

SB 736e

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WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE
SEVENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION, 2008

SECRETARY OF STATE

ENROLLED

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

FOR

Senate Bill No. 736

(SENATOR CARUTH, *original sponsor*)

[Passed March 16, 2008; in effect ninety days from passage.]

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AN ACT to amend and reenact §37-1-3 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended; to amend and reenact §44A-1-8 of said code; and to amend and reenact §44A-3-5 of said code, all relating generally to appointment of guardians and conservators for persons under legal disability, including protected persons; clarifying the sale of real estate for persons under legal disability, including protected persons; authorizing background checks for persons seeking appointment as guardian or conservator;

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clarifying who may not be appointed guardian or conservator; clarifying when a conservator appointment is exempted; and making technical corrections.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

That §37-1-3 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, be amended and reenacted; that §44A-1-8 of said code be amended and reenacted; and that §44A-3-5 of said code be amended and reenacted, all to read as follows:

CHAPTER 37. REAL PROPERTY.

ARTICLE 1. LANDS OF PERSONS WITH LEGAL DISABILITY, AND LANDS HELD IN TRUST.

§37-1-3. Guardian ad litem.

1 A guardian ad litem shall be appointed for minors
2 under the age of eighteen, inmates and protected
3 persons subject to the requirements of section five,
4 article three, chapter forty-four-a of this code. The
5 guardian ad litem shall answer the petition under oath,
6 be present at any summary proceeding or hearing and
7 inform the court whether the sale of property is in the
8 best interests of the minor, inmate or protected person.
9 Minors over the age of fourteen may answer in person as
10 well.

CHAPTER 44A. WEST VIRGINIA GUARDIANSHIP AND CONSERVATORSHIP ACT.

ARTICLE 1. DEFINITIONS AND GENERAL PROVISIONS.

§44A-1-8. Persons and entities qualified to serve as guardian and conservator; default guardian and conservator; exemptions from conservator appointment.

1 (a) Any adult individual may be appointed to serve as
2 a guardian, a conservator or both upon a showing by the
3 individual of the necessary education, ability and
4 background to perform the duties of guardian or
5 conservator and upon a determination by the court that
6 the individual is capable of providing an active and
7 suitable program of guardianship or conservatorship for
8 the protected person. The individual may not be
9 employed by or affiliated with any public agency, entity
10 or facility that is providing substantial services or
11 financial assistance to the protected person.

12 (b) The court may, after first determining it to be in
13 the best interest of the protected person, appoint
14 coguardians, coconservators or both.

15 (c) Any person being considered by a court for
16 appointment as a guardian or conservator shall provide
17 information regarding any crime, other than traffic
18 offenses, of which he or she was convicted and the court
19 or mental hygiene commissioner may order a
20 background check to be conducted by the state police or
21 county sheriff. The court shall consider this
22 information in determining the person's fitness to be
23 appointed a guardian or conservator.

24 (d) Any nonprofit corporation chartered in this state
25 and licensed as set forth in subsection (e) of this section
26 or a public agency that is not a provider of health care
27 services to the protected person may be appointed to
28 serve as a guardian, a conservator or both: *Provided,*
29 That the entity is capable of providing an active and
30 suitable program of guardianship or conservatorship for
31 the protected person and is not otherwise providing
32 substantial services or financial assistance to the

33 protected person.

34 (e) A nonprofit corporation chartered in this state may
35 be appointed to serve as a guardian or conservator or as
36 a limited or temporary guardian or conservator for a
37 protected person if it is licensed to do so by the
38 Secretary of Health and Human Resources. The
39 secretary shall propose legislative rules, for
40 promulgation in accordance with the provisions of
41 chapter twenty-nine-a of this code, for the licensure of
42 nonprofit corporations and shall provide for the review
43 of the licenses. The rules shall, at a minimum, establish
44 standards to assure that any corporation licensed for
45 guardianship or conservatorship:

46 (1) Has sufficient fiscal and administrative resources
47 to perform the fiduciary duties and make the reports
48 and accountings required by this chapter;

49 (2) Will respect and maintain the dignity and privacy
50 of the protected person;

51 (3) Will protect and advocate the legal human rights of
52 the protected person;

53 (4) Will assure that the protected person is receiving
54 appropriate educational, vocational, residential and
55 medical services in the setting least restrictive of the
56 individual's personal liberty;

57 (5) Will encourage the protected person to participate
58 to the maximum extent of his or her abilities in all
59 decisions affecting him or her and to act in his or her
60 own behalf on all matters in which he or she is able to
61 do so;

62 (6) Does not provide educational, vocational,
63 residential or medical services to the protected person;
64 and

65 (7) Has written provisions in effect for the distribution
66 of assets and for the appointment of temporary
67 guardians and conservators for any protected persons it
68 serves in the event the corporation ceases to be licensed
69 by the Department of Health and Human Resources or
70 otherwise becomes unable to serve as guardian.

71 (f) A duly licensed nonprofit corporation that has been
72 appointed to serve as a guardian or as a conservator
73 pursuant to the provisions of this article is entitled to
74 compensation in accordance with the provisions of
75 section thirteen of this article.

76 (g) Except as provided in section thirteen of this
77 article, no guardian or conservator nor any officer,
78 agent, director, servant or employee of any guardian or
79 conservator may do business with or in any way profit,
80 either directly or indirectly, from the estate or income of
81 any protected person for whom services are being
82 performed by the guardian or conservator.

83 (h) A person who has an interest as a creditor of a
84 protected person is not eligible for appointment as
85 either a guardian or conservator of the protected person,
86 except that a bank or trust company authorized to
87 exercise trust powers or to engage in trust business in
88 this state may be appointed as a conservator if the court
89 determines it is capable of providing suitable
90 conservatorship for the protected person.

91 (i) The Secretary of the Department of Health and

92 Human Resources shall designate the adult protective
93 services division of the county of appointment, or
94 another agency under his or her jurisdiction, to be
95 appointed as guardian when there is no other
96 individual, nonprofit corporation or other public agency
97 that is equally or better qualified and willing to serve.
98 The department may not refuse to accept the
99 guardianship appointment when ordered by the court,
100 but may not be appointed as conservator.

101 (j) The sheriff of the county in which a court has
102 jurisdiction shall be appointed as conservator when
103 there is no other individual, nonprofit corporation or
104 other public agency that is equally or better qualified
105 and willing to serve . The sheriff may not refuse to
106 accept the conservatorship appointment when ordered
107 by the court, but may not be appointed as guardian.

108 (k) A conservator shall not be appointed when the
109 alleged protected person's total assets are worth less
110 than two thousand dollars or the alleged protected
111 person's income is: (1) From the Social Security
112 Administration and a representative payee has been
113 appointed to act in the best interest of the individual; (2)
114 from Medicaid and the only income distributed to the
115 individual is the personal account allotment; or (3) less
116 than fifty dollars per month or six hundred dollars per
117 year. In these instances, the guardian, representative
118 payee or health care facility, if there is no other person
119 or entity, shall manage the personal care account or
120 assets.

ARTICLE 3. GUARDIANSHIP AND CONSERVATORSHIP ADMINISTRATION.

§44A-3-5. Sale or mortgage of real estate.

1 (a) A conservator shall not sell real estate and shall
2 not be authorized to mortgage any real estate without
3 approval of the court.

4 (b) Following a petition by the conservator for the sale
5 or mortgage of real property, the court or mental
6 hygiene commissioner shall appoint a guardian ad litem
7 and set a hearing on the petition. The conservator shall
8 personally serve the protected person and serve by
9 certified mail all persons entitled to notice pursuant to
10 the original petition at least thirty days prior to the
11 hearing.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "John M. [unclear]", is located at the bottom of the page. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large loop at the end.

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The Joint Committee on Enrolled Bills hereby certifies that the foregoing bill is correctly enrolled.

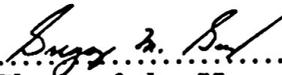

.....
Chairman Senate Committee


.....
Chairman House Committee

Originated in the Senate.

In effect ninety days from passage.


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Clerk of the Senate


.....
Clerk of the House of Delegates


.....
President of the Senate


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Speaker House of Delegates

The within is approved this
the 15th Day of April, 2008.

Governor

PRESENTED TO THE
GOVERNOR

MAR 26 2008

Time 10:05 hr