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I N   S E N A T E

May 12, 2016

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

AN ACT to amend the family court act and the social services law, in relation to the liability for abuse of a child by a person legally responsible for such child

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

1     Section 1. Subdivision (j) of section 1012 of the family court act, as  
2 amended by section 3 of part B of chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, is  
3 amended to read as follows:  
4     (j) "Aggravated circumstances" means where a child has been either  
5 severely or repeatedly abused, as defined AND PROVIDED FOR in subdivi-  
6 sion eight of section three hundred eighty-four-b of the social services  
7 law, BY A PARENT OR BY A PERSON LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR SUCH CHILD OR  
8 ANOTHER CHILD; or where a child has subsequently been found to be an  
9 abused child, as defined in paragraph (i) or (iii) of subdivision (e) of  
10 this section, within five years after return home following placement in  
11 foster care as a result of being found to be a neglected child, as  
12 defined in subdivision (f) of this section, provided that the respondent  
13 or respondents, BEING EITHER THE CHILD'S PARENT OR A PERSON LEGALLY  
14 RESPONSIBLE FOR SUCH CHILD OR ANOTHER CHILD, in each of the foregoing  
15 proceedings was the same; or where the court finds by clear and convinc-  
16 ing evidence that the parent of a child in foster care has refused and  
17 has failed completely, over a period of at least six months from the  
18 date of removal, to engage in services necessary to eliminate the risk  
19 of abuse or neglect if returned to the parent, and has failed to secure  
20 services on his or her own or otherwise adequately prepare for the  
21 return home and, after being informed by the court that such an admis-  
22 sion could eliminate the requirement that the local department of social  
23 services provide reunification services to the parent, the parent has  
24 stated in court under oath that he or she intends to continue to refuse  
25 such necessary services and is unwilling to secure such services inde-  
26 pendently or otherwise prepare for the child's return home; provided,  
27 however, that if the court finds that adequate justification exists for

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

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1 the failure to engage in or secure such services, including but not  
2 limited to a lack of child care, a lack of transportation, and an  
3 inability to attend services that conflict with the parent's work sched-  
4 ule, such failure shall not constitute an aggravated circumstance; or  
5 where a court has determined a child five days old or younger was aban-  
6 doned by a parent with an intent to wholly abandon such child and with  
7 the intent that the child be safe from physical injury and cared for in  
8 an appropriate manner.

9 S 2. Paragraph (i) of subdivision (a) of section 1046 of the family  
10 court act, as added by chapter 962 of the laws of 1970, is amended to  
11 read as follows:

12 (i) proof of the AGGRAVATED CIRCUMSTANCES, abuse or neglect of one  
13 child shall be admissible evidence on the issue of the AGGRAVATED  
14 CIRCUMSTANCES, abuse or neglect of any other child of, or the legal  
15 responsibility of, the respondent; and

16 S 3. Paragraph (e) of subdivision 4 of section 384-b of the social  
17 services law, as amended by section 56 of part A of chapter 3 of the  
18 laws of 2005, is amended to read as follows:

19 (e) The parent or parents, whose consent to the adoption of the child  
20 would otherwise be required in accordance with section one hundred elev-  
21 en of the domestic relations law, severely or repeatedly abused such  
22 child OR ANY CHILD FOR WHOM SUCH PARENT IS OR HAS BEEN A PERSON LEGALLY  
23 RESPONSIBLE, AS DEFINED IN SUBDIVISION (G) OF SECTION ONE THOUSAND  
24 TWELVE OF THE FAMILY COURT ACT. Where a court has determined that  
25 reasonable efforts to reunite the child with his or her parent are not  
26 required, pursuant to the family court act or this chapter, OR WHERE THE  
27 CHILD WAS SEVERELY OR REPEATEDLY ABUSED IS NOT THE CHILD OF THE RESPOND-  
28 ENT IN THE TERMINATION PROCEEDING, a petition to terminate parental  
29 rights on the ground of severe abuse as set forth in subparagraph (iii)  
30 of paragraph (a) of subdivision eight of this section may be filed imme-  
31 diately upon such determination.

32 S 4. Subdivision 8 of section 384-b of the social services law, as  
33 amended by chapter 7 of the laws of 1999, subparagraph (ii) of paragraph  
34 (a) and subparagraph (i) of paragraph (b) as amended by chapter 430 of  
35 the laws of 2013, clause (A) of subparagraph (iii) of paragraph (a) as  
36 amended by chapter 460 of the laws of 2006, paragraph (f) as amended by  
37 section 58 of part A of chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, is amended to  
38 read as follows:

39 8. (a) For the purposes of this section a child is "severely abused"  
40 by his or her parent OR BY A RESPONDENT WHO IS OR WAS A PERSON LEGALLY  
41 RESPONSIBLE, AS DEFINED IN SUBDIVISION (G) OF SECTION ONE THOUSAND  
42 TWELVE OF THE FAMILY COURT ACT, FOR A CHILD, if (i) the child has been  
43 found to be an abused child as a result of reckless or intentional acts  
44 of the parent OR SUCH PERSON committed under circumstances evincing a  
45 depraved indifference to human life, which result in serious physical  
46 injury to the child as defined in subdivision ten of section 10.00 of  
47 the penal law; or

48 (ii) the child has been found to be an abused child, as defined in  
49 paragraph (iii) of subdivision (e) of section ten hundred twelve of the  
50 family court act, as a result of such parent's OR PERSON LEGALLY RESPON-  
51 SIBLE'S acts; provided, however, the respondent must have committed or  
52 knowingly allowed to be committed a felony sex offense as defined in  
53 sections 130.25, 130.30, 130.35, 130.40, 130.45, 130.50, 130.65, 130.67,  
54 130.70, 130.75, 130.80, 130.95 and 130.96 of the penal law and, for the  
55 purposes of this section the corroboration requirements contained in the  
56 penal law shall not apply to proceedings under this section; or

1 (iii) (A) the parent of such child OR A PERSON LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE, AS  
2 DEFINED IN SUBDIVISION (G) OF SECTION ONE THOUSAND TWELVE OF THE FAMILY  
3 COURT ACT, has been convicted of murder in the first degree as defined  
4 in section 125.27, murder in the second degree as defined in section  
5 125.25, manslaughter in the first degree as defined in section 125.20,  
6 or manslaughter in the second degree as defined in section 125.15, and  
7 the victim of any such crime was another child of the parent or another  
8 child for whose care such parent is or has been legally responsible as  
9 defined in subdivision (g) of section one thousand twelve of the family  
10 court act, or another parent of the child, unless the convicted parent  
11 was a victim of physical, sexual or psychological abuse by the decedent  
12 parent and such abuse was a factor in causing the homicide; or has been  
13 convicted of an attempt to commit any of the foregoing crimes, and the  
14 victim or intended victim was the child or another child of the parent  
15 or another child for whose care such parent is or has been legally  
16 responsible as defined in subdivision (g) of section one thousand twelve  
17 of the family court act, or another parent of the child, unless the  
18 convicted parent was a victim of physical, sexual or psychological abuse  
19 by the decedent parent and such abuse was a factor in causing the  
20 attempted homicide; (B) the parent of such child has been convicted of  
21 criminal solicitation as defined in article one hundred, conspiracy as  
22 defined in article one hundred five or criminal facilitation as defined  
23 in article one hundred fifteen of the penal law for conspiring, solicit-  
24 ing or facilitating any of the foregoing crimes, and the victim or  
25 intended victim was the child or another child of the parent or another  
26 child for whose care such parent is or has been legally responsible; (C)  
27 the parent of such child has been convicted of assault in the second  
28 degree as defined in section 120.05, assault in the first degree as  
29 defined in section 120.10 or aggravated assault upon a person less than  
30 eleven years old as defined in section 120.12 of the penal law, and the  
31 victim of any such crime was the child or another child of the parent or  
32 another child for whose care such parent is or has been legally respon-  
33 sible; or has been convicted of an attempt to commit any of the forego-  
34 ing crimes, and the victim or intended victim was the child or another  
35 child of the parent or another child for whose care such parent is or  
36 has been legally responsible; or (D) the parent of such child has been  
37 convicted under the law in any other jurisdiction of an offense which  
38 includes all of the essential elements of any crime specified in clause  
39 (A), (B) or (C) of this subparagraph; and

40 (iv) IN THE CASE WHERE THE CHILD, WHO IS THE SUBJECT OF THE PETITION,  
41 IS IN FOSTER CARE, the agency has made diligent efforts to encourage and  
42 strengthen the parental relationship, including efforts to rehabilitate  
43 the respondent, when such efforts will not be detrimental to the best  
44 interests of the child, and such efforts have been unsuccessful and are  
45 unlikely to be successful in the foreseeable future. Where a court has  
46 previously determined in accordance with this chapter or the family  
47 court act that reasonable efforts to make it possible for the child to  
48 return safely to his or her home are not required, the agency shall not  
49 be required to demonstrate diligent efforts as set forth in this  
50 section.

51 (b) For the purposes of this section a child is "repeatedly abused" by  
52 his or her parent OR BY A RESPONDENT WHO IS OR WAS A PERSON LEGALLY  
53 RESPONSIBLE AS DEFINED IN SUBDIVISION (G) OF SECTION ONE THOUSAND TWELVE  
54 OF THE FAMILY COURT ACT, FOR A CHILD, if:

55 (i) the child has been found to be an abused child, (A) as defined in  
56 paragraph (i) of subdivision (e) of section ten hundred twelve of the

1 family court act, as a result of such parent's OR PERSON LEGALLY RESPON-  
2 SIBLE'S acts; or (B) as defined in paragraph (iii) of subdivision (e) of  
3 section ten hundred twelve of the family court act, as a result of such  
4 parent's acts; provided, however, the respondent must have committed or  
5 knowingly allowed to be committed a felony sex offense as defined in  
6 sections 130.25, 130.30, 130.35, 130.40, 130.45, 130.50, 130.65, 130.67,  
7 130.70, 130.75, 130.80, 130.95 and 130.96 of the penal law; and  
8 (ii) (A) the child or another child for whose care such parent is or  
9 has been legally responsible has been previously found, within the five  
10 years immediately preceding the initiation of the proceeding in which  
11 such abuse is found, to be an abused child, as defined in paragraph (i)  
12 or (iii) of subdivision (e) of section ten hundred twelve of the family  
13 court act, as a result of such parent's acts; provided, however, in the  
14 case of a finding of abuse as defined in paragraph (iii) of subdivision  
15 (e) of section ten hundred twelve of the family court act the respondent  
16 must have committed or knowingly allowed to be committed a felony sex  
17 offense as defined in sections 130.25, 130.30, 130.35, 130.40, 130.45,  
18 130.50, 130.65, 130.67, 130.70, 130.75 and 130.80 of the penal law, or  
19 (B) the parent has been convicted of a crime under section 130.25,  
20 130.30, 130.35, 130.40, 130.45, 130.50, 130.65, 130.67, 130.70, 130.75  
21 or 130.80 of the penal law against the child, a sibling of the child or  
22 another child for whose care such parent is or has been legally respon-  
23 sible, within the five year period immediately preceding the initiation  
24 of the proceeding in which abuse is found; and  
25 (iii) the agency has made diligent efforts, to encourage and strength-  
26 en the parental relationship, IF THE RESPONDENT IS THE CHILD'S PARENT,  
27 including efforts to rehabilitate the respondent, when such efforts will  
28 not be detrimental to the best interests of the child, and such efforts  
29 have been unsuccessful and are unlikely to be successful in the foresee-  
30 able future. Where a court has previously determined in accordance with  
31 this chapter or the family court act that reasonable efforts to make it  
32 possible for the child to return safely to his or her home are not  
33 required, the agency shall not be required to demonstrate diligent  
34 efforts as set forth in this section.  
35 (c) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the requirements of  
36 paragraph (g) of subdivision three of this section shall be satisfied if  
37 one of the findings of abuse pursuant to subparagraph (i) or (ii) of  
38 paragraph (b) of this subdivision is found to be based on clear and  
39 convincing evidence.  
40 (d) A determination by the court in accordance with article ten of the  
41 family court act based upon clear and convincing evidence that the child  
42 was a severely abused child as defined in subparagraphs (i) and (ii) of  
43 paragraph (a) of this subdivision shall establish that the child was a  
44 severely abused child in accordance with this section. Such a determi-  
45 nation by the court in accordance with article ten of the family court  
46 act based upon a fair preponderance of evidence shall be admissible in  
47 any proceeding commenced in accordance with this section.  
48 (e) A determination by the court in accordance with article ten of the  
49 family court act based upon clear and convincing evidence that a child  
50 was abused (A) as defined in paragraph (i) of subdivision (e) of section  
51 ten hundred twelve of the family court act, as a result of such parent's  
52 acts; or (B) as defined in paragraph (iii) of subdivision (e) of section  
53 ten hundred twelve of the family court act, as a result of such parent's  
54 acts; provided, however, the respondent must have committed or knowingly  
55 allowed to be committed a felony sex offense as defined in sections  
56 130.25, 130.30, 130.35, 130.40, 130.45, 130.50, 130.65, 130.67, 130.70,

1 130.75 and 130.80 of the penal law shall establish that the child was an  
2 abused child for the purpose of a determination as required by subpara-  
3 graph (i) or (ii) of paragraph (b) of this subdivision. Such a determi-  
4 nation by the court in accordance with article ten of the family court  
5 act based upon a fair preponderance of evidence shall be admissible in  
6 any proceeding commenced in accordance with this section.

7 (f) Upon a finding pursuant to paragraph (a) or (b) of this subdivi-  
8 sion that the child has been severely or repeatedly abused by his or her  
9 parent OR BY A PERSON LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE, AS DEFINED BY SUBDIVISION (G)  
10 OF SECTION ONE THOUSAND TWELVE OF THE FAMILY COURT ACT, FOR A CHILD, the  
11 court shall enter an order of disposition either (i) committing the  
12 guardianship and custody of the child OR ANY CHILD OF SUCH PARENT,  
13 pursuant to this section, or (ii) suspending judgment in accordance with  
14 section six hundred thirty-three of the family court act, upon a further  
15 finding, based on clear and convincing, competent, material and relevant  
16 evidence introduced in a dispositional hearing, that the best interests  
17 of the child require such commitment or suspension of judgment, OR (III)  
18 TERMINATING THE RIGHTS OF ONE PARENT WHERE THE CHILD WILL BE IN THE  
19 CUSTODY OF ANOTHER PARENT, A RELATIVE OR THE LOCAL COMMISSIONER OF  
20 SOCIAL SERVICES. Where the disposition ordered is the commitment of  
21 guardianship and custody pursuant to this section, an initial freed  
22 child permanency hearing shall be completed pursuant to section one  
23 thousand eighty-nine of the family court act.

24 (G) A PETITION FILED PURSUANT TO THIS SUBDIVISION MAY ALSO BE FILED  
25 WHERE A CHILD IS THE CHILD OF A RESPONDENT WHO SEVERELY ABUSED OR  
26 REPEATEDLY ABUSED A CHILD FOR WHOM HE OR SHE WAS A PERSON LEGALLY  
27 RESPONSIBLE, AS DEFINED IN SUBDIVISION (G) OF SECTION ONE THOUSAND  
28 TWELVE OF THE FAMILY COURT ACT.

29 (H) A PETITION MAY BE FILED PURSUANT TO THIS SUBDIVISION WHEN THE  
30 SEVERELY OR REPEATEDLY ABUSED CHILD IS NOT IN FOSTER CARE AND/OR WHEN  
31 ONLY ONE OF SUCH CHILD'S PARENTS IS A RESPONDENT.

32 S 5. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall  
33 have become a law.