglect, or self-neglect and the reporting person cannot immediately contact the
31 department's central information and referral service for vulnerable adults

1 [HARM], the reporting person may [SHALL] make the report [OF HARM] to a
2 police officer or a village public safety officer. The police officer or village public
3 safety officer shall take immediate action to protect the vulnerable adult [ELDERLY
4 PERSON] and shall, at the earliest opportunity, notify the department. A person may
5 not bring an action for damages against a police officer, village public safety
6 officer, the state, or a political subdivision of the state based on a decision under
7 this subsection to take or not to take immediate action to protect a vulnerable
8 adult. If a decision is made under this subsection to take immediate action to
9 protect a vulnerable adult, a person may not bring an action for damages based
10 on the protective actions taken unless the protective actions were performed with
11 gross negligence or intentional misconduct; damages awarded in the action may
12 include only direct economic compensatory damages for personal injury.

13 * Sec. 7. AS 47.24.010(f) is repealed and reenacted to read:

14 (f) A person listed in (a) of this section who reports to the long term care
15 ombudsman under AS 44.21.232, or to the Department of Health and Social Services,
16 that a vulnerable adult has been exploited, abused, or neglected in an out-of-home care
17 facility is considered to have met the duty to report under (a) of this section.

18 * Sec. 8. AS 47.24 is amended by adding new sections to read:

19 Sec. 47.24.011. DUTIES OF THE DEPARTMENT REGARDING SERVICES
20 AND PROTECTION FOR VULNERABLE ADULTS. In order to facilitate the
21 provision of supportive and protective services for vulnerable adults, the department
22 shall

23 (1) compile information on available supportive and protective services
24 for vulnerable adults in the state;

25 (2) establish, publicize, and maintain a central information and referral
26 service for vulnerable adults;

27 (3) develop and coordinate a statewide system to serve vulnerable
28 adults who are in need of protective services;

29 (4) establish criteria and procedures for the authorization and
30 supervision of other state agencies or community-based service providers to serve as
31 designees of the department under this chapter;

1 (5) in accordance with this chapter, designate other state agencies or
2 community-based service providers to deliver supportive and protective services to
3 vulnerable adults who are in need of protective services;

4 (6) develop within the central information and referral service for
5 vulnerable adults a central registry for reports of vulnerable adults in need of protective
6 services;

7 (7) maintain confidentiality of records as provided for in AS 47.24.050;
8 and

9 (8) adopt regulations to carry out the purposes of this chapter.

10 Sec. 47.24.013. REPORTS OF ABANDONMENT, EXPLOITATION, ABUSE,
11 NEGLECT, OR SELF-NEGLECT OF VULNERABLE ADULTS IN OUT-OF-HOME
12 CARE FACILITIES. (a) If a report received under AS 47.24.010 regards the
13 abandonment, exploitation, abuse, neglect, or self-neglect of a vulnerable adult who is
14 60 years of age or older that is alleged to have been committed by or to have resulted
15 from the negligence of the staff or a volunteer of an out-of-home care facility,
16 including a facility licensed under AS 18.20, in which the vulnerable adult resides, and
17 if the Department of Health and Social Services licenses that type of facility, the
18 Department of Administration shall transfer the report for investigation to the long
19 term care ombudsman under AS 44.21.232 and the Department of Health and Social
20 Services.

21 (b) The department shall transfer to the Department of Health and Social
22 Services, for investigation, a report received under AS 47.24.010 regarding the
23 abandonment, exploitation, abuse, neglect, or self-neglect of a vulnerable adult who is
24 less than 60 years of age that is alleged to have been committed by or to have resulted
25 from the negligence of the staff or a volunteer of an out-of-home care facility in which
26 the vulnerable adult resides, if the Department of Health and Social Services licenses
27 that type of facility.

28 (c) Upon receipt of a report from the department under (a) or (b) of this
29 section, the long term care ombudsman and the Department of Health and Social
30 Services shall

31 (1) conduct an investigation as appropriate under AS 44.21.232 or

1 AS 47, respectively;

2 (2) coordinate and cooperate in their responses to and investigations of
3 the report if their jurisdictions overlap;

4 (3) provide the results of their actions or investigations to the central
5 information and referral service of the department within 60 days after the receipt of
6 the report.

7 (d) If the long term care ombudsman or the Department of Health and Social
8 Services receives directly a report regarding the abandonment, exploitation, abuse,
9 neglect, or self-neglect of a vulnerable adult in an out-of-home care facility, the
10 ombudsman or the Department of Health and Social Services shall provide the report,
11 and the results of their actions or investigations regarding the report, to the central
12 information and referral service of the Department of Administration. The Department
13 of Administration may investigate the report as described in AS 47.24.015 if the
14 department determines that action is appropriate.

15 (e) If the results of an investigation by the long term care ombudsman or the
16 Department of Health and Social Services are provided to the Department of
17 Administration under (c) or (d) of this section, the Department of Administration may
18 make a final determination as described in AS 47.24.015(b), based on the investigation
19 results provided, regarding services to be offered to the vulnerable adult.

20 Sec. 47.24.015. ACTION ON REPORTS. (a) Upon the department's receipt
21 of a report under AS 47.24.010 that is not transferred under AS 47.24.013, the
22 department, or its designee, shall promptly initiate an investigation to determine
23 whether the vulnerable adult who is the subject of the report suffers from
24 abandonment, exploitation, abuse, neglect, or self-neglect. The department, or its
25 designee, shall conduct a face-to-face interview with the subject of the report unless
26 that person is unconscious or the department, or its designee, has determined that a
27 face-to-face interview could further endanger the vulnerable adult.

28 (b) After the department conducts an investigation under (a) of this section,
29 the department shall prepare a written report of the investigation, including findings,
30 recommendations, and a determination of whether and what kind of supportive or
31 protective services are needed by and are to be offered to the vulnerable adult. After

1 the department's designee conducts an investigation under (a) of this section, the
2 designee shall prepare a written report of the investigation, including findings,
3 recommendations, and a proposed determination of whether and what kind of
4 supportive or protective services are to be offered to the vulnerable adult. The
5 department shall prepare, and attach to the designee's report, a final determination
6 regarding services to be offered to the vulnerable adult.

7 (c) The department, or its designee, shall immediately terminate an
8 investigation under this section upon the request of the vulnerable adult who is the
9 subject of the report made under AS 47.24.010. However, if the investigation to that
10 point has resulted in reasonable cause to believe that the vulnerable adult is in need
11 of protective services,

12 (1) the department may petition the court as set out in AS 47.24.019;

13 or

14 (2) the department or its designee may refer the report made to the
15 department under AS 47.24.010 to a police officer for criminal investigation.

16 (d) Upon request, a person who made a report to the department under
17 AS 47.24.010 regarding a vulnerable adult shall be notified of the status of the
18 investigation conducted under (a) of this section regarding that vulnerable adult.

19 (e) A person may not bring an action for damages based on a decision under
20 this section to offer or not to offer protective services to a vulnerable adult.

21 (f) A person may not bring an action for damages based on the provision of
22 protective services under this section unless the action is based on gross negligence or
23 intentional misconduct. The damages awarded in an action under this section may
24 include only direct economic compensatory damages for personal injury.

25 Sec. 47.24.016. SURROGATE DECISION MAKERS FOR VULNERABLE
26 ADULTS. (a) If the department determines under AS 47.24.015 that a vulnerable
27 adult is in need of protective services, but the department cannot obtain the vulnerable
28 adult's consent to receive the services because the vulnerable adult is unable to consent
29 or lacks decision making capacity, and has no guardian or attorney in fact to serve as
30 the vulnerable adult's surrogate decision maker, the department may select from the
31 following list, in the order of priority listed, an individual who is willing to be the

1 vulnerable adult's surrogate decision maker for the purpose of deciding whether to
2 consent to the vulnerable adult's receipt of protective services:

3 (1) the vulnerable adult's spouse, unless

4 (A) the vulnerable adult and the spouse have separate domiciles;

5 or

6 (B) the vulnerable adult or the spouse have initiated divorce or
7 dissolution proceedings;

8 (2) an individual who lives with the vulnerable adult in a spousal
9 relationship or as a domestic partner and who is 18 years of age or older;

10 (3) a son or daughter of the vulnerable adult who is 18 years of age or
11 older;

12 (4) a parent of the vulnerable adult;

13 (5) a brother or sister of the vulnerable adult who is 18 years of age
14 or older; or

15 (6) a close friend or relative of the vulnerable adult who is 18 years of
16 age or older.

17 (b) An individual from the list in (a) of this section may not be selected as a
18 surrogate decision maker if

19 (1) the department determines that individual does not possess decision
20 making capacity; or

21 (2) there are allegations that individual is a perpetrator of the
22 abandonment, exploitation, abuse, or neglect of the vulnerable adult.

23 (c) If the department intends to select a surrogate decision maker from a
24 priority level in the list in (a) of this section and there is more than one individual at
25 that priority level who is willing to be the surrogate decision maker, those individuals

26 (1) may select from amongst themselves, by majority vote, an
27 individual to serve as the surrogate decision maker; or

28 (2) as a group may serve as the surrogate decision maker and reach
29 decisions by consensus.

30 (d) The department may not continue to provide protective services to a
31 vulnerable adult based on the consent of a surrogate decision maker serving under this

1 section if the department determines that the vulnerable adult has become able to
2 consent or has regained decision making capacity since the surrogate's consent was
3 given. The department may continue protective services to a vulnerable adult who has
4 become able to consent or has regained decision making capacity only if the vulnerable
5 adult consents.

6 Sec. 47.24.017. DELIVERY OF PROTECTIVE SERVICES FOR
7 VULNERABLE ADULTS. (a) If the department determines under AS 47.24.015 that
8 a vulnerable adult is in need of protective services and either the vulnerable adult, the
9 vulnerable adult's guardian or attorney in fact, or a surrogate decision maker selected
10 under AS 47.24.016 consents to receipt of the protective services, and to the extent
11 that resources are available, the department shall ensure that the protective services for
12 the vulnerable adult are provided by the department or its designee within 10 working
13 days after the department received the report under AS 47.24.010 regarding the
14 abandonment, exploitation, abuse, neglect, or self-neglect of the vulnerable adult.
15 However, if circumstances beyond the control of the department or the department's
16 designee make it impossible to provide the protective services within the 10 working
17 days, the department shall ensure that the services are provided as soon as possible
18 after that time.

19 (b) Notwithstanding (a) of this section, if the department determines that an
20 emergency situation exists that necessitates provision of protective services to a
21 vulnerable adult, the department may provide the necessary protective services in a
22 manner determined by the department to be the most appropriate in light of the
23 emergency situation, regardless of whether the vulnerable adult or any other person has
24 consented to receipt of the services.

25 (c) To the extent practicable, protective services provided under this section
26 shall be delivered in a culturally relevant manner that protects the vulnerable adult's
27 right to the least restrictive environment and maximizes that person's own decision
28 making capabilities.

29 Sec. 47.24.019. PETITIONING COURT FOR CERTAIN PROTECTIVE
30 SERVICES. (a) If, after investigation under AS 47.24.015, the department has
31 reasonable cause to believe that a vulnerable adult is in need of protective services and

1 is an incapacitated person, the department may petition the court under AS 13.26 for
2 appointment of a guardian or temporary guardian for the vulnerable adult for the
3 purpose of deciding whether to consent to the receipt of protective services for the
4 vulnerable adult.

5 (b) If, after an investigation under AS 47.24.015, the department has
6 reasonable cause to believe that a vulnerable adult is mentally ill and as a result either
7 is likely to cause serious harm to self or others or is gravely disabled, the department
8 may petition the court under AS 47.30.700 to initiate an involuntary commitment
9 proceeding.

10 (c) If a vulnerable adult who has consented to receive protective services, or
11 on whose behalf consent to receive protective services has been given, is prevented by
12 a caregiver from receiving those services, the department may assist the vulnerable
13 adult or the person who consented to the vulnerable adult's receipt of the services to
14 petition the superior court for an injunction restraining the caregiver from interfering
15 with the provision of protective services to the vulnerable adult.

16 * Sec. 9. AS 47.24.040 is repealed and reenacted to read:

17 Sec. 47.24.040. MONITORING. If ongoing protective services are provided
18 to a vulnerable adult under AS 47.24.017, the department shall monitor the adult's
19 situation, as the department considers appropriate, until the department determines that
20 the protective services are no longer needed.

21 * Sec. 10. AS 47.24.050 is amended to read:

22 Sec. 47.24.050. CONFIDENTIALITY OF REPORTS. (a) Investigation
23 reports and reports of the abandonment, exploitation, abuse, neglect, or self-neglect
24 of a vulnerable adult [HARM] filed under this chapter [AS 47.24.010 - 47.24.100]
25 are confidential and are not subject to public inspection and copying under
26 AS 09.25.110 - 09.25.125. However, in accordance with this chapter [AS 47.24.010
27 - 47.24.100] and regulations adopted under this chapter [AS 47.24.010 - 47.24.100],
28 investigation reports may be used by appropriate [GOVERNMENTAL] agencies or
29 individuals inside and outside the state, in connection with investigations or judicial
30 proceedings involving the abandonment, exploitation, abuse, neglect, or self-neglect
31 of a vulnerable adult [HARM TO AN ELDERLY PERSON].

1 (b) The department shall disclose a report of the abandonment, exploitation,
2 abuse, neglect, or self-neglect of a vulnerable adult [HARM] if the vulnerable adult
3 [ELDERLY PERSON] who is the subject of the report consents in writing. The
4 department shall, upon request, disclose the number of verified reports of
5 abandonment, exploitation, abuse, neglect, or self-neglect of a vulnerable adult
6 [HARM] that occurred at an institution that provides [FOR] care for vulnerable
7 adults [OF THE ELDERLY].

8 * Sec. 11. AS 47.24.070 is repealed and reenacted to read:

9 Sec. 47.24.070. REGULATIONS. Before adoption by the department,
10 regulations to implement this chapter shall be provided to the Older Alaskans
11 Commission (AS 44.21.200) for review.

12 * Sec. 12. AS 47.24.120 is amended to read:

13 Sec. 47.24.120. IMMUNITY FROM LIABILITY; RETALIATION
14 PROHIBITED. (a) A person who in good faith makes a report under AS 47.24.010
15 [AS 47.24.110], regardless of whether the person is required to do so, is immune from
16 civil or criminal liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed for making the
17 report.

18 (b) An employer or supervisor of a person who in good faith makes a report
19 under AS 47.24.010 [AS 47.24.110] may not discharge, demote, transfer, reduce pay
20 or benefits or work privileges of, prepare a negative work performance evaluation of,
21 or take other detrimental action against the person because the person made the report.
22 The person making the report may bring a civil action for compensatory and punitive
23 damages against an employer or supervisor who violates this subsection. In the civil
24 action there is a rebuttable presumption that the detrimental action by the employer or
25 supervisor was retaliatory if it was taken within 90 days after the report was made.

26 * Sec. 13. AS 47.24 is amended by adding new sections to read:

27 Sec. 47.24.130. TREATMENT THROUGH SPIRITUAL MEANS. This
28 chapter may not be construed to mean that a person is abused, neglected, self-
29 neglected, vulnerable, unable to consent, abandoned, exploited, or in need of
30 emergency or protective services for the sole reason that the person relies on or is
31 being furnished treatment by spiritual means through prayer alone in accordance with

1 the tenets and practices of a church or religious denomination of which the person is
2 a member or adherent, provided that the person consents to the treatment through
3 spiritual means only and the treatment is administered by an accredited practitioner of
4 the church or religious denomination. In this section, "church or religious
5 denomination" has the meaning given to "religious organization" in AS 05.15.210.

6 Sec. 47.24.900. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter,

7 (1) "abandonment" means desertion of a vulnerable adult by a
8 caregiver;

9 (2) "abuse" means

10 (A) the wilful, intentional, or reckless nonaccidental, and
11 nontherapeutic infliction of physical pain, injury, or mental distress; or

12 (B) sexual assault under AS 11.41.410 or 11.41.420;

13 (3) "caregiver" means

14 (A) a person who is providing care to a vulnerable adult as a
15 result of a family relationship, or who has assumed responsibility for the care
16 of a vulnerable adult voluntarily, by contract, or by court order; or

17 (B) an employee of an out-of-home care facility who provides
18 care to one or more vulnerable adults;

19 (4) "decision making capacity" means the ability to understand and
20 appreciate the nature and consequences of a decision and the ability to reach and
21 communicate an informed decision;

22 (5) "department" means the Department of Administration;

23 (6) "designee" means another state agency or a community-based
24 program, individual, or provider of supportive services that has been licensed, or
25 authorized by agreement with the department, to provide one or more services to
26 vulnerable adults;

27 (7) "exploitation" means unjust or improper use of another person or
28 another person's resources for one's own profit or advantage;

29 (8) "incapacitated person" means a person whose ability to receive and
30 evaluate information or to communicate decisions is impaired to the extent that the
31 person lacks the ability to provide or arrange for the essential requirements for the

1 person's physical health or safety without court-ordered assistance;

2 (9) "neglect" means the intentional failure by a caregiver to provide
3 essential care or services necessary to maintain the physical and mental health of the
4 vulnerable adult;

5 (10) "police officer" has the meaning given in AS 18.65.290;

6 (11) "protective services" means services that are intended to prevent
7 or alleviate harm resulting from abandonment, exploitation, abuse, neglect, or self-
8 neglect and that are provided to a vulnerable adult in need of protection; "protective
9 services" includes protective placement;

10 (12) "self-neglect" means an act or omission by a vulnerable adult that
11 results, or could result in the deprivation of essential services necessary to maintain
12 minimal mental, emotional, or physical health and safety;

13 (13) "supportive services" means the range of services delivered by
14 public and private organizations and individuals that assist the elderly and vulnerable
15 adults with their social, health, educational, recreational, transportation, housing,
16 nutritional, financial, legal, or other needs;

17 (14) "unable to consent" means refusal to, or inability to, accept
18 services because

19 (A) the person is an incapacitated person or apparently is an
20 incapacitated person;

21 (B) of coercion by or fear of reprisal from the perpetrator of
22 abandonment, exploitation, abuse, or neglect;

23 (C) of dependency on the perpetrator of abandonment,
24 exploitation, abuse, or neglect for services, care, or support; or

25 (D) of an inability to perceive that refusal to consent results in
26 an imminent and substantial danger of death or irreparable harm to self or
27 others;

28 (15) "vulnerable adult" means a person 18 years of age or older who,
29 because of physical or mental impairment, is unable to meet the person's own needs
30 or to seek help without assistance.

31 * Sec. 14. AS 47.24.010(g), 47.24.010(h), 47.24.020, 47.24.030, 47.24.060, 47.24.075,

1 47.24.100, and 47.24.110 are repealed.

2 * Sec. 15. TRANSITION. (a) Contracts, rights, liabilities, and obligations created by or
3 under a law repealed by this Act and in effect on June 30, 1994, remain in effect
4 notwithstanding this Act's taking effect. Records, equipment, appropriations, and other
5 property of agencies of the state whose functions are transferred under this Act shall be
6 transferred to implement the provisions of this Act.

7 (b) Litigation, hearings, investigations, and other proceedings pending under a law
8 repealed by this Act, or in connection with functions transferred by this Act, continue in effect
9 and may be continued and completed notwithstanding a transfer, amendment, or repeal
10 provided for in this Act.

11 (c) The Department of Administration may proceed to adopt regulations necessary to
12 implement the changes made by this Act. The regulations may not take effect before July 1,
13 1994.

14 * Sec. 16. Section 15(c) of this Act takes effect immediately under AS 01.10.070(c).

15 * Sec. 17. Sections 1 - 14, 15(a), and 15(b) of this Act take effect July 1, 1994.