

SENATE BILL 797

D4

7lr3291
CF 7lr2676

By: **Senators Ready, Lee, Muse, and Smith**

Introduced and read first time: February 3, 2017

Assigned to: Judicial Proceedings

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Child Abuse and Neglect – Reporting – Definitions**

3 FOR the purpose of altering the definitions of “educator or human service worker” and
4 “health practitioner” in provisions of law relating to the reporting of child abuse and
5 neglect; defining the terms “mandated reporter” and “youth–serving organization”
6 in provisions of law relating to the reporting of child abuse and neglect; making
7 certain conforming changes; and generally relating to child abuse and neglect.

8 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

9 Article – Family Law

10 Section 5–701, 5–704(a), and 5–705(a)

11 Annotated Code of Maryland

12 (2012 Replacement Volume and 2016 Supplement)

13 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,

14 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

15 **Article – Family Law**

16 5–701.

17 (a) Except as otherwise provided in § 5–705.1 of this subtitle, in this subtitle the
18 following words have the meanings indicated.

19 (b) “Abuse” means:

20 (1) the physical or mental injury of a child by any parent or other person
21 who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of a child,
22 or by any household or family member, under circumstances that indicate that the child’s
23 health or welfare is harmed or at substantial risk of being harmed; or

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (2) sexual abuse of a child, whether physical injuries are sustained or not.

2 (c) "Administration" means the Social Services Administration of the
3 Department.

4 (d) "Centralized confidential database" means the Department's confidential
5 computerized data system that contains information regarding child abuse and neglect
6 investigations and assessments.

7 (e) "Child" means any individual under the age of 18 years.

8 (g) (1) "Educator or human service worker" means any professional employee
9 of any correctional, public, parochial or private educational, health, juvenile service, social
10 or social service agency, institution, or licensed facility.

11 (2) "Educator or human service worker" includes:

12 (i) any teacher, **TEACHER'S AIDE OR ASSISTANT, SCHOOL**
13 **COUNSELOR OR GUIDANCE COUNSELOR, OR SCHOOL OFFICIAL OR ADMINISTRATOR;**

14 (ii) any **LICENSED OR UNLICENSED MARRIAGE, FAMILY, OR**
15 **INDIVIDUAL** counselor;

16 (iii) any social worker;

17 (iv) any caseworker; and

18 (v) any probation or parole officer.

19 (h) "Family member" means a relative by blood, adoption, or marriage of a child.

20 (i) **[(1)]** "Health practitioner" includes any person who is authorized to practice
21 healing under the Health Occupations Article or § 13-516 of the Education Article.

22 **[(2)]** "Health practitioner" does not include an emergency medical
23 dispatcher.]

24 (j) "Household" means the location:

25 (1) in which the child resides;

26 (2) where the abuse or neglect is alleged to have taken place; or

27 (3) where the person suspected of abuse or neglect resides.

1 (k) "Household member" means a person who lives with, or is a regular presence
2 in, a home of a child at the time of the alleged abuse or neglect.

3 (m) "Indicated" means a finding that there is credible evidence, which has not been
4 satisfactorily refuted, that abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse did occur.

5 (n) (1) "Law enforcement agency" means a State, county, or municipal police
6 department, bureau, or agency.

7 (2) "Law enforcement agency" includes:

8 (i) a State, county, or municipal police department or agency;

9 (ii) a sheriff's office;

10 (iii) a State's Attorney's office; and

11 (iv) the Attorney General's office.

12 (o) Except as provided in §§ 5-705.1 and 5-714 of this subtitle, "local department"
13 means the local department that has jurisdiction in the county:

14 (1) where the allegedly abused or neglected child lives; or

15 (2) if different, where the abuse or neglect is alleged to have taken place.

16 (p) "Local department case file" means that component of the Department's
17 confidential computerized database that contains information regarding child abuse and
18 neglect investigations to which access is limited to the local department staff responsible
19 for the investigation.

20 (q) "Local State's Attorney" means the State's Attorney for the county:

21 (1) where the allegedly abused or neglected child lives; or

22 (2) if different, where the abuse or neglect is alleged to have taken place.

23 **(R) "MANDATED REPORTER" MEANS ANY OF THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS,**
24 **ACTING IN A PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY, WHO ARE REQUIRED TO REPORT SUSPECTED**
25 **ABUSE OR NEGLECT UNDER § 5-704 OF THIS SUBTITLE:**

26 **(1) A HEALTH PRACTITIONER;**

27 **(2) A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER;**

28 **(3) AN EDUCATOR OR A HUMAN SERVICE WORKER;**

1 **(4) A CHILD CARE WORKER OR AN ADMINISTRATOR;**

2 **(5) A FOSTER PARENT; OR**

3 **(6) AN INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYED BY A YOUTH-SERVING**
4 **ORGANIZATION.**

5 **[(r)] (S)** “Mental injury” means the observable, identifiable, and substantial
6 impairment of a child’s mental or psychological ability to function.

7 **[(s)] (T)** “Neglect” means the leaving of a child unattended or other failure to
8 give proper care and attention to a child by any parent or other person who has permanent
9 or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of the child under
10 circumstances that indicate:

11 (1) that the child’s health or welfare is harmed or placed at substantial risk
12 of harm; or

13 (2) mental injury to the child or a substantial risk of mental injury.

14 **[(t)] (U)** “Police officer” means any State or local officer who is authorized to
15 make arrests as part of the officer’s official duty.

16 **[(u)] (V)** “Record” means the original or any copy of any documentary material,
17 in any form, including a report of suspected child abuse or neglect, that is made by, received
18 by, or received from the State, a county, or a municipal corporation in the State, or any
19 subdivision or agency concerning a case of alleged child abuse or neglect.

20 **[(v)] (W)** “Report” means an allegation of abuse or neglect, made or received
21 under this subtitle.

22 **[(w)] (X)** “Ruled out” means a finding that abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse did not
23 occur.

24 **[(x)] (Y)** (1) “Sexual abuse” means any act that involves sexual molestation
25 or exploitation of a child by a parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care
26 or custody or responsibility for supervision of a child, or by any household or family
27 member.

28 (2) “Sexual abuse” includes:

29 (i) allowing or encouraging a child to engage in:

30 1. obscene photography, films, poses, or similar activity;

1 (2) A person is not required to provide notice under paragraph (1) of this
2 subsection:

3 (i) in violation of the privilege described under § 9–108 of the Courts
4 Article;

5 (ii) if the notice would disclose matter communicated in confidence
6 by a client to the client’s attorney or other information relating to the representation of the
7 client; or

8 (iii) in violation of any constitutional right to assistance of counsel.

9 (3) A minister of the gospel, clergyman, or priest of an established church
10 of any denomination is not required to provide notice under paragraph (1) of this subsection
11 if the notice would disclose matter in relation to any communication described in § 9–111
12 of the Courts Article and:

13 (i) the communication was made to the minister, clergyman, or
14 priest in a professional character in the course of discipline enjoined by the church to which
15 the minister, clergyman, or priest belongs; and

16 (ii) the minister, clergyman, or priest is bound to maintain the
17 confidentiality of that communication under canon law, church doctrine, or practice.

18 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
19 October 1, 2017.