

824

2013-2014 Regular Sessions

I N S E N A T E

(PREFILED)

January 9, 2013

Introduced by Sen. PARKER -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Children and Families

AN ACT to amend the social services law, in relation to the reporting of child abuse

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1 Section 1. Paragraph (a) of subdivision 1 of section 413 of the social
2 services law, as amended by chapter 91 of the laws of 2011, is amended
3 to read as follows:
4 (a) The following persons and officials are required to report or
5 cause a report to be made in accordance with this title when they have
6 reasonable cause to suspect that a child coming before them in their
7 professional or official capacity is an abused or maltreated child, or
8 when they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is an abused or
9 maltreated child where the parent, guardian, custodian or other person
10 legally responsible for such child comes before them in their profes-
11 sional or official capacity and states from personal knowledge facts,
12 conditions or circumstances which, if correct, would render the child an
13 abused or maltreated child: any physician; registered physician assist-
14 ant; surgeon; medical examiner; coroner; dentist; dental hygienist;
15 osteopath; optometrist; chiropractor; podiatrist; resident; intern;
16 psychologist; registered nurse; social worker; emergency medical techni-
17 cian; licensed creative arts therapist; licensed marriage and family
18 therapist; licensed mental health counselor; licensed psychoanalyst;
19 hospital personnel engaged in the admission, examination, care or treat-
20 ment of persons; A MEMBER OF THE CLERGY; a Christian Science practition-
21 er; school official, which includes but is not limited to school teach-
22 er, school guidance counselor, school psychologist, school social
23 worker, school nurse, school administrator or other school personnel
24 required to hold a teaching or administrative license or certificate;

EXPLANATION--Matter in *ITALICS* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [] is old law to be omitted.

LBD02908-01-3

1 social services worker; director of a children's overnight camp, summer
2 day camp or traveling summer day camp, as such camps are defined in
3 section thirteen hundred ninety-two of the public health law; day care
4 center worker; school-age child care worker; provider of family or group
5 family day care; employee or volunteer in a residential care facility
6 defined in subdivision four of section four hundred twelve-a of this
7 title or any other child care or foster care worker; mental health
8 professional; substance abuse counselor; alcoholism counselor; all
9 persons credentialed by the office of alcoholism and substance abuse
10 services; peace officer; police officer; district attorney or assistant
11 district attorney; investigator employed in the office of a district
12 attorney; or other law enforcement official.

13 S 2. Article 6 of the social services law is amended by adding a new
14 title 6-B to read as follows:

15 TITLE 6-B
16 REPORTS OF CHILD ABUSE TO
17 LAW ENFORCEMENT

18 SECTION 429-A. PERSONS AND OFFICIALS REQUIRED TO REPORT CASES OF
19 SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE TO APPROPRIATE LAW ENFORCEMENT
20 AGENCY.

21 429-B. PENALTIES FOR FAILURE TO REPORT.

22 429-C. IMMUNITY FROM LIABILITY.

23 429-D. REVIEW OF EXISTING RECORDS FOR ALLEGATIONS THAT A CHILD
24 IS AN ABUSED CHILD; DISTRICT ATTORNEY; PENALTY.

25 S 429-A. PERSONS AND OFFICIALS REQUIRED TO REPORT CASES OF SUSPECTED
26 CHILD ABUSE TO APPROPRIATE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY. 1. (A) THE FOLLOWING
27 PERSONS AND OFFICIALS ARE REQUIRED TO REPORT OR CAUSE AN INDICATED
28 REPORT AS DEFINED IN SUBDIVISION SEVEN OF SECTION FOUR HUNDRED TWELVE OF
29 THIS ARTICLE TO BE MADE TO AN APPROPRIATE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY WHEN
30 THEY HAVE REASONABLE CAUSE TO SUSPECT IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL OR OFFICIAL
31 CAPACITY THAT A CHILD IS AN ABUSED CHILD: ANY PHYSICIAN; REGISTERED
32 PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT; SURGEON; MEDICAL EXAMINER; CORONER; DENTIST; DENTAL
33 HYGIENIST; OSTEOPATH; OPTOMETRIST; CHIROPRACTOR; PODIATRIST; RESIDENT;
34 INTERN; PSYCHOLOGIST; REGISTERED NURSE; EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN;
35 HOSPITAL PERSONNEL ENGAGED IN THE ADMISSION, EXAMINATION, CARE OR TREAT-
36 MENT OF PERSONS; MEMBER OF THE CLERGY; A CHRISTIAN SCIENCE PRACTITIONER;
37 SCHOOL OFFICIAL; SOCIAL SERVICES WORKER; DAY CARE CENTER WORKER; PROVID-
38 ER OF FAMILY OR GROUP FAMILY DAY CARE; EMPLOYEE OR VOLUNTEER IN A RESI-
39 DENTIAL CARE FACILITY OR ANY OTHER CHILD CARE OR FOSTER CARE WORKER;
40 MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL; SUBSTANCE ABUSE COUNSELOR; ALCOHOLISM COUN-
41 SELOR; PEACE OFFICER; POLICE OFFICER; DISTRICT ATTORNEY OR ASSISTANT
42 DISTRICT ATTORNEY; INVESTIGATOR EMPLOYED IN THE OFFICE OF A DISTRICT
43 ATTORNEY; OR OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIAL.

44 (B) FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION THE TERM "ABUSED CHILD" SHALL
45 MEAN A CHILD UNDER THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN YEARS UPON WHOM A PERSON EIGHTEEN
46 YEARS OF AGE OR MORE WHO IS DEFINED IN PARAGRAPH (A) OF THIS SUBDIVISION
47 AND WHO IS NOT THE PARENT OR OTHER PERSON LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR SUCH
48 CHILD'S CARE:

49 (I) INTENTIONALLY OR RECKLESSLY INFLICTS PHYSICAL INJURY, SERIOUS
50 PHYSICAL INJURY OR DEATH, OR

51 (II) INTENTIONALLY OR RECKLESSLY ENGAGES IN CONDUCT WHICH CREATES A
52 SUBSTANTIAL RISK OF SUCH PHYSICAL INJURY, SERIOUS PHYSICAL INJURY OR
53 DEATH, OR

54 (III) COMMITS OR ATTEMPTS TO COMMIT AGAINST A CHILD THE CRIME OF
55 DISSEMINATING INDECENT MATERIALS TO MINORS PURSUANT TO ARTICLE TWO
56 HUNDRED THIRTY-FIVE OF THE PENAL LAW, OR

(IV) ENGAGES IN ANY CONDUCT PROHIBITED BY ARTICLE ONE HUNDRED THIRTY OR TWO HUNDRED SIXTY-THREE OF THE PENAL LAW.

(C) FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION THE TERM "LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES" SHALL MEAN A MUNICIPAL POLICE DEPARTMENT, SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT, THE DIVISION OF STATE POLICE OR ANY OFFICER THEREOF OR A DISTRICT ATTORNEY OR ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY. NOTWITHSTANDING ANY OTHER PROVISION OF LAW, LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES SHALL NOT INCLUDE ANY CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICE OR ANY SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN AS SUCH TERMS ARE DEFINED IN SECTION FOUR HUNDRED TWENTY-THREE OF THIS ARTICLE.

(D) FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION THE TERM "MEMBER OF THE CLERGY" SHALL HAVE THE SAME DEFINITION AS THE TERM "CLERGYMAN" AS SET FORTH IN SECTION TWO OF THE RELIGIOUS CORPORATIONS LAW AND SHALL ALSO INCLUDE ANY PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR SUPERVISING A MEMBER OF THE CLERGY OF A RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION OR RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF A RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION.

(E) FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION THE TERM "RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION" SHALL MEAN A RELIGIOUS CORPORATION CREATED TO ENABLE ITS MEMBERS TO MEET FOR DIVINE WORSHIP OR OTHER RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES OR A CONGREGATION, SOCIETY, OR OTHER ASSEMBLAGE OF PERSONS WHO ARE ACCUSTOMED TO STATEDLY MEET FOR DIVINE WORSHIP OR OTHER RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES, WITHOUT HAVING BEEN INCORPORATED FOR THAT PURPOSE, AS PROVIDED IN SECTION TWO OF THE RELIGIOUS CORPORATIONS LAW.

2. (A) UNLESS THE PERSON CONFESSING OR CONFIDING WAIVES THE PRIVILEGE, A MEMBER OF THE CLERGY, OR OTHER MINISTER OF ANY RELIGION OR DULY ACCREDITED CHRISTIAN SCIENCE PRACTITIONER, SHALL NOT BE REQUIRED TO MAKE A REPORT AS REQUIRED BY PARAGRAPH (A) OF SUBDIVISION ONE OF THIS SECTION IF THE CONFESSION OR CONFIDENCE WAS MADE TO HIM OR HER IN HIS OR HER PROFESSIONAL CHARACTER AS SPIRITUAL ADVISOR.

(B) WHEN A MEMBER OF THE CLERGY HAS REASONABLE CAUSE TO SUSPECT THAT A CHILD IS AN ABUSED CHILD BASED UPON ANY INFORMATION RECEIVED OTHER THAN THROUGH A CONFESSION OR CONFIDENCE MADE PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH (A) OF THIS SUBDIVISION, THEN SUCH MEMBER OF THE CLERGY SHALL PROMPTLY MAKE A REPORT AS REQUIRED BY PARAGRAPH (A) OF SUBDIVISION ONE OF THIS SECTION NOTWITHSTANDING THE FACT THAT HE OR SHE MAY HAVE ALSO RECEIVED A REPORT OF ABUSE THROUGH A CONFESSION OR CONFIDENCE MADE PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH (A) OF THIS SUBDIVISION.

(C) THE PROVISIONS OF PARAGRAPH (A) OF THIS SUBDIVISION SHALL NOT BE DEEMED TO EXEMPT A MEMBER OF THE CLERGY FROM ANY OTHER REQUIREMENTS OF LAW TO PREVENT THE PERPETRATOR FROM COMMITTING ADDITIONAL ACTS OF ABUSE.

3. NOTHING IN THIS TITLE SHALL BE CONSTRUED TO REQUIRE THE REPORT OF INFORMATION BY A PERSON REQUIRED TO REPORT WHEN SUCH INFORMATION IS OTHERWISE PRIVILEGED FROM DISCLOSURE BY LAW.

S 429-B. PENALTIES FOR FAILURE TO REPORT. 1. ANY PERSON REQUIRED BY THIS TITLE TO REPORT A CASE OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE WHO WILLFULLY FAILS TO DO SO SHALL BE GUILTY OF A CLASS A MISDEMEANOR FOR THE FIRST OFFENSE, A CLASS E FELONY FOR THE SECOND OFFENSE AND A CLASS D FELONY FOR THE THIRD OFFENSE OR ANY SUBSEQUENT OFFENSE.

2. ANY PERSON REQUIRED BY THIS TITLE TO REPORT A CASE OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE WHO KNOWINGLY AND WILLFULLY FAILS TO DO SO SHALL BE CIVILLY LIABLE FOR THE DAMAGES PROXIMATELY CAUSED BY SUCH FAILURE.

S 429-C. IMMUNITY FROM LIABILITY. 1. ANY PERSON WHO IN GOOD FAITH MAKES A REPORT OF ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE AS REQUIRED BY THIS TITLE, INCLUDING THOSE WHO IN GOOD FAITH MAKE A REPORT TO THE WRONG RECIPIENT, SHALL HAVE IMMUNITY FROM CRIMINAL LIABILITY WHICH MIGHT OTHERWISE RESULT BY REASON OF SUCH ACTIONS.

1 2. ANY PERSON WHO REASONABLY AND IN GOOD FAITH MAKES A REPORT OF ALLE-
2 GATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE AS REQUIRED BY THIS TITLE, SHALL HAVE IMMUNITY
3 FROM CIVIL LIABILITY WHICH MIGHT OTHERWISE RESULT BY REASON OF SUCH
4 ACTIONS.

5 S 429-D. REVIEW OF EXISTING RECORDS FOR ALLEGATIONS THAT A CHILD IS AN
6 ABUSED CHILD; DISTRICT ATTORNEY; PENALTY. 1. WITHIN THREE MONTHS OF THE
7 EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS SECTION, ALL MEMBERS OF THE CLERGY SHALL: (A)
8 REVIEW ALL INSTITUTIONAL RECORDS WITHIN THEIR CONTROL AND ANY OTHER
9 INFORMATION THEY HAVE OBTAINED REGARDING ALLEGATIONS THAT A CHILD IS AN
10 ABUSED CHILD BY A MEMBER OF THE CLERGY WITHIN FIFTY YEARS PRIOR TO THE
11 EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS SECTION; (B) REVIEW WHETHER THEY ARE AWARE OF ANY
12 OTHER ALLEGATIONS THAT A CHILD IS AN ABUSED CHILD ALLEGED TO HAVE BEEN
13 ABUSED BY A MEMBER OF THE CLERGY WHO REMAINS ACTIVELY IN THE SERVICE OF
14 A RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION, REGARDLESS OF THE DATE ON WHICH SUCH ALLEGATION
15 WAS MADE; AND WHERE SUCH INFORMATION OR RECORDS RAISE REASONABLE CAUSE
16 TO SUSPECT THAT A CHILD IS AN ABUSED CHILD, REPORT SUCH ALLEGATION TO
17 THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY. THIS SECTION SHALL NOT APPLY TO INFORMATION
18 OBTAINED THROUGH CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS WITH CLERGY AND PRIVILEGED
19 UNDER LAW.

20 2. ANY INDIVIDUAL, AS DEFINED IN PARAGRAPH (A) OF SUBDIVISION ONE OF
21 SECTION FOUR HUNDRED TWENTY-NINE-A OF THIS TITLE, REQUIRED BY THIS
22 SECTION TO REVIEW EXISTING RECORDS AND INFORMATION AND REPORT ALLEGA-
23 TIONS CONTAINED THEREIN WHO WILLFULLY FAILS TO DO SO SHALL BE GUILTY OF
24 A CLASS A MISDEMEANOR FOR THE FIRST OFFENSE, A CLASS E FELONY FOR THE
25 SECOND OFFENSE AND A CLASS D FELONY FOR THE THIRD OFFENSE OR ANY SUBSE-
26 QUENT OFFENSE.

27 S 3. This act shall take effect on the sixtieth day after it shall
28 have become a law.