

By Mr. Bradford of Rochester, petition of John C. Bradford and other members of the General Court that the Department of Elder Affairs be directed to establish a program utilizing elderly volunteers to provide respite care and related services to certain elderly persons. Human Services and Elderly Affairs.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Eighty-Six.

AN ACT DIRECTING THE DEPARTMENT OF ELDER AFFAIRS TO ESTABLISH A PROGRAM UTILIZING ELDERLY VOLUNTEERS TO PROVIDE RESPITE CARE AND RELATED SERVICES TO CERTAIN ELDERLY PERSONS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 19A of the General Laws is hereby
2 amended by inserting, after section 13, the following section:

3 Section 13A. The department is hereby authorized and direct-
4 ed to establish a statewide, computer-based volunteer service
5 credit program for the purpose of providing respite care, home-
6 maker care and other related services to elderly persons who
7 are determined by the department to be in need of such care or
8 services. The care and services provided under the provisions of
9 this program shall be supplied only by volunteers who are also
10 elderly persons. Volunteer participants in this program shall
11 receive credit for providing such volunteer services, which
12 credit may then be drawn upon when volunteers or their
13 spouses are determined by the department to need services in-
14 cluded in the volunteer service credit program. Eligibility for as-
15 sistance shall not be based on financial need but on the social
16 and medical condition of the person in question.

17 The department shall establish a computer-based volunteer
18 skills bank which shall include a registry of names, skills and
19 interests of persons earning service credits, an accounting sys-
20 tem to track service credits earned by each volunteer, and the

21 capacity to provide each volunteer with regular balances of
22 credits earned and credits expended. The department is also
23 authorized to contract for the use of a private computer system
24 if it determines that to be the most effective and efficient
25 method of implementing the establishment of said skills bank.

26 For the purpose of ensuring the integrity of the program, the
27 department shall, to the extent possible, recruit and train volun-
28 teers, sufficient in number to assure their availability in meeting
29 the needs of persons who have service credits and wish to draw
30 on their account. The department shall also develop a contin-
31 gency plan which shall provide for the utilization of their own
32 staff and other state programs in order to insure that services
33 are available in return for credit on those occasions where no
34 appropriate volunteer is available. Such contingency plan shall
35 be incorporated into rules adopted pursuant to this section.

36 The department shall also adopt whatever rules it deems to
37 be necessary to administer the program. Said rules shall include
38 standards (a) for the screening and training of volunteers, (b) to
39 limit the number of hours of credit which may be accumulated
40 by each volunteer, and (c) to provide appropriate insurance cov-
41 erage. No person serving as a volunteer pursuant to any pro-
42 gram established by the department under the provisions of this
43 section shall be credited with more than ten hours of volunteer
44 service under this program per week.

45 The department shall, on or before December thirty-first,
46 nineteen hundred and eighty-seven, and each year thereafter
47 not later than December thirty-first, file a report with the gover-
48 nor, the president of the senate and the speaker of the house of
49 representatives relative to the implementation and operation of
50 the program. Such report shall include the number of volun-
51 teers who have participated in the program, the number of
52 total hours of credited service, any and all costs associated with
53 the program, any recommendations for program modifications
54 and any other information relevant to program effectiveness.

1 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect on January first, nine-
2 teen hundred and eighty-seven.