



# OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

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## Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

**Bill:** H.B. 523 of the 132nd G.A.

**Status:** As Introduced

**Sponsor:** Reps. Lanese and Perales

**Local Impact Statement Procedure Required:** No

**Subject:** Reporting abuse by social workers and veterinarians

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### State Fiscal Highlights

- The Counselor, Social Worker and Marriage and Family Therapist Board will experience a minimal cost to establish a schedule for biennially renewing licenses or a certificate of registration.

### Local Fiscal Highlights

- Public children services agencies (PCSAs) will experience costs to investigate any additional reports of child abuse and neglect from animal control officers. The costs will depend on the total number and scope of investigations.
- PCSAs and peace officers will experience a minimal cost to report child abuse and neglect or domestic violence, respectively, to the U.S. Department of Defense (USDOD) Family Advocacy Program.

### Detailed Fiscal Analysis

H.B. 523 makes several changes to current law in regards to reporting child abuse and neglect, reporting animal abuse, and the renewal processes for the Counselor, Social Worker and Marriage and Family Therapist Board.

#### Child abuse and neglect reporting

The bill adds a dog warden, deputy dog warden, or other person appointed to act as an animal control officer to the list of mandatory reporters required to report cases of child abuse and neglect. Political subdivisions that employ animal control officers may experience a minimal cost for the officer to report suspected child abuse and neglect to a PCSA. Additionally, the bill requires the animal control officer to report the suspected abuse of a companion animal or horse to a PCSA if the officer has reasonable knowledge that a child resides with the alleged abuser. These provisions will pose a minimal cost for the animal control officer to make the report. Additionally, PCSAs will experience an increase in costs to investigate any additional reports as a result of the bill. Any cost will depend on the number and scope of investigations.

## **Animal abuse reporting**

The bill requires a licensed veterinarian, registered veterinary technician, social service professional, and any other person licensed as a counselor, social worker, or marriage and family therapist to report abuse of a companion animal or horse to the local animal control officer. This provision will pose a minimal cost to make the report. It might also result in additional investigations conducted by a local animal control officer. However, it is possible that some of these individuals, particularly veterinarians, currently report this information.<sup>1</sup>

## **Criminal prohibitions**

The bill specifies that violations of reporting requirements, that involve a companion animal or a horse, are a fourth degree misdemeanor. A violation may result in additional annual costs to county criminal justice systems, with the cost depending on the number of violations. There could be an annual increase in state and/or local revenue from any court costs, fees, and fine revenues collected.

## **U.S. Department of Defense Family Advocacy Program**

The bill requires a PCSA investigating a report of child abuse to determine if the person alleged to have inflicted harm is serving in the armed forces. If so, the PCSA is required to report the alleged abuse to the USDOD Family Advocacy Program. Similarly, the bill requires a peace officer investigating an allegation of domestic violence to determine if the person alleged to have committed the act is a member of the armed forces; if so, the officer must report the alleged abuse to the USDOD Family Advocacy Program. Making this determination and notifying the USDOD Family Advocacy Program will pose a minimal cost.

## **Counselor, Social Worker and Marriage and Family Therapist Board**

The bill requires the Counselor, Social Worker and Marriage and Family Therapist Board to establish a schedule of deadlines for biennially renewing a license or certificate of registration. Currently, licenses expire two years following the date of issuance. Developing this schedule will pose a minimal cost to the board.

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<sup>1</sup> The American Veterinary Medical Foundation considers it a veterinarian's responsibility to report animal abuse or neglect regardless of whether the reporting is mandated by law or not.