



**COUNTY OF
SAN BERNARDINO**

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GREGORY C. DEVEREAUX
County Administrative Officer

LANCE M. LARSON
Director of Legislative Affairs

February 24, 2010

The Honorable Jean Fuller
California State Assembly
State Capitol Sacramento, Ca 95814

RE: **AB 2493** (Fuller) – As introduced February 19, 2010 – **SPONSOR**

Dear Assemblymember Fuller:

The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors is pleased to sponsor AB 2493 addressing persons classified with County Public Guardians as conservatees. As you know, County Public Guardian-Conservators insure the safety, both financially and physically, of incompetent and mentally disabled persons who meet the criteria for conservatorship.

At some point in their lives, six in ten seniors with Alzheimer's disease, a serious mental disorder or dementia wander from their homes or long-term care facilities, often without knowing their own name or address and sometimes missing life-sustaining medications.

Wandering is a common problem for county public guardian conservatees who suffer from Alzheimer's, dementia or a mental disorder. Conservatees may leave their care facilities and disappear into the adjacent community or even into other counties. At that point, it can become very difficult to find them.

Eventually, many wandering conservatees will come to the attention of local law enforcement, who must then try to identify conservatees who often cannot provide their name or other identifying information. Although Public Guardian-Conservators post missing persons reports when conservatees wander off, a photograph of the missing person is often not available.

AB 2493 would help locate missing conservatees by requiring public guardians to ensure that a clear photograph of ward or conservatee is available for the purposes of identifying the person, and provide the photograph to relevant law enforcement agencies if the ward or conservatee is reported lost or missing.

For these reasons, the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors is pleased to sponsor AB 2493. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Lance Larson, the County's Director of Legislative Affairs at (909) 387-4821. The Board thanks you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

GARY C. OVITT
Chairman, Board of Supervisors



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AB 2493 Fact Sheet

AUTHOR: Fuller.
TOPIC : Public guardian: identifying photograph of wards and conservatees.

Background

County public guardian-conservators insure the safety, both financially and physically, of incompetent and mentally disabled persons who meet the criteria for conservatorship, as required by law, when there are no viable alternatives to public conservatorship. The Public Guardian-Conservator administers two types of conservatorships after appointment by the Superior Court: probate and LPS conservatorship. To qualify for an LPS conservatorship, an individual must be gravely disabled. Grave disability is defined as unable to provide for his or her basic personal needs for food, clothing or shelter as a result of a mental disorder. To qualify for probate conservatorship an individual must be unable to provide for his or her personal needs for physical health, food, clothing or shelter; unable to manage his or her own financial resources or resist fraud or undue influence.

Statistics show that at some point in their lives, 60 percent of individuals suffering from Alzheimer's disease, a serious mental disorder or dementia wander from their homes or long-term care facilities, often without knowing their own name or address and sometimes missing life-sustaining medications. This can be a problem for wards of the public guardian-conservator. Conservatees may wander from their care facilities and disappear into the adjacent community or even into other counties. County public guardian-conservators will post a missing persons reports when this happens, but often do not have a photograph of the conservatee to post with the report to aid in identification.

The Problem

A recent case in San Bernardino County illustrates the difficulty in identifying wandering conservatees. The police picked up an elderly man with obvious psychological problems. The individual had no identification and was unable to identify himself, and could not be identified with fingerprints. The individual was placed in a hospital and contacted by county adult protective workers, who were unable to identify the person. Several months later he was finally identified as a missing conservatee from another county. Had a photograph of the conservatee been taken and made available to law enforcement at the time the host county filed the missing persons report, the conservatee would have been identified much sooner.

AB 2493 Summary

AB 2493 would require that a public guardian ensure that a clear photograph of each ward or conservatee is available for the purposes of identifying the ward or conservatee in case the ward or conservatee is lost or missing, and requires the public guardian to provide the photograph and other identifying information to the relevant law enforcement agencies if the ward or conservatee is reported lost or missing.

Impact on Public-Guardian-Conservators

Public guardian-conservators are required by the court during the conservator process to take photographs of the property and assets of a conservatee. Public guardian-conservators already have cameras for this purpose, so the impact on public guardian-conservators will be inconsequential.

Sponsor

The County of San Bernardino is sponsoring AB 2493.

The mission of the government of the County of San Bernardino is to satisfy its customers by providing service that promotes the health, safety, well being, and quality of life of its residents according to the County Charter, general laws, and the will of the people it serves.