



ARIZONA STATE SENATE
Fifty-Fifth Legislature, Second Regular Session

FACT SHEET FOR H.B. 2397

emotional abuse; vulnerable adults

Purpose

Expands the definition of *abuse* to include emotional abuse for purposes of Adult Protective Services (APS) investigations and services.

Background

APS is the program within the Department of Economic Security responsible for investigating allegations of abuse, exploitation and neglect of vulnerable adults. The duties and responsibilities of APS workers include: 1) receiving reports of abused, exploited or neglected vulnerable adults; 2) receiving oral or written information indicating that an adult may be in need of protective services; 3) conducting evaluations to determine if an adult is in need of protective services and which services are needed; 4) offering protective services to individuals in need; and 5) filing petitions for guardianship or conservatorship of vulnerable adults ([A.R.S. § 46-452](#)).

Abuse includes intentional infliction of physical harm, injury caused by negligent acts or omissions, unreasonable confinement and sexual abuse or assault ([A.R.S. § 46-451](#)).

There is no anticipated fiscal impact to the state General Fund associated with this legislation.

Provisions

1. Expands the definition of *abuse* to include emotional abuse for purposes of APS investigations and providing protective services.
2. Defines *emotional abuse* as a pattern of ridiculing, demeaning, making derogatory remarks to, verbally harassing or threatening to inflict physical or emotional harm on a vulnerable adult.
3. Makes conforming changes.
4. Becomes effective on the general effective date.

House Action

HHS	2/7/22	DP	9-0-0-0
3 rd Read	2/17/22		49-9-2

Prepared by Senate Research
 February 28, 2022
 MM/sr