

RCW 13.90.900 Purpose. Existing federal law, 8 U.S.C. Sec. 1101(a)(27)(J), establishes a procedure for classification of abandoned, abused, or neglected youth as special immigrants who have been declared dependent on a juvenile court or legally committed to or placed in the custody of a state agency or department, or placed under the custody of an individual or entity appointed by a state or juvenile court, and authorizes those youth to apply for an adjustment of status to that of a lawful permanent resident within the United States. A youth is age-eligible if the youth is under twenty-one years old. Existing state law already provides that superior courts have jurisdiction to make judicial determinations regarding the custody and care of juveniles.

This chapter authorizes a court to appoint a guardian for a vulnerable youth from eighteen to twenty-one years old, who is not participating in extended foster care services authorized under RCW 74.13.031, and who is eligible for classification under 8 U.S.C. Sec. 1101(a)(27)(J) with the consent of the proposed ward. This chapter also provides that a vulnerable youth guardianship of the person terminates on the youth's twenty-first birthday unless the youth requests termination prior to that date. Opening court doors for the provision of a vulnerable youth guardianship serves the state's interest in eliminating human trafficking, preventing further victimization of youth, decreasing reliance on public resources, reducing youth homelessness, and offering protection for youth who may otherwise be targets for traffickers. [2017 c 279 § 1.]