

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1931

As Passed House:
February 28, 2017

Title: An act relating to posting child abuse and neglect mandated reporter requirements.

Brief Description: Concerning the posting of child abuse and neglect mandated reporter requirements.

Sponsors: Representatives Hayes, Macri, McDonald and Jinkins.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Early Learning & Human Services: 2/15/17, 2/17/17 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/28/17, 98-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Social and Health Services to make available on its website a poster that includes the requirements for mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect, and organizations with employees or volunteers subject to the mandatory reporter requirements must clearly display that poster in a common area.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & HUMAN SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Kagi, Chair; Senn, Vice Chair; Dent, Ranking Minority Member; McDonald, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Frame, Goodman, Griffey, Kilduff, Klippert, Lovick, McCaslin, Muri and Ortiz-Self.

Staff: Luke Wickham (786-7146).

Background:

In Washington mandatory reporting laws require certain people to report suspected child abuse or child neglect to the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) or law

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enforcement. Practitioners, medical examiners, law enforcement officers, professional school personnel, registered or licensed nurses, social service counselors, psychologists, pharmacists, the Department of Early Learning employees, licensed or certified child care providers, juvenile probation officers, placement and liaison specialists, responsible living skills program staff, the DSHS employees, HOPE center staff, the Office of the Family and Children's Ombudsman (Ombuds) employees, any volunteers in the Ombuds's office, or host home providers, are all examples of mandated reporters.

Mandated reporting requirements are also extended to the Department of Corrections personnel, guardians ad litem, court appointed special advocates, any person in an official supervisory capacity with a profit or nonprofit organization, administrative, academic or athletic departmental employees of institutions of higher learning, or any adult who has reasonable cause to believe that a child who resides with them is a victim of abuse or neglect. Any other person who has reason to believe that child abuse or child neglect has occurred may report that information.

Upon suspecting child abuse or child neglect, the mandated reporter must make a report within 48 hours. Failing to report suspected child abuse or child neglect within 48 hours is considered a gross misdemeanor.

Summary of Bill:

The DSHS must make available on its public website a downloadable and printable poster that includes the requirements for mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect. The poster must be at least 8.5 inches by 11 inches with all information on one side and made available in both English and Spanish. Organizations that include employees or volunteers subject to the mandatory reporter requirements must clearly display this poster in a common area.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Investigations have revealed that mandatory reporters had knowledge of a child sex crime, and it was unclear whether these individuals were aware of their responsibilities under mandatory reporting laws. This is a simple bill that will improve the effectiveness of our mandatory reporter laws. The failure of mandatory reporters to report abuse and neglect have contributed to the death of children. There may be many sex offenders in the community who have offended without being reported. Posting the requirements of mandatory reporters clarifies their responsibilities and makes the job of law enforcement easier.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Hayes, prime sponsor; Byron Manering, Brigid Collins Family Support Center; and John Snaza, Thurston County Sheriff's Office.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.