

4248

2015-2016 Regular Sessions

I N   A S S E M B L Y

January 29, 2015

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Introduced by M. of A. SCARBOROUGH, PEOPLES-STOKES, CERETTO, TITUS,  
MONTESANO, ROBINSON -- Multi-Sponsored by -- M. of A. BARCLAY, COLTON,  
GRAF -- read once and referred to the Committee on Children and Families

AN ACT to amend the social services law, in relation to investigations of the homes of adults about whom reports have been filed and requiring officials to obtain a supervisor's approval or otherwise requiring application for a court order allowing access to the home; and to amend the penal law, in relation to criminalizing the act of denying access to an individual who is the subject of a report to child or adult protective services

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

1     Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as  
2     "Laura Cummings' Law".  
3     S 2. The section heading and opening paragraph of section 421 of the  
4     social services law, as amended by section 5 of part D of chapter 501 of  
5     the laws of 2012, are amended to read as follows:  
6     Responsibility of the office OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES. The  
7     office OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES shall:  
8     S 3. Paragraph (a) of subdivision 1 of section 473 of the social  
9     services law, as amended by chapter 395 of the laws of 1995, is amended  
10    to read as follows:  
11    (a) receiving and investigating reports of seriously impaired individuals  
12    who may be in need of protection; SUCH INVESTIGATIONS SHALL INCLUDE  
13    INVESTIGATION OF THE HOME OF AN IMPAIRED INDIVIDUAL NAMED IN THE REPORT,  
14    INCLUDING BY THE AUTHORITY OF IMMEDIATE COURT ORDERS WHENEVER ACCESS  
15    THERETO IS DENIED AS SET FORTH IN SECTION FOUR HUNDRED SEVENTY-THREE-A  
16    OF THIS ARTICLE;  
17    S 4. Section 473-c of the social services law is amended by adding a  
18    new subdivision 1-a to read as follows:

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

LBD08081-01-5

1 1-A. EXCEPT IN A CITY WITH A POPULATION OF ONE MILLION OR MORE, IN  
2 EVERY SITUATION WHERE A SOCIAL SERVICES OFFICIAL OR CASEWORKER, WHO IS  
3 INVESTIGATING WHETHER AN ADULT IS IN NEED OF PROTECTIVE SERVICES, IS  
4 DENIED ACCESS TO THAT ADULT TO SUFFICIENTLY ASSESS IF THAT ADULT IS IN  
5 NEED OF SUCH SERVICES, THE OFFICIAL OR CASEWORKER SHALL IMMEDIATELY  
6 DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH THE SUPERVISOR OF THE ADULT SERVICES DIVISION OF  
7 THE SOCIAL SERVICES DISTRICT AS WELL AS WITH THE APPROPRIATE COUNTY  
8 LEGAL COUNSEL ASSIGNED TO SUCH MATTERS, AND A DECISION SHALL BE MADE AS  
9 TO THE APPROPRIATENESS OF SEEKING A COURT ORDER OF ACCESS PURSUANT TO  
10 THIS SECTION. IF THE DECISION IS MADE TO SEEK AN ORDER, THAT SHALL OCCUR  
11 FORTHWITH, AND IF THE DECISION IS NOT TO SEEK SUCH AN ORDER, IT SHALL BE  
12 RECORDED WITH THE RATIONALE FOR SUCH DECISION IN THE RECORDS.

13 S 5. Subdivision 4 of section 473-c of the social services law, as  
14 added by chapter 413 of the laws of 1986, is amended to read as follows:

15 4. If the court is satisfied that there is reasonable cause to believe  
16 that a person in need of protective services for adults may be found at  
17 the premises described in the application, that such person may be in  
18 need of protective services for adults, and that access to such person  
19 has been refused, it shall grant the application and issue an order  
20 authorizing the social services official and such other individuals as  
21 may be designated by the said official, accompanied by a police officer,  
22 to enter the premises to conduct an assessment to determine whether the  
23 person named in the application is in need of protective services for  
24 adults. The [standard for proof and] procedure for such an authorization  
25 shall be the same as for a search warrant under the criminal procedure  
26 law.

27 S 6. Subparagraphs (z) and (aa) of paragraph (A) of subdivision 4 of  
28 section 422 of the social services law, subparagraph (z) as amended and  
29 subparagraph (aa) as added by chapter 440 of the laws of 2011, are  
30 amended and a new subparagraph (bb) is added to read as follows:

31 (z) an entity with appropriate legal authority in another state to  
32 license, certify or otherwise approve prospective foster and adoptive  
33 parents where disclosure of information regarding the prospective foster  
34 or adoptive parents and other persons over the age of eighteen residing  
35 in the home of such prospective parents is required by paragraph twenty  
36 of subdivision (a) of section six hundred seventy-one of title forty-two  
37 of the United States code; [and]

38 (aa) a social services official who is investigating whether an adult  
39 is in need of protective services in accordance with the provisions of  
40 section four hundred seventy-three of this chapter, when such official  
41 has reasonable cause to believe such adult may be in need of protective  
42 services due to the conduct of an individual or individuals who had  
43 access to such adult when such adult was a child and that such reports  
44 and information are needed to further the present investigation[.]; AND

45 (BB) A SOCIAL SERVICES OFFICIAL WHO IS INVESTIGATING WHETHER AN ADULT  
46 IS IN NEED OF PROTECTIVE SERVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF  
47 SECTION FOUR HUNDRED SEVENTY-THREE OF THIS CHAPTER, AND WHEN SUCH OFFI-  
48 CIAL STATES THAT HE OR SHE HAS REASONABLE CAUSE TO BELIEVE THAT SUCH  
49 PERSON MAY BE IN NEED OF PROTECTIVE SERVICES AND THAT SUCH PERSON MAY  
50 HAVE BEEN THE SUBJECT OF A CHILD PROTECTIVE REPORT WITHIN THE LAST FIVE  
51 YEARS. SUCH INFORMATION MAY BE REQUESTED AND RELEASED ACROSS ALL SOCIAL  
52 SERVICES DISTRICTS IN THE STATE.

53 S 7. Paragraphs (B), (C) and (D) of subdivision 4 of section 422 of  
54 the social services law, as amended by chapter 677 of the laws of 1985,  
55 are amended to read as follows:

(B) Notwithstanding any inconsistent provision of law to the contrary, a city or county social services commissioner may withhold, in whole or in part, the release of any information which he or she is authorized to make available to persons or agencies identified in subparagraphs (a), (k), [(l),] (m), (n)[,] AND (o)[,] (p) and (q)] of paragraph (A) of this subdivision if such commissioner determines that such information is not related to the purposes for which such information is requested or when such disclosure will be detrimental to the child named in the report.

(C) A city or county social services commissioner who denies access by persons or agencies identified in subparagraphs (a), (k), [(l),] (m), (n)[,] AND (o)[,] (p) and (q)] of paragraph (A) of this subdivision to records, reports or other information or parts thereof maintained by such commissioner in accordance with this title shall, within ten days from the date of receipt of the request fully explain in writing to the person requesting the records, reports or other information the reasons for the denial.

(D) A person or agency identified in subparagraphs (a), (k), [(l),] (m), (n)[,] AND (o)[,] (p) and (q)] of paragraph (A) of this subdivision who is denied access to records, reports or other information or parts thereof maintained by a local department pursuant to this title may bring a proceeding for review of such denial pursuant to article seventy-eight of the civil practice law and rules.

S 8. Section 195.05 of the penal law, as amended by chapter 269 of the laws of 1998, is amended to read as follows:

S 195.05 Obstructing governmental administration in the second degree.

A person is guilty of obstructing governmental administration IN THE SECOND DEGREE when he OR SHE intentionally obstructs, impairs or perverts the administration of law or other governmental function or prevents or attempts to prevent a public servant from performing an official function[,]:

1. by means of intimidation, physical force or interference, or by means of any independently unlawful act[, or];

2. by means of interfering, whether or not physical force is involved, with radio, telephone, television or other telecommunications systems owned or operated by the state, or a county, city, town, village, fire district or emergency medical service [or];

3. by means of releasing a dangerous animal under circumstances evincing the actor's intent that the animal obstruct governmental administration; OR

4. BY, WITH INTENT TO CONCEAL ABUSE AND/OR NEGLECT, DENYING OR ATTEMPTING TO DENY AN INVESTIGATION OF CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES OR OF ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES, ACCESS TO INTERVIEW AN ALLEGED VICTIM.

Obstructing governmental administration IN THE SECOND DEGREE is a class A misdemeanor.

S 9. This act shall take effect immediately.