

HB 3442 -- ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTS

SPONSOR: Kimble

This bill mandates that the Department of Social Services maintain a state repository of all reports of abuse and neglect. This repository's purpose is to provide information to assist in the proper evaluation of current reports, which may include a pattern of incidents.

The depository will contain a registry of substantiated reports. The names of certain individuals who are determined to be perpetrators of abuse or neglect will not be placed on the registry until that individual has exhausted all administrative appeals. All decisions rendered by an administrative judge are final. The Department of Social Services must immediately provide information involving an investigation to certain bodies as determined by the bill when necessary.

All records of reports of child abuse or neglect are confidential except as provided in the bill.

Upon written request of a court, the Department will search the registry and report back to the court if the alleged perpetrator is:

- (1) An individual applying to work as a court-appointed special advocate;
- (2) A CASA staff member; or
- (3) A member of the CASA board of directors.

If a report is determined to be substantiated, subsequent adjudication shall be added to the central registry. Information from inconclusive reports may be disclosed with the applicant's written consent for the limited purpose of evaluating the applicant to be a foster parent, adoptive parent, or caregiver. Any violation of confidentiality subjects an offender to criminal prosecution.

The Department can charge a fee to conduct a search that does not exceed \$25 when a search is specifically authorized.