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SENATE BILL NO. 519

Offered January 24, 2000

A BILL to amend and reenact § 2.1-373 of the Code of Virginia, relating to consumer information for older Virginians.

Patrons—Forbes and Schrock

Referred to Committee on General Laws

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That § 2.1-373 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 2.1-373. Powers and duties of Department with respect to aging persons; area agencies on aging; Commonwealth Council on Aging.

A. The mission of the Department for the Aging shall be to improve the quality of life for older Virginians and to act as a focal point among state agencies for research, policy analysis, long-range planning, and education on aging issues. In this chapter, older Virginians means persons aged sixty or older. The Department's policies and programs shall be designed to enable older persons to be as independent and self-sufficient as possible. The Department shall promote local participation in programs for the aging, evaluate and monitor the services provided for older Virginians and provide information to the general public. In furtherance of this mission, the Department's duties shall include, but not be restricted to:

1. To study the economic and physical condition of the residents in the Commonwealth whose age qualifies them for coverage under Public Law 89-73 or any law amendatory or supplemental thereto of the Congress of the United States, hereinafter referred to as the aging, and the employment, medical, educational, recreational and housing facilities available to them, with the view of determining the needs and problems of such persons;

2. To determine the services and facilities, private and governmental and state and local, provided for and available to the aging and to recommend to the appropriate person or persons such coordination of and changes in such services and facilities as will make them of greater benefit to the aging and more responsive to their needs;

3. To act as the single state agency, under Public Law 89-73 or any law amendatory or supplemental thereto of the Congress of the United States, and as the sole agency for administering or supervising the administration of such plans as may be adopted in accordance with the provisions of such law or laws. As such agency, the Department shall have authority to prepare, submit and carry out state plans and shall be the agency primarily responsible for coordinating state programs and activities related to the purposes of, or undertaken under, such plans or laws;

4. With the approval of the Governor, to apply for and expend such grants, gifts or bequests from any source as may become available in connection with its duties under this section, and is authorized to comply with such conditions and requirements as may be imposed in connection therewith;

5. To hold such hearings and conduct such investigations as are necessary to pass upon applications for approval of a project under the plans and laws set out in subdivision (3) hereof, and shall make such reports to the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services as may be required;

6. To designate area agencies on aging pursuant to Public Law 89-73 or any law amendatory or supplemental thereto of the Congress of the United States and to promulgate rules and regulations for the composition and operation of such area agencies on aging;

7. To provide information to consumers and their representatives concerning the recognized features of special care units. Such information shall educate consumers and their representatives on how to choose special care and may include brochures and electronic bulletin board notices;

8. To provide staff support to the Commonwealth Council on Aging;

9. To assist state, local, and nonprofit agencies, including, but not limited to, area agencies on aging, in identifying grant and public-private partnership opportunities for improving services to elderly Virginians.

10. To contract with a not-for-profit Virginia corporation granted tax-exempt status under § 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code with statewide experience in Virginia in conducting a state long-term care ombudsman program or designated area agencies on aging for the administration of the ombudsman program. The Department may also contract with such entity or entities for the administration of elder rights programs as authorized under Public Law 89-73, such as insurance counseling and assistance, and to create an elder information/elder rights center.

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SB519

60 11. *To serve as the focal point for the rights of older Virginians and their families by establishing,*
61 *maintaining and publicizing a toll-free number to provide resource and referral information, and to*
62 *provide such other assistance and advice as may be requested.*

63 B. The governing body of any county, city or town may appropriate funds for support of area
64 agencies on aging designated pursuant to subdivision A 6 hereof.

65 C. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall assist the Department in effectuating its functions in
66 accordance with its designation as the single state agency as required in subdivision A 3 above.