§ 551. The justice center for the protection of people with special needs. 1. There is hereby created within the executive department a justice center for the protection of people with special needs ("justice center" or "center"). Such justice center shall be headed by an executive director, who shall be appointed by the governor, by and with the advice and consent of the senate. The executive director may appoint staff and perform such other functions for the efficient operation of the justice center within the amounts made available therefor by appropriation.

2. The executive director shall recommend policies and procedures to the state oversight agency for the protection of vulnerable persons, including but not limited to policies and procedures: (a) for the protection of vulnerable persons who reside in or receive services from facilities or provider agencies as set forth in subdivision four of section four hundred eighty-eight of the social services law; (b) relating to assuring, on behalf of the state, that vulnerable persons are afforded care that is of a uniformly high standard; (c) relating to assuring, on behalf of the state, that vulnerable persons are afforded the opportunity to exercise all of the rights and responsibilities accorded to residents of the state; and (d) to harmonize and improve the procedures for and quality of investigations of reportable incidents involving vulnerable persons within the different systems of care in the state.

3. The executive director may, in consultation with the advisory council, promulgate, adopt, amend or rescind rules and regulations necessary to carry out the provisions of this article; provided, however, that such rules and regulations shall be strictly limited in their application to the means and methods of compliance with the provisions of this article.