

HB 2239 -- Child Abuse and Neglect Reports

Sponsor: Schoeller

This bill changes the laws regarding hotline calls reporting suspected child abuse or neglect to the Children's Division within the Department of Social Services. In its main provisions, the bill:

(1) Requires hotline and division case workers involved in a case of a child's death or serious injury to receive a preliminary evaluation by the division to determine if a performance assessment is required. A required assessment must be completed within three days of the child's death;

(2) Requires the division to review cases when three or more calls regarding the same child are made within a 72-hour time period to determine if the calls meet the criteria to initiate a child abuse and neglect report. The review must include contacting the hotline caller or callers to collect information to determine if the calls meet the criteria for harassment;

(3) Requires hotline workers to advise individuals to call 911 when a child may be in immediate danger;

(4) Prohibits any division case worker who responds to a child abuse and neglect report initiated by a hotline call from leaving a business card, pamphlet, or other identifying information at a residence if there is no person present at the time of the attempted home visit; and

(5) Requires a division case worker responding to a child abuse and neglect investigation, if the alleged perpetrator is present during the visit, to provide written material to the alleged perpetrator informing the person of his or her rights regarding the visit, including the right to contact an attorney. The alleged perpetrator must be given a reasonable amount of time, not to exceed five minutes, to review the materials provided. This requirement does not apply if a child faces an immediate threat or danger or if the case worker feels threatened or in danger of physical harm.