

STATE OF NEW YORK

2433

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IN ASSEMBLY

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Introduced by M. of A. PAULIN, WRIGHT, PRETLOW, GUNTHER, ROSENTHAL, HOOPER, GALEF, JAFFEE, SCHIMMINGER, ZEBROWSKI, ABBATE, KAVANAGH -- Multi-Sponsored by -- M. of A. BENEDETTO, CAHILL, DINOWITZ, ENGLE-BRIGHT, FARRELL, GOTTFRIED, HEVESI, LUPARDO, MAGEE, ORTIZ, PERRY -- read once and referred to the Committee on Judiciary

AN ACT to amend the family court act and the social services law, in relation to abandoned infants

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Paragraph (ii) of subdivision (f) and subdivision (j) of
2 section 1012 of the family court act, paragraph (ii) of subdivision (f)
3 as amended by chapter 666 of the laws of 1976 and subdivision (j) as
4 amended by section 3 of part B of chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, are
5 amended and a new subdivision (l) is added to read as follows:

6 (ii) who has been abandoned, in accordance with the definition and
7 other criteria set forth in subdivision five of section three hundred
8 eighty-four-b of the social services law, by his parents or other person
9 legally responsible for his care, but shall not include an abandoned
10 infant as defined in subdivision (l) of this section.

11 (j) "Aggravated circumstances" means where a child has been either
12 severely or repeatedly abused, as defined in subdivision eight of
13 section three hundred eighty-four-b of the social services law; or where
14 a child has subsequently been found to be an abused child, as defined in
15 paragraph (i) or (iii) of subdivision (e) of this section, within five
16 years after return home following placement in foster care as a result
17 of being found to be a neglected child, as defined in subdivision (f) of
18 this section, provided that the respondent or respondents in each of the
19 foregoing proceedings was the same; or where the court finds by clear
20 and convincing evidence that the parent of a child in foster care has
21 refused and has failed completely, over a period of at least six months
22 from the date of removal, to engage in services necessary to eliminate

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

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1 the risk of abuse or neglect if returned to the parent, and has failed
2 to secure services on his or her own or otherwise adequately prepare for
3 the return home and, after being informed by the court that such an
4 admission could eliminate the requirement that the local department of
5 social services provide reunification services to the parent, the parent
6 has stated in court under oath that he or she intends to continue to
7 refuse such necessary services and is unwilling to secure such services
8 independently or otherwise prepare for the child's return home;
9 provided, however, that if the court finds that adequate justification
10 exists for the failure to engage in or secure such services, including
11 but not limited to a lack of child care, a lack of transportation, and
12 an inability to attend services that conflict with the parent's work
13 schedule, such failure shall not constitute an aggravated circumstance;
14 or where a court has determined a child [~~five~~ thirty] days old or young-
15 er was abandoned by a parent with an intent to wholly abandon such child
16 and with the intent that the child be safe from physical injury and
17 cared for in an appropriate manner.

18 (1) "Abandoned infant" means a child who has been left by his or her
19 parent when thirty days old or younger, in a manner that indicated the
20 parent's intent to wholly abandon such child by relinquishing and fore-
21 going responsibility for and rights to the care and custody of such
22 child with the intent that the child be safe from physical injury and
23 cared for in an appropriate manner.

24 § 2. The family court act is amended by adding a new section 1031-a to
25 read as follows:

26 § 1031-a. Abandoned infants, preliminary procedure. (a) Upon receipt
27 of notice that a child who appears to be an abandoned infant has been
28 found in the jurisdiction of the local social services district, the
29 local commissioner of social services shall immediately take protective
30 custody of the child pursuant to section one thousand twenty-four of
31 this article until further order of the court.

32 (b) A proceeding to determine whether a child is an abandoned infant
33 pursuant to subdivision (1) of section one thousand twelve of this arti-
34 cle shall be commenced by such local commissioner forthwith. The peti-
35 tion for such proceeding shall:

36 (i) allege the location and date of and the circumstances by which it
37 is alleged that the child was abandoned; and

38 (ii) allege that upon information and belief, the child in question
39 was thirty days old or younger when found.

40 (c) The court upon receipt of the petition shall appoint an attorney
41 for the child to represent the child alleged to be an abandoned infant.

42 (d) If the identity of the parents of the child is unknown, the court
43 upon receipt of the petition shall hold a hearing to determine whether
44 the child appears to have been abandoned in accordance with the defi-
45 nition of abandoned infant provided in subdivision (1) of section one
46 thousand twelve of this article.

47 (i) At such hearing, if the court determines that the circumstances of
48 the abandonment meet the definition of abandoned infant in subdivision
49 (1) of section one thousand twelve of this article, the court shall:

50 (A) order that the local commissioner of social services shall not be
51 required to commence a diligent search to locate the parent or parents
52 or other relatives of the child; and

53 (B) require the local commissioner of social services to cause notice
54 of the proceeding to be published in accordance with the provisions of
55 subdivision (a) of rule three hundred sixteen of the civil practice law
56 and rules in the county in which such child was found, at least once in

1 each of three successive weeks. Service by publication is complete on
2 the twenty-first day after the day of the first publication. The notice
3 shall state:

4 (1) the date, time and purpose of the proceeding;

5 (2) the date, time and place that the abandoned infant was found;

6 (3) a description of the infant including its approximate date of
7 birth;

8 (4) that upon failure of the parent to appear, the child may be deemed
9 an abandoned infant pursuant to subdivision (1) of section one thousand
10 twelve of this article and placed into the care and custody of the
11 commissioner of the local social services district in the parent's
12 absence; and

13 (5) the name, address, and telephone number of the person designated
14 by the local commissioner of social services to contact for information
15 regarding such child.

16 (ii) In determining whether removal or continuing the removal of a
17 child is necessary to avoid imminent risk to the child's life or health,
18 the court shall consider and determine in its order whether continuation
19 in the child's home would be contrary to the best interests of the child
20 and where appropriate, whether reasonable efforts were made prior to the
21 date of the hearing held under this subdivision to prevent or eliminate
22 the need for removal of the child from the home and, if the child was
23 removed from his or her home prior to the date of the hearing held under
24 this subdivision, where appropriate, that reasonable efforts were made
25 to make it possible for the child to safely return home. If the court
26 determines that reasonable efforts to prevent or eliminate the need for
27 removal of the child from the home were not made but that the lack of
28 such efforts was appropriate under the circumstances, the court order
29 shall include such a finding.

30 (e) If a person claiming to be a parent of the child in question who
31 is alleged to be an abandoned infant, comes forward, the local commis-
32 sioner of social services shall:

33 (i) provide written notification to the court and the attorney for the
34 child forthwith; and

35 (ii) cause a test to be conducted to confirm maternity or paternity of
36 the persons claiming to be the mother or father of the child in ques-
37 tion; and if maternity or paternity is confirmed, notify the court which
38 shall order an investigation pursuant to subdivision one of section one
39 thousand thirty-four of this part. The existing order of custody of the
40 child to the local commissioner of social services shall continue pend-
41 ing the result of the investigation.

42 (A) If there are grounds pursuant to subdivision (e) or (f) of section
43 one thousand twelve of this article to file a petition to determine
44 abuse or neglect pursuant to section one thousand thirty-one of this
45 part, the local commissioner of social services shall file such petition
46 within three court days of the completion of the investigation. The
47 parent or parents shall be informed of the date and the time that the
48 petition shall be filed, the address of the court where the petition
49 shall be filed, of the right of the parent to be present at any hearing
50 held thereon and of the right to be represented by counsel, including
51 procedures for obtaining counsel if indigent. Upon such filing, a hear-
52 ing pursuant to section one thousand twenty-seven of this article shall
53 be held forthwith.

54 (B) If no such grounds exist, the court shall dismiss the petition and
55 order that the child be returned to his or her parent or parents.

§ 3. Subdivision (a) of section 1039-b of the family court act, as added by chapter 7 of the laws of 1999, is amended to read as follows:

(a) In conjunction with, or at any time subsequent to, the filing of a petition under section ~~[ten—hundred]~~ one thousand thirty-one of this ~~[chapter]~~ part, the social services official may file a motion upon notice requesting a finding that reasonable efforts to return the child to his or her home are no longer required.

§ 4. Subdivision (a) of section 1041 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 1015 of the laws of 1972, is amended to read as follows:

(a) that the parent or other person legally responsible for the child's care is present at the hearing and has been served with a copy of the petition, unless the child is alleged to be an abandoned infant pursuant to section one thousand thirty-one-a of this article, in which event, the provisions of subparagraph (B) of paragraph (i) of subdivision (d) of section one thousand thirty-one-a of this article shall apply; or

§ 5. Section 1044 of the family court act, as added by chapter 962 of the laws of 1970, is amended to read as follows:

§ 1044. Definition of "fact-finding hearing". When used in this article, "fact-finding hearing" means a hearing to determine whether the child is an abused or neglected child or an abandoned infant as defined by this article.

§ 6. The family court act is amended by adding a new section 1051-a to read as follows:

§ 1051-a. Sustaining or dismissing a petition alleging a child is an abandoned infant. (a) At the fact-finding hearing scheduled pursuant to section one thousand thirty-one-a of this article, the court shall determine that the child is an abandoned infant and sustain the petition filed under section one thousand thirty-one-a of this article if facts sufficient to constitute clear and convincing evidence are established to find that the child was thirty days old or younger when abandoned and that the child was left in a manner that indicated his or her parent's intent to wholly abandon such child by relinquishing and foregoing responsibility for and rights to the care and custody of such child with the intent that the child be safe from physical injury and cared for in an appropriate manner. For purposes of finding that the child was thirty days old or younger when abandoned, an affidavit or other official record of a determination of a qualified health care practitioner, licensed or certified under title eight of the education law, acting within his or her lawful scope of practice who examined the child that such child was thirty days old or younger when abandoned and the date of birth of the child, to a reasonable degree of medical certainty; an affidavit or official record, including a police report or testimony regarding the manner of the abandonment of the child; and an affidavit or official record of the result of the inquiries made to the putative father registry and to local law enforcement officials regarding a missing person report, shall be sufficient evidence of the child's age and date of birth and the intent to wholly abandon the child.

(b) If the court sustains the petition and finds that the child is an abandoned infant, the court shall determine and find and shall state in its order:

(i) that the child was thirty days old or younger when abandoned to a reasonable degree of medical certainty;

(ii) the date the child was born, to a reasonable degree of medical certainty;

1 (iii) that the child was left in a manner that indicated his or her
2 parent's intent to wholly abandon the child by relinquishing and forego-
3 ing responsibility for and rights to the care and custody of such child
4 with the intent that the child be safe from physical injury and cared
5 for in an appropriate manner;

6 (iv) that based upon the findings of paragraphs (i) and (iii) of this
7 subdivision, aggravated circumstances within the meaning of subdivision
8 (j) of section one thousand twelve of this article exist; and

9 (v) that based upon such finding of aggravated circumstances, reason-
10 able efforts to return the child to his or her home are not required.

11 (c) If facts sufficient to sustain the petition are not established
12 due to a determination that either the child was older than thirty days
13 at the time of abandonment or the child is not otherwise an abandoned
14 infant as provided in this section, the court shall convert the petition
15 to a proceeding to determine abuse or neglect pursuant to section one
16 thousand thirty-one of this article and shall state on the record the
17 grounds for the conversion.

18 (i) The court shall determine whether temporary custody of the child
19 to the local commissioner of social services shall continue until
20 further order of the court. In determining whether removal or continuing
21 the removal of a child is necessary to avoid imminent risk to the
22 child's life or health, the court shall consider and determine in its
23 order whether continuation in the child's home would be contrary to the
24 best interests of the child and where appropriate, whether reasonable
25 efforts were made prior to the date of the hearing held under subdivi-
26 sion (a) of this section to prevent or eliminate the need for removal of
27 the child from the home and, if the child was removed from his or her
28 home prior to the date of the hearing held under subdivision (a) of this
29 section, where appropriate, that reasonable efforts were made to make it
30 possible for the child to safely return home.

31 (ii) If the court determines that reasonable efforts to prevent or
32 eliminate the need for removal of the child from the home were not made
33 but that the lack of such efforts was appropriate under the circum-
34 stances, the court order shall include such a finding.

35 (d) At the conclusion of the dispositional hearing that shall be
36 commenced immediately upon completion of the fact-finding hearing when
37 the petition has been sustained, the court shall enter an order of
38 disposition:

39 (i) placing the child in the custody of the local commissioner of
40 social services, who shall make reasonable efforts to place the child
41 into a pre-adoptive home, in accordance with the provisions of section
42 one thousand fifty-five of this part, upon a determination that:

43 (A) continuation in the child's home would be contrary to the best
44 interests of the child; and

45 (B) where the court has determined that the parent of such child has
46 subjected the child to aggravated circumstances, as defined in subdivi-
47 sion (j) of section one thousand twelve of this article, reasonable
48 efforts to prevent or eliminate the need for removing the child from the
49 home of the child or to make it possible for the child to return safely
50 to his or her home are not required;

51 (ii) requiring the local commissioner of social services to commence a
52 proceeding to commit the guardianship and custody of such child to an
53 authorized agency pursuant to section three hundred eighty-four-b of the
54 social services law within sixty days; and

1 (iii) if the initial permanency hearing has not been held, setting a
2 date certain for an initial permanency hearing pursuant to paragraph one
3 of subdivision (b) of section one thousand eighty-nine of this act.

4 § 7. Paragraph (i) of subdivision (a) of section 1055 of the family
5 court act, as amended by section 12 of part G of chapter 58 of the laws
6 of 2010, is amended to read as follows:

7 (i) For purposes of section one thousand fifty-two of this part the
8 court may place the child in the custody of a relative or other suitable
9 person pursuant to this article, or of the local commissioner of social
10 services or of such other officer, board or department as may be author-
11 ized to receive children as public charges, or a duly authorized associ-
12 ation, agency, society or in an institution suitable for the placement
13 of a child. The court may also place a child who it finds to be a sexu-
14 ally exploited child as defined in subdivision one of section four
15 hundred forty-seven-a of the social services law with the local commis-
16 sioner of social services for placement in an available long-term safe
17 house. The court may also place the child in the custody of the local
18 commissioner of social services and may direct such commissioner to have
19 the child reside with a relative or other suitable person who has indi-
20 cated a desire to become a foster parent for the child and further
21 direct such commissioner, pursuant to regulations of the office of chil-
22 dren and family services, to commence an investigation of the home of
23 such relative or other suitable person within twenty-four hours and
24 thereafter expedite approval or certification of such relative or other
25 suitable person, if qualified, as a foster parent. If such home is found
26 to be unqualified for approval or certification, the local commissioner
27 shall report such fact to the court forthwith so that the court may make
28 a placement determination that is in the best interests of the child.
29 For purposes of section one thousand fifty-one-a of this part, the court
30 may place the child in the custody of the local commissioner of social
31 services or of such other officer, board or department as may be author-
32 ized to receive children as public charges, or a duly authorized associ-
33 ation, agency, society or in an institution suitable for the placement
34 of a child.

35 § 8. Paragraph (ii) of subdivision (b) of section 1055 of the family
36 court act, as amended by section 18 of part A of chapter 3 of the laws
37 of 2005, is amended to read as follows:

38 (ii) (A) Upon placing a child under the age of one, who has been aban-
39 doned as defined in paragraph (ii) of subdivision (f) of section one
40 thousand twelve of this article, with a local commissioner of social
41 services, the court shall, where either of the parents do not appear
42 after due notice, include in its order of disposition pursuant to
43 section one thousand fifty-two of this part, a direction that such
44 commissioner shall promptly commence a diligent search to locate the
45 child's non-appearing parent or parents or other known relatives who are
46 legally responsible for the child, and to commence a proceeding to
47 commit the guardianship and custody of such child to an authorized agen-
48 cy pursuant to section three hundred eighty-four-b of the social
49 services law, six months from the date that care and custody of the
50 child was transferred to the local commissioner, unless there has been
51 communication and visitation between such child and such parent or
52 parents or other known relatives or persons legally responsible for the
53 child. In addition to such diligent search, the local commissioner of
54 social services shall provide written notice to the child's parent or
55 parents or other known relatives or persons legally responsible as
56 provided for in this paragraph. Such notice shall be served upon such

parent or parents or other known relatives or persons legally responsible in the manner required for service of process pursuant to section six hundred seventeen of this act. Information regarding such diligent search, including, but not limited to, the name, last known address, social security number, employer's address and any other identifying information to the extent known regarding the non-appearing parent, shall be recorded in the uniform case record maintained pursuant to section four hundred nine-f of the social services law.

(B) The requirements of this paragraph shall not apply to an abandoned infant, as defined in subdivision (1) of section one thousand twelve of this article.

§ 9. Subparagraph (i) of paragraph 1 of subdivision (b) of section 1089 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 573 of the laws of 2015, is amended to read as follows:

(i) the child's parent, including any non-respondent parent, unless the parental rights of the parent have been terminated or surrendered, or unless the child has been alleged or found to be an abandoned infant pursuant to section one thousand thirty-one-a of this act and the identity of the parent or parents is unknown, and any other person legally responsible for the child's care at the most recent address or addresses known to the local social services district or agency, and the foster parent in whose home the child currently resides, each of whom shall be a party to the proceeding; and

§ 10. Subdivision (b) of section 1089 of the family court act is amended by adding two new paragraphs 3 and 4 to read as follows:

(3) In the case of a child who is not free for adoption who has been alleged or found to be an abandoned infant pursuant to section one thousand thirty-one-a of this act where the identity of the parent or parents is unknown, the local commissioner of social services shall cause notice of the permanency hearing to be published in accordance with the provisions of rule three hundred sixteen of the civil practice law and rules in the county in which such child was found. The notice shall state:

(i) the date, time and purpose of the proceeding;

(ii) the date, time and place that the abandoned infant was found;

(iii) a description of the infant including its approximate date of birth;

(iv) that upon failure of the parent to appear the child may continue to be placed into the care and custody of the commissioner of the local social services district in the parent's absence; and

(v) the name, address, and telephone number of the person designated by the local commissioner of social services to contact for information regarding such child.

(4) In the case of a child who has been alleged or found to be an abandoned infant pursuant to section one thousand thirty-one-a of this act but not later than six months after the initial publication of notice of such proceeding, if the maternity or paternity of a person claiming to be the mother or father of the infant is confirmed by a test to be conducted to confirm maternity or paternity,

(i) the court shall order an investigation pursuant to subdivision one of section one thousand thirty-four of this act and

(A) if there are grounds pursuant to subdivision (e) or (f) of section one thousand twelve of this act to file a petition to determine abuse or neglect pursuant to section one thousand thirty-one of this act, the local commissioner of social services shall file such petition within

1 three court days. Upon such filing, a hearing pursuant to section one
2 thousand twenty-seven of this act shall be held forthwith; or

3 (B) if there are no grounds to file a petition pursuant to section one
4 thousand thirty-one of this act, the court shall hold a best interests
5 hearing as to whether it is in the best interests of the child to return
6 the child to his or her home or to continue the custody of the child
7 with the local commissioner of social services. Except for good cause
8 shown such hearing shall commence within three court days. The custody
9 of the child with the local commissioner of social services shall
10 continue pending the result of the best interests hearing;

11 (ii) if the child is free for adoption, the court shall also vacate
12 the order committing guardianship and custody of the child.

13 § 11. Section 352 of the social services law is amended by adding a
14 new subdivision 4 to read as follows:

15 4. The provisions of this section shall not apply to the parents of an
16 abandoned infant as defined in subdivision (1) of section one thousand
17 twelve of the family court act and section three hundred ninety-two-a of
18 this chapter.

19 § 12. Subdivision 1 of section 352-a of the social services law is
20 amended by adding a new paragraph (g) to read as follows:

21 (g) the provisions of this section shall not apply to the parents of
22 an abandoned infant as defined in subdivision (1) of section one thou-
23 sand twelve of the family court act and section three hundred ninety-
24 two-a of this chapter.

25 § 13. Subdivision 2 of section 371 of the social services law, as
26 amended by chapter 666 of the laws of 1976, is amended and a new subdi-
27 vision 2-a is added to read as follows:

28 2. "Abandoned child" means a child under the age of eighteen years who
29 is abandoned by both parents, or by the parent having [~~its~~] his or her
30 custody, or by any other person or persons lawfully charged with [~~its~~]
31 his or her care or custody, in accordance with the definition and other
32 criteria set forth in subdivision five of section three hundred eighty-
33 four-b of this title;

34 2-a. "Abandoned infant" means a child as defined in subdivision (1) of
35 section one thousand twelve of the family court act and section three
36 hundred ninety-two-a of this title;

37 § 14. Paragraph (ii) of subdivision 4-a of section 371 of the social
38 services law, as added by chapter 782 of the laws of 1971, is amended to
39 read as follows:

40 (ii) who has been abandoned by his or her parents or other person
41 legally responsible for his or her care, including an abandoned child as
42 defined in subdivision two or an abandoned infant as defined in subdivi-
43 sion two-a of this section.

44 § 15. The opening paragraph and paragraphs (b), (c) and (d) of subdi-
45 vision 1 of section 372 of the social services law are amended to read
46 as follows:

47 Every court, and every public board, commission, institution, or offi-
48 cer having powers or charged with duties in relation to abandoned chil-
49 dren, including abandoned infants, delinquent, destitute, neglected or
50 dependent children who shall receive, accept or commit any child shall
51 provide and keep a record showing:

52 (b) his or her sex and date and place of birth, if ascertainable, or
53 his or her apparent age and in the case of an abandoned infant as
54 defined in subdivision two-a of section three hundred seventy-one of
55 this title, the affidavit or other official record of the determination
56 of a qualified health care practitioner, licensed or certified under

title eight of the education law, acting within his or her lawful scope of practice attesting that the child was thirty days old or younger at the time of abandonment and the date of birth of the child, to a reasonable degree of medical certainty,

(c) the full and true names and places of birth of his or her parents, and their actual residence if living, or their latest known residence, if deceased or whereabouts unknown and the name and actual residence of any other person having custody of the child, as nearly as the same can reasonably be ascertained, and in the case of an abandoned infant as defined in subdivision two-a of section three hundred seventy-one of this title, a certified copy of the court order determining that the child was an abandoned infant pursuant to section one thousand fifty-one-a of the family court act,

(d) the religious faith of the parents and of the child, if known,

§ 16. Paragraph (e) of subdivision 3 of section 384-b of the social services law, as amended by section 55 of part A of chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, is amended to read as follows:

(e) (i) A proceeding under this section is originated by a petition on notice served upon the child's parent or parents, the attorney for the child's parent or parents and upon such other persons as the court may in its discretion prescribe. Such notice shall inform the parents and such other persons that the proceeding may result in an order freeing the child for adoption without the consent of or notice to the parents or such other persons. Such notice also shall inform the parents and such other persons of their right to the assistance of counsel, including any right they may have to have counsel assigned by the court in any case where they are financially unable to obtain counsel. The petition shall set forth the names and last known addresses of all persons required to be given notice of the proceeding, pursuant to this section and section three hundred eighty-four-c of this title, and there shall be shown by the petition or by affidavit or other proof satisfactory to the court that there are no persons other than those set forth in the petition who are entitled to notice pursuant to the provisions of this section or of section three hundred eighty-four-c of this title. When the proceeding is initiated in family court service of the petition and other process shall be made in accordance with the provisions of section six hundred seventeen of the family court act, and when the proceeding is initiated in surrogate's court, service shall be made in accordance with the provisions of section three hundred seven of the surrogate's court procedure act. When the proceeding is initiated on the grounds of abandonment of a child less than one year of age at the time of the transfer of the care and custody of such child to a local social services official, the court shall take judicial notice of efforts to locate the child's parents or other known relatives or other persons legally responsible pursuant to paragraph (ii) of subdivision (b) of section one thousand fifty-five of the family court act. The provisions of this paragraph shall not apply to a child determined to be an abandoned infant as defined in subdivision two-a of section three hundred seventy-one of this title.

(ii) If the identity of the parents of the child is unknown, and the child has been found to be an abandoned infant pursuant to subdivision (1) of section one thousand twelve or section one thousand thirty-one-a of the family court act, the court upon receipt of the petition shall require the local commissioner to cause notice to be published in accordance with the provisions of rule three hundred sixteen of the

1 civil practice law and rules in the county in which such child was
2 found, for a period of at least thirty days. The notice shall state:

3 (A) the date, time and purpose of the proceeding;

4 (B) the date, time and place that the abandoned newborn infant was
5 found;

6 (C) a description of the infant including its approximate date of
7 birth;

8 (D) that upon failure to appear, all parental rights of the parents of
9 such abandoned newborn infant may be terminated;

10 (E) that a parent's failure to appear shall constitute a denial of his
11 or her interest in the child, which denial may result, without further
12 notice, in the commitment of the custody and guardianship of the child
13 to the local commissioner of social services and in the child's
14 adoption; and

15 (F) the name, address, and telephone number of the person designated
16 by the local commissioner to contact for information regarding such
17 child.

18 (iii) At any time prior to or subsequent to the entry of an order
19 committing the guardianship and custody of the child pursuant to this
20 section but not later than six months after the initial publication of
21 notice of the proceeding pursuant to section one thousand thirty-one-a
22 of the family court act, if the maternity or paternity of a person
23 claiming to be the mother or father of the infant is confirmed by a test
24 to be conducted to confirm maternity or paternity, the proceeding shall
25 be stayed pending an investigation pursuant to subdivision one of
26 section one thousand thirty-four of the family court act. Within three
27 court days of the completion of the investigation.

28 (A) if there are grounds pursuant to subdivision (e) or (f) of section
29 one thousand twelve of the family court act to file a petition to deter-
30 mine abuse or neglect pursuant to section one thousand thirty-one of the
31 family court act, the local commissioner of social services shall file
32 such petition, or

33 (B) if there are no such grounds, the court shall hold a hearing as to
34 the best interests of the child.

35 (iv) The custody of the child with the local commissioner of social
36 services shall continue pending the result of the best interests hear-
37 ing.

38 (v) If the child is free for adoption, the court shall vacate the
39 order committing guardianship and custody of the child.

40 § 17. Subparagraph (iii) of paragraph (1) of subdivision 3 of section
41 384-b of the social services law, as amended by chapter 145 of the laws
42 of 2000, is amended and a new subparagraph (vi) is added to read as
43 follows:

44 (iii) For the purposes of this paragraph, the date of the child's
45 entry into foster care is the earlier of sixty days after the date on
46 which the child was removed from the home or the date the child was
47 found by a court to be an abandoned infant, or an abused or neglected
48 child pursuant to article ten of the family court act.

49 (vi) For the purposes of this paragraph, a petition for termination of
50 parental rights shall be filed within sixty days after a court's deter-
51 mination that the child is an abandoned infant pursuant to section one
52 thousand fifty-one-a of the family court act.

53 § 18. Paragraphs (d) and (e) of subdivision 4 of section 384-b of the
54 social services law, paragraph (d) as amended by chapter 739 of the laws
55 of 1981 and paragraph (e) as amended by section 56 of part A of chapter

3 of the laws of 2005, are amended and a new paragraph (f) is added to read as follows:

(d) The child is a permanently neglected child; ~~[or]~~

(e) The parent or parents, whose consent to the adoption of the child would otherwise be required in accordance with section one hundred eleven of the domestic relations law, severely or repeatedly abused such child. Where a court has determined that reasonable efforts to reunite the child with his or her parent are not required, pursuant to the family court act or this chapter, a petition to terminate parental rights on the ground of severe abuse as set forth in subparagraph (iii) of paragraph (a) of subdivision eight of this section may be filed immediately upon such determination~~[-]~~; or

(f) The parent or parents abandoned the child when the child was thirty days old or younger in a manner that indicated the parent's or parents' intent to wholly relinquish and forgo responsibility for and rights to the care and custody of such child with the intent that the child be safe from physical injury and cared for in an appropriate manner, and such parent or parents, after a period of two months from the date of abandonment, have not communicated with the child or agency regarding the child.

§ 19. Subdivision 5 of section 384-b of the social services law is amended by adding a new paragraph (c) to read as follows:

(c) The provisions of this subdivision shall not apply to an abandoned infant as defined in subdivision two-a of section three hundred seventy-one of this title.

§ 20. The social services law is amended by adding a new section 392-a to read as follows:

§ 392-a. Abandoned infants; special provisions. 1. A child is an "abandoned infant" where a court of competent jurisdiction has determined pursuant to section one thousand fifty-one-a of the family court act that such child is an abandoned infant.

2. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, upon notification that an alleged abandoned infant is found within the county or jurisdiction, the local commissioner shall:

(i) immediately cause a physical examination of the child to be performed by a qualified health care practitioner, licensed or certified under title eight of the education law, acting within his or her lawful scope of practice to determine the health status of the child and the age and date of birth of the child to a reasonable degree of medical certainty. Such health care practitioner shall certify by affidavit or other official record his or her reasonable medical conclusion as to whether the child was thirty days old or younger when abandoned and the child's date of birth. The affidavit or other official record of the determination shall be placed in the infant's records in place of those required by subdivision one of section three hundred seventy-two of this title; and

(ii) forthwith commence a proceeding pursuant to section one thousand thirty-one-a of the family court act.

(b) Upon assumption of protective custody of a child alleged to be an "abandoned infant" the local commissioner shall:

(i) provide necessary services or assistance, including authorizing a qualified health care practitioner, licensed or certified under title eight of the education law, acting within his or her lawful scope of practice or hospital to provide emergency medical treatment or surgical procedures necessary to safeguard the life or health of the child;

(ii) at the time of assumption of custody of the child, at the time of the fact-finding hearing and at the time of the dispositional hearing regarding the petition to commit guardianship and custody of the child to an authorized agency pursuant to section three hundred eighty-four-b of this title, make inquiry of the putative father registry regarding the existence of a notice of intent filed with the registry that may pertain to the child and of local law enforcement officials regarding the existence of a missing person report that may pertain to the child. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the local commissioner shall not be required to pursue any other efforts to locate the parents or relatives of such child;

(iii) publicize: (A) notwithstanding any other provision of law, in an effort to allow a parent or other relative of the child to come forward, the abandonment of the child through local media outlets and specifically in the community where the abandonment occurred with the information regarding the child to be provided at the discretion of the local commissioner, including, but not limited to photos of the child; and (B) the availability of (1) prevention services, personal counseling and support services as contemplated under titles four and four-B of this article; (2) information and referral services, advocacy, counseling and hotline services to victims of domestic violence as contemplated under section four hundred fifty-nine-c of this chapter; and (3) safe placement alternatives for newborn infants as provided under this section and section one thousand thirty-one-a of the family court act, including information regarding termination of parental rights and adoption procedures and that an abandoned infant is not a neglected child under this chapter or the family court act; and

(iv) if the maternity or paternity of a person claiming to be the mother or father of the infant is confirmed by a test to be conducted to confirm maternity or paternity, conduct an investigation pursuant to subdivision one of section one thousand thirty-four of the family court act and if there are no grounds pursuant to subdivision (e) or (f) of section one thousand twelve of the family court act, withdraw the petition to determine whether a child is an abandoned infant pursuant to subdivision (1) of section one thousand twelve of the family court act. If there are grounds pursuant to subdivision (e) and (f) of section one thousand twelve of the family court act, the local commissioner of social services shall file a petition to determine abuse or neglect pursuant to section one thousand thirty-one of the family court act within three court days of the completion of the investigation.

§ 21. Section 372-g of the social services law, as added by chapter 156 of the laws of 2000, is amended to read as follows:

§ 372-g. Abandoned infant protection program. 1. The office of children and family services shall develop and implement a public information program to inform the general public of the provisions of the abandoned infant protection act and the availability of safe placement alternatives for newborn infants as provided under section three hundred ninety-two-a of this title and section one thousand thirty-one-a of the family court act, including information regarding termination of parental rights and adoption procedures and that an abandoned infant is not a neglected child under this chapter or the family court act. Such public information program shall also inform the general public of the availability of prevention services, personal counseling and support services as contemplated under titles four and four-B of this article, and information and referral services, advocacy, counseling and hotline services to victims of domestic violence as contemplated under section

1 four hundred fifty-nine-c of this chapter. The program may include but
2 not be limited to the following elements:

3 [~~1-~~] (a) educational and informational materials in print, audio,
4 video, electronic, or other media;

5 [~~2-~~] (b) public service announcements and advertisements; and

6 [~~3-~~] (c) establishment of toll-free telephone hotlines to provide
7 information.

8 2. The office of children and family services shall develop and imple-
9 ment the public information program within amounts appropriated or
10 available by the state.

11 § 22. This act shall take effect on the one hundred eightieth day
12 after it shall have become a law.