CHAPTER 356.

CARE AND DETENTION OF FEEBLE-MINDED PERSONS.

S. F. 525.

AN ACT to better provide for the care and detention of feeble-minded persons.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Iowa:

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"Feeble-minded person" — words defined. The words SECTION 1. "feeble-minded person" in this act shall be construed to mean any per-3 son afflicted with mental defectiveness from birth or from any early age, so pronounced that he is incapable of managing himself and his 4 5 affairs, or of being taught to do so, and requires supervision, control and care for his own welfare, or for the welfare of others, or for the welfare of the community, who is not classifiable as an "insane person" 8 within the meaning of the provisions of chapter 2, title 12, of the code 9 of 1897, and amendments thereto.

SEC. 2. Petition — what to set forth — affidavit. When any person residing in this state shall be supposed to be feeble-minded, and by reason of such mental condition of feeble-mindedness and of social conditions, such as want of proper supervision, control, care and support, or other causes, it is unsafe and dangerous to the welfare of the community, for him to be at large without supervision, control and care, any relative, guardian, or any reputable citizen of the county in which supposed feeble-minded person resides or is found, may, by leave of court first had and obtained, file with the clerk of either the district court of the county or in the superior or municipal court of the city in which such feeble-minded person resides or is found, a petition in writing, setting forth that the person therein named is feeble-minded, the fact and circumstances of the social conditions, such as want of proper supervision, control, care and support, or other causes making it unsafe or dangerous to the welfare of the community for such person to be at large without supervision, control or care; also the name and residence, or that such name or residence is unknown to the petitioner, of some person, if any there be, actually supervision, caring for or supporting such person, and of at least one person if any there be, legally chargeable with such supervision, care or support, and also the names and residences, or that same are unknown, of the parents or guardians.

The petition shall also allege whether or not such person has been examined by a qualified physician having personal knowledge of the condition of such alleged feeble-minded person. There shall be endorsed on such petition the names and residences of witnesses known to petitioner by whom the truth of the allegations of the petition may be proved, as well as the name and the residence of a qualified physician, if any is known to the petitioner, having personal knowledge of the case. All persons named in such petition shall be made defendants by name and shall be notified of such proceedings by notice, if residence of this state, in the same manner as is now or may hereafter be required by law in chancery in this state, except only as herein otherwise provided. All persons whose names are stated in the petition to be unknown to the petitioner shall be deemed and taken as defendants by the name and designation of "all whom it may concern". The

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petition shall be verified by affidavit, which shall be sufficient if it states that it is based upon information and belief. Process shall be issued against all persons made parties by the designation of "all whom it may concern", by such description and notice given by publication as required in this act, shall be sufficient to authorize the court to hear and determine the suit as though the parties had been sued by their proper names.

SEC. 3. Notice to appear — defendants — publication — form. The notice shall require all defendants to personally appear at the time and place stated therein, and to bring into court the alleged feeble-minded No written answer shall be required to the petition, but the cause shall stand for trial upon the petition on the return day of the The notice shall be made returnable at any time within ten days after the date thereof, and may be served the same as a notice in civil actions is served. No service of process shall be necessary upon any of the defendants named, if they appear or are brought before the court personally without service of notice.

Whenever it shall appear from the petition or from affidavit filed in the cause that any named defendant, other than the alleged feebleminded person, resides or has gone out of the state, or on due inquiry cannot be found, or is concealed within this state, or that his place of residence is unknown, so that process cannot be served upon him, and whenever any person is made a defendant under the name and designation of "all whom it may concern", the clerk of the court shall cause publication to be made once in some newspaper of general circulation published in his county, and if there be none published in his county, then in a newspaper of general circulation published in the nearest like the state of the sta place to his county in this state, which publication shall be substantially as follows:

(Give names of such defendants and) To all whom it may concern

(if there be any defendant under such designation): TAKE NOTICE—That on the day of A. D.,, a petition was filed by in the court of to have a person named declared feeble-minded and to have the court provide for the care and the detention of such person. Now unless you appear within ten days after the date of this notice and resist the granting of the prayer of such petition, the petition will be taken for confessed and a decree entered.

..... Clerk.

and the clerk shall also within ten days after the publication of such notice send a copy thereof by mail, addressed to such defendants whose place of residence is stated in the petition and who cannot be served with notice. Notice given by such publication shall be as effectual for every purpose as if such person or persons were duly served with notice personally. The certificate of the clerk that he has sent such notice pursuant to this section, shall be conclusive evidence thereof. Every defendant who shall be duly notified shall be held to appear and answer either in writing or orally in open court, on the return day of the notice, and if the notice be served less than one day prior to the return day thereof, then on the following day. Every defendant who shall be notified by publication as herein provided, shall be held to 48 appear and answer, either in writing or orally, within ten days after 49 the date of the publication notice. The answer shall have no greater 50 weight as evidence than the petition.

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In default of an answer at the time herein specified or at such further time as by order of court may be granted to the defendant, the petition may be taken as confessed against all defendants, except the alleged feeble-minded persons.

- Custody order of court guardianship etc. Upon SEC. 4. the filing of the petition, or upon motion at any time thereafter, if it shall be made to appear to the court by evidence given under oath that it is for the best interests of the alleged feeble-minded person and the community that such person be at once taken into custody, or that the service of a notice will be ineffectual to secure the presence of such person, a warrant may issue in the order of the court, directing that such person be taken into custody and brought before the court forthwith or at such time and place as the judge may appoint, and pending the hearing of the petition, the court may make any order for the detention of such feeble-minded person, or the placing of such feebleminded person under temporary guardianship of some suitable person, on such person entering into a recognizance for his appearance, as the court shall deem proper. But no such alleged feeble-minded person shall, during the pendency of the hearing of the petition, be detained in any place provided for the detention of persons charged with or convicted of any criminal or quasi criminal offense.
- SEC. 5. Examination by physician, etc. At any time after the filing of the petition and pending the final disposition of the case, the court may continue the hearing from time to time, and may order such alleged feeble-minded person to submit to the examination of some qualified physician or psychologist, and the court may also require by rule or order that the petitioner answer under oath such interrogatories as may be propounded, in a form to be prescribed by the board of control.

SEC. 6. Commission — appointment — recommendations. The hearing on the petition shall be by the court, and a commission to be appointed by the court, of two qualified physicians or one qualified physician and one qualified psychologist, residents of the county, to be selected by the judge on account of known competency and integrity, and evidence shall be heard and proceedings had as in any other civil proceedings.

Evidence shall also be heard and inquiry made into the social conditions, such as want of proper supervision, control, care or support, and other causes making it unsafe or dangerous to the welfare of the community for such person to be at large, without supervision, control or care. The commission shall also make a personal examination touching the mental condition of the alleged feeble bodied person. Upon the conclusion of a hearing, inquiry and examination, the commission shall file with the clerk of the court a report in writing, showing the result of their examination of the mental condition and social conditions aforesaid setting forth their conclusions and recommendations, and shall also file with such report their sworn answers to such interrogatories as may be propounded in a form to be prescribed by the board of control. Such answers may be based upon their knowledge and belief.

- SEC. 7. Report objections and exceptions power of court. The report shall have the same effect as the reports of masters in chancery, and shall be subject to be set aside or overruled by the court the same as reports of masters in chancery: Provided, however, that there shall be no need of making objections and taking exceptions to same and the court shall have the power to dismiss the proceedings, order a new hearing by the same or a new commission, or make such findings of fact in lieu of the findings in such report as may be justified by the evidence heard, and on the review of the court of the findings and recommendations of the commission, the court may hear such further evidence as it thinks fit.
- SEC. 8. Findings of court — decree — guardianship by person or If the court shall find such alleged feeble-minded person institution. not to be feeble-minded as defined in this act, he shall order the petition dismissed and the person discharged. If the court shall find such alleged feeble-minded person to be feeble-minded, and subject to be dealt with under this act, having due regard to all the circumstances appearing on the hearing, the guiding and controlling thought of the court throughout the proceedings to be the welfare of the feeble-minded person and the welfare of the community, it shall enter a decree, appointing a suitable person to be the guardian of the person of such feeble-minded person, or directing that such feeble-minded person be sent to a private institution, qualified and licensed under the laws of the state to receive such person whose managers are willing to receive him, or may direct that he be placed in a public institution for the feeble-minded and such decree so entered shall stand and continue binding upon all persons whom it may concern until rescinded or otherwise regularly superseded or set aside. Provided, however, that any guardian appointed under this act shall be subordinate to any guardian previously or subsequently appointed under section 3219 of the code of 1897.
- SEC. 9. Guardian powers. On order that the feeble-minded person be placed under guardianship, shall confer on the person named in the order as guardian such powers, subject to the regulations of the board of control, as would have been exercisable if he had been the father of the feeble-minded, and the feeble-minded person had been under the age of fourteen.
- SEC. 10. Guardian or institution power of court. Where an order has been made that a feeble-minded person be placed under guardianship, the guardian may be removed by the court that appointed him, on the application of the feeble-minded person, or of any relative or friend of the feeble-minded person, or of any reputable citizen, or of the board of control; and when the guardian dies, resigns or is removed, the court may, on a like application, appoint a suitable person to act in his stead. And on application of the guardian, or of the feeble-minded person, or of any relative or friend of the feeble-minded person, or of any reputable citizen, or of the board of control, the court that appointed the guardian, on being satisfied that the case is, or has become one unsuitable for guardianship, may order that the feeble-minded person be discharged from guardianship and set free, or be sent to a private institution qualified, and licensed under the laws of the state to receive him, whose

managers are willing to receive him or be sent to a public institution for the feeble-minded, as seems best to the court, having regard to the circumstances appearing on the hearing. No order shall be made discharging or varying a prior order placing the feeble-minded person under guardianship without giving one or more of the relatives or a friend of the feeble-minded person, his guardian or the board of control, notice and an opportunity to be heard.

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SEC. 11. Institution — duty of superintendent. Upon the entry of an order directing that a feeble-minded person be sent to an institution for feeble-minded persons, the clerk of the court shall send a copy of the order to the superintendent of the institution to which such feeble-minded person is ordered to be sent, and such superintendent shall receive such feeble-minded person as a charge in such institution: Provided that if on account of the crowded condition of a public institution it is impossible to accommodate such feeble-minded person, the superintendent will inform the court with the promise that the court be notified at once when the next vacancy occurs and that such feeble-minded person be then received as a charge in such public institution.

SEC. 12. Institution — conveyance to — warrant —assistant, etc. For the conveyance of any feeble-minded person to any public or private institution for the feeble-minded, admission thereto having been ordered by the court as herein provided, the clerk shall issue a warrant and duplicate directed to the petitioner, or to some suitable reputable person, as the judge may select, commanding him to take such feeble-minded person and deliver him to the superintendent of And if the judge thinks necessary he may direct the institution. the clerk to authorize the employment of one or more assistants, but no feeble-minded female shall be taken to the institution by any male person not her husband, father, brother or son, without the attendance of some woman of good character and mature age chosen for the purpose by the judge. Upon receiving the feeble-minded person the superintendent of the institution shall endorse upon the warrant his receipt, naming the person of persons from whom the feeble-minded person is received, and one copy of the warrant so endorsed, shall be returned to the clerk of the court to be filed with the other papers in the case, and the other shall be left with the superintendent and the person delivering the feeble-minded person shall endorse thereon that he has so delivered him, and said duplicate warrant shall be prima facie evidence of that fact set forth therein, and in said endorsement.

SEC. 13. Discharge — right of petition for — causes — notice to superintendent, etc. No feeble-minded person admitted to an institution for the feeble-minded pursuant to an order of the court as herein provided, shall be discharged therefrom, except as herein provided, except that nothing herein contained shall abridge the right of petition for a writ of habeas corpus. At any time after the admission of the feeble-minded person to an institution for the feeble-minded, pursuant to an order of court as herein provided, the feeble-minded person or any reputable citizen or the superintendent of the institution having the feeble-minded person in charge, or the board of control, may petition the court that entered the order of admission to discharge the feeble-minded person or to vary the order of the court,

If on the hearsending the feeble-minded person to an institution. ing of the petition, the court is satisfied that the welfare of the 14 15 feeble-minded person or the welfare of others, or the welfare of the community required his discharge, or a modification of the order, the 16 17 court may enter such order of discharge or modification, as the court 18 thinks proper. Discharges and modifications of orders may be made 19 for either of the following causes: Because the person adjudged to be feeble-minded is not feeble minded; because he has so far improved 20 21 as to be capable of caring for himself; because the relatives or friends of the feeble-minded person are able and willing to support, care for 22 23 him and request his discharge and in the judgment of the superin-24 tendent of the institution having the person in charge, no evil conse-25 quences are likely to follow such discharge; but the enumeration of 26 grounds of discharge or modification herein shall not exclude other grounds of discharge or modification which the court, in its discretion, may deem adequate, having due regard for the welfare of the 27 28 person concerned, or the welfare of others, or the welfare of the com-29 munity, on any petition of discharge or variation, the court may discharge the feeble-minded person all supervision, control and care, or may place him under guardianship, or may transfer him from 30 31 32 33 a public institution to a private institution, or from a private institution to a public institution, as the court thinks fit under all the circumstances appearing on the hearing of the petition. The superintendent of the institution having the feeble-minded person in charge, 34 35 36 37 must be notified of the time and place of hearing on any petition for 38 discharge or variation, as the court shall direct, and no order of discharge or variation, shall be entered without giving such superin-39 tendent a reasonable opportunity to be heard; and the court may 40 notify such other persons, relatives and friends of the feeble-minded 41 42 person as the court may think proper of the time and place of the 43 hearing on any petition for discharge or variation of prior order. The 44 denial of one petition for discharge or modification shall be no bar to another on the same or different grounds within a reasonable time 45 thereafter, such reasonable time to be determined by the court in its 46 47 discretion, discouraging frequent, repeated, frivolous, or ill-founded 48 petitions for discharge or modification of a prior order. On reception 49 of a feeble-minded person in an institution pursuant to an order of 50 court under this act, the superintendent of the institution under regulations of the board of control shall cause the feeble-minded person 51 **52** to be examined touching his mental condition, and if upor such exam-53 ination it is found the person is not feeble-minded, it shall be the duty of the superintendent to petition the court for a discharge or modifi-**54** cation of the order sending him to the institution. Any person sent to an institution pursuant to an order of court under this act shall 55 56 have the right to at least one hearing on a petition for discharge or 57 modification within one year after the date of the order sending him 58 59 to an institution.

SEC. 14. Communication with friends — letters — leave of absence. Every person admitted to any institution for the feeble-minded shall have all reasonable opportunity and facility for communication with his friends, and be permitted to write and send letters, providing they contain nothing of an immoral or personally offensive character, and letters written by any charge to any member of the board of control, or to any state or county official, shall be for-

- warded unopened. But no leave of absence shall be granted except for good cause to be determined and approved by the board of control in each case who shall take appropriate measures to secure for the feeble-minded person proper supervision, control and care during such leave of absence, and no leave of absence shall be for a longer period than two weeks in one calendar year.
 - SEC. 15. Sudden death of charge inquest —notice to court. In the event of a sudden or mysterious death of a charge of any public or private institution for the feeble-minded, a coroner's inquest shall be held as provided by law in other cases. Notice of the death of such person, and the cause thereof, shall in all cases be sent to the judge of the court having jurisdiction, over such person, and the fact of the death, with the time, place and alleged cause shall be entered upon the docket.
 - SEC. 16. Misdemeanor penalty. Any person who shall knowingly contrive or who shall conspire to have any person adjudged feeble-minded under this act unlawfully and improperly, or any person who shall violate any provision of this act, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof shall be fined not exceeding \$1,000, or imprisoned not exceeding one year, or both, at the discretion of the court in which such conviction is had.

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- Costs of proceedings how paid witness fees, etc. The costs of proceedings in feeble-mindedness shall be defrayed from 1 the county treasury, unless otherwise ordered by the court as herein provided. But when on the hearing of the petition, the person alleged to be feeble-minded is found not to be feeble-minded, the 3 court, in its discretion, may require that the costs shall be paid by the person who filed the petition, and may render judgment against him therefor, except that judgment for costs shall not be rendered against the petitioner who filed the petition pursuant to the direction of a court as provided in sections 19 and 20. The fees paid for attendance of witnesses and execution of legal process, shall be the 10 same as are allowed by law for similar service in other cases. 11 service as commissioner, the sum of \$5.00 per day and the actual and necessary traveling expenses shall be allowed, to each person so 12 13 14 employed. But when the proceedings are instituted in a court of 15 any county of which the alleged feeble-minded person is not a resident, 16 in case a judgment for costs is not rendered against the petitioner as 17 above provided, the clerk of the district court of the county in which the said feeble-minded person resides shall be furnished with a 18 19 transcript of the record and findings in the case, and thereupon the 20 said county shall be liable for the costs of the proceedings.
 - SEC. 18. Expense of guardianship, maintenance in institution, funeral, etc. property liable. Where an order that a feeble-minded person be placed under guardianship or be sent to a private or public institution, is made under this act, may at any time, on the application of the petitioner or of the guardian, as the case may be, make an order requiring the feeble-minded person, or any person liable or undertaking to maintain him, to contribute such sums towards the expenses of his guardianship, or his maintenance in the institution and any charges incidental thereto, including the costs of the proceedings in feeble-mindedness, of his conveyance to the institution,

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- and in the event of his death at the institution, his funeral expenses, as seems reasonable, having regard to the ability of the feeble-minded person, or of the person liable or undertaking to maintain him. Any such order may be enforced against any property of the feeble-minded person, or of the person liable or undertaking to maintain him, in the same way as if it were a judgment or decree for temporary alimony in a divorce case.
 - SEC. 19. Delinquent child petition guardianship. When a 'child is brought before a "juvenile" court as a dependent or a delinquent child, if it appears to the court, on the testimony of a physician or psychologist, or other evidence, that such person or child is feeble-minded within the meaning of this act, the court may adjourn the proceedings and direct some suitable officer of the court or some other suitable reputable person to file a petition under this act; and the court may order that pending the preparation, filing and hearing of such petitions, the person or child be detained in a place of safety or be placed under the guardianship of some suitable person on that person entering into recognizance for his appearance.
 - Crime or delinquency suspension of sentence on peti-SEC. 20. tion for feeble-mindedness — hearing — sentence. On the conviction by a court of record of competent jurisdiction of any person of any crime, misdemeanor, or any violation of any ordinance which is in whole, or in part, a violation of any statute of this state; or on a child brought before the juvenile court for any delinquency, being found liable to be sent to a reformatory school, a training school or an industrial school the court, if satisfied on the testimony of a physician or a psychologist, or other evidence that the person or child is feeble-minded within the meaning of this act, may suspend any sentence or suspend entering an order sending the child to a reformatory training or industrial school and direct that a petition be filed under When the court directs a petition to be filed it may order this act. that pending the preparation, filing and hearing of the petition, the person or child be detained in a place of safety, or be placed under the guardianship of any suitable person on that person entering into a recognizance for his appearance. If upon the hearing of said petition or upon any subsequent hearing under this act the person is found not to be feeble-minded the court shall impose sentence.
 - SEC. 21. Institution for insane transfer to or from order of court. When the mental condition of a person under guardianship or in an institution for feeble-minded persons, pursuant to an order of court under this act, becomes or is found to be such that he ought to be transferred to an institution for the insane, the superintendent of the institution or the guardian of the person or the board of control, as the case may be, shall cause such steps to be taken as may be necessary for his removal to an institution for the insane. And when the mental condition of a person in an institution for the insane becomes or is found to be such that he ought to be transferred to an institution for feeble-minded persons or placed under guardianship under this act, the superintendent of the institution for the insane, or the board of control may cause such steps to be taken as may be necessary for having an order that he be sent to an institution entered by the court by original jurisdiction for feeble-minded persons or placed under guardianship under this act.

- SEC. 22. Suitable clothing, etc., on discharge from institution.

 No person shall be discharged from a public institution for the feebleminded without suitable clothing and a sum of money not exceeding
 \$20, sufficient to defray his expenses home, which shall be charged to
 the county in which the person resides, and collected as other debts
 due the institution are collected. But the court ordering the discharge may dispense with this requirement if the court, in its discretion, thinks it fit and proper under the circumstances.
 - SEC. 23. Escape from institution duty of superintendent, etc. If any feeble-minded person shall escape from an institution for the feeble-minded, it shall be the duty of the superintendent of the institution and his assistants, and of any sheriff or constable, or other officer of the peace in any county in which he may be found, to take and detain him without a warrant and report the same at once to a judge who shall return him to the institution at the expense of the county from which he was admitted.
- SEC. 24. Docket of proceedings record of individual cases, etc.

 Each court having jurisdiction under this act shall keep a separate

 docket of proceedings in feeble-mindedness upon which shall be made

 such entries as will, together with the papers filed, preserve a complete and perfect record of each case, the original petitions, writs, and
 returns made thereto, and the reports of commissions shall be filed
 with the clerk of the court.
- SEC. 25. Feeble-minded board of control to keep record of. The board of control shall keep a record of all persons adjudged to be feeble-minded, and of the orders respecting them by the courts throughout the state, copies of which orders shall be furnished by the clerk of the court without the board's application or upon the board's application.
- SEC. 26. Parts of act invalidity, etc. The invalidity of any part of this act shall not be construed to affect the validity of any other part capable of having practical operation and effect without the invalid part.
- 1 SEC. 27. Inconsistent acts repealed. All acts and parts of acts 2 inconsistent with this act are hereby repealed.

Approved April 25, A. D. 1919.