As Introduced

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H. B. No. 896

Representative Brewer
Cosponsor: Representative Lett

To amend sections 2151.314, 2151.419, 2151.4116, and 2151.421 and to enact sections 2151.317, 2151.318, and 2151.4123 of the Revised Code regarding parents' rights in child welfare cases.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:

Section 1. That sections 2151.314, 2151.419, 2151.4116, and 2151.421 be amended and sections 2151.317, 2151.318, and 2151.4123 of the Revised Code be enacted to read as follows:

Sec. 2151.314. (A) When a child is brought before the court or delivered to a place of detention or shelter care designated by the court, the intake or other authorized officer of the court shall immediately make an investigation and shall release the child unless it appears that the child's detention or shelter care is warranted or required under section 2151.31 of the Revised Code.

If the child is not so released, a complaint under section 2151.27 or 2152.021 or an information under section 2152.13 of the Revised Code shall be filed or an indictment under division (B) of section 2152.13 of the Revised Code shall be sought and

an informal detention or shelter care hearing held promptly, not later than seventy-two hours after the child is placed in detention or shelter care, to determine whether detention or shelter care is required. Reasonable oral or written notice of the time, place, and purpose of the detention or shelter care hearing shall be given to the child and, if they can be found, to the child's parents, guardian, or custodian. In cases in which the complaint alleges a child to be an abused, neglected, or dependent child, the notice given the parents, guardian, or custodian shall inform them that a case plan may be prepared for the child, the general requirements usually contained in case plans, and the possible consequences of the failure to comply with a journalized case plan.

Prior to the hearing, the court shall inform the parties of their right to counsel and to appointed counsel or to the services of the county public defender or joint county public defender, if they are indigent, of the child's right to remain silent with respect to any allegation of delinquency, and of the name and telephone number of a court employee who can be contacted during the normal business hours of the court to arrange for the prompt appointment of counsel for any party who is indigent. Unless it appears from the hearing that the child's detention or shelter care is required under the provisions of section 2151.31 of the Revised Code, the court shall order the child's release as provided by section 2151.311 of the Revised Code. If a parent, guardian, or custodian has not been so notified and did not appear or waive appearance at the hearing, upon the filing of an affidavit stating these facts, the court shall rehear the matter without unnecessary delay.

(B) When the court conducts a hearing pursuant to division (A) of this section, all of the following apply:

(1) The court shall determine whether an alleged abused, neglected, or dependent child should remain or be placed in shelter care;

(2) The court shall determine whether there are any relatives of the child who are willing to be temporary custodians of the child. If any relative is willing to be a temporary custodian, the child would otherwise be placed or retained in shelter care, and the appointment is appropriate, the court shall appoint the relative as temporary custodian of the child, unless the court appoints another relative as temporary custodian. If it determines that the appointment of a relative as custodian would not be appropriate, it shall issue a written opinion setting forth the reasons for its determination and give a copy of the opinion to all parties and to the guardian ad litem of the child.

The court's consideration of a relative for appointment as a temporary custodian does not make that relative a party to the proceedings.

(3) The court shall comply with section 2151.419 of the Revised Code.

(4) The court shall verify that the parent, guardian, or custodian of the child who is the subject of the hearing has received the information described in division (G)(2)(b)(ii) of section 2151.421 of the Revised Code.

(C) If a child is in shelter care following the filing of a complaint pursuant to section 2151.27 or 2152.021 of the Revised Code, the filing of an information, or the obtaining of an indictment or following a hearing held pursuant to division (A) of this section, any party, including the public children

services agency, and the guardian ad litem of the child may file a motion with the court requesting that the child be released from shelter care. The motion shall state the reasons why the child should be released from shelter care and, if a hearing has been held pursuant to division (A) of this section, any changes in the situation of the child or the parents, guardian, or custodian of the child that have occurred since that hearing and that justify the release of the child from shelter care. Upon the filing of the motion, the court shall hold a hearing in the same manner as under division (A) of this section.

(D) Each juvenile court shall designate at least one court employee to assist persons who are indigent in obtaining appointed counsel. The court shall include in each notice given pursuant to division (A) or (C) of this section and in each summons served upon a party pursuant to this chapter, the name and telephone number at which each designated employee can be contacted during the normal business hours of the court to arrange for prompt appointment of counsel for indigent persons.

Sec. 2151.317. The parent, guardian, or custodian of a child who is the subject of an investigation under section 2151.421 or 2151.422 of the Revised Code may choose a support person to attend any meetings regarding the child's welfare and case plan, except that the court, for good cause shown, may restrict or prohibit the attendance of the support person.

Sec. 2151.318. The department of children and youth shall develop and distribute a parents' bill of rights pamphlet to public children services agencies and private child placing agencies. The pamphlet shall be written in plain language and translated into the ten most commonly spoken languages in this state. The pamphlet shall include all of the following:

(A) Information on all of the following:

(1) Notification requirements under division (G)(2)(b) of section 2151.421 of the Revised Code;

(2) Kinship notification requirements under sections 2151.4115 to 2151.4122 of the Revised Code;

(3) The right to a support person under section 2151.317 of the Revised Code;

(4) The right to receive a plain language reasonable efforts statement under division (D) of section 2151.419 of the Revised Code.

(B) An explanation of the timelines and judicial proceedings for abuse, neglect, and dependency cases.

(C) Contact information for legal aid services and the state public defender's office.

Sec. 2151.419. (A)(1) Except as provided in division (A)(2) of this section, at any hearing held pursuant to section 2151.28, division (E) of section 2151.31, or section 2151.314, 2151.33, or 2151.353 of the Revised Code at which the court removes a child from the child's home or continues the removal of a child from the child's home, the court shall determine whether the public children services agency or private child placing agency that filed the complaint in the case, removed the child from home, has custody of the child, or will be given custody of the child has made reasonable efforts to prevent the removal of the child from the child's home, to eliminate the continued removal of the child from the child's home, or to make it possible for the child to return safely home. The agency shall have the burden of proving that it has made those reasonable efforts. If the agency removed the child from home

during an emergency in which the child could not safely remain at home and the agency did not have prior contact with the child, the court is not prohibited, solely because the agency did not make reasonable efforts during the emergency to prevent the removal of the child, from determining that the agency made those reasonable efforts. In determining whether reasonable efforts were made, the child's health and safety shall be paramount.

(2) If any of the following apply, the court shall make a determination that the agency is not required to make reasonable efforts to prevent the removal of the child from the child's home, eliminate the continued removal of the child from the child's home, and return the child to the child's home:

(a) The parent from whom the child was removed has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to one of the following:

(i) An offense under section 2903.01, 2903.02, or 2903.03 of the Revised Code or under an existing or former law of this state, any other state, or the United States that is substantially equivalent to an offense described in those sections and the victim of the offense was a sibling of the child or the victim was another child who lived in the parent's household at the time of the offense;

(ii) An offense under section 2903.11, 2903.12, or 2903.13 of the Revised Code or under an existing or former law of this state, any other state, or the United States that is substantially equivalent to an offense described in those sections and the victim of the offense is the child, a sibling of the child, or another child who lived in the parent's household at the time of the offense;

(iii) An offense under division (B)(2) of section 2919.22 of the Revised Code or under an existing or former law of this state, any other state, or the United States that is substantially equivalent to the offense described in that section and the child, a sibling of the child, or another child who lived in the parent's household at the time of the offense is the victim of the offense;

(iv) An offense under section 2907.02, 2907.03, 2907.04, 2907.05, or 2907.06 of the Revised Code or under an existing or former law of this state, any other state, or the United States that is substantially equivalent to an offense described in those sections and the victim of the offense is the child, a sibling of the child, or another child who lived in the parent's household at the time of the offense;

(v) An offense under section 2905.32, 2907.21, or 2907.22 of the Revised Code or under an existing or former law of this state, any other state, or the United States that is substantially equivalent to the offense described in those sections and the victim of the offense is the child, a sibling of the child, or another child who lived in the parent's household at the time of the offense;

(vi) A conspiracy or attempt to commit, or complicity in committing, an offense described in division (A)(2)(a)(i), (iv), or (v) of this section.

(b) The parent from whom the child was removed has repeatedly withheld medical treatment or food from the child when the parent has the means to provide the treatment or food. If the parent has withheld medical treatment in order to treat the physical or mental illness or defect of the child by spiritual means through prayer alone, in accordance with the

tenets of a recognized religious body, the court or agency shall comply with the requirements of division (A)(1) of this section.

(c) The parent from whom the child was removed has placed the child at substantial risk of harm two or more times due to alcohol or drug abuse and has rejected treatment two or more times or refused to participate in further treatment two or more times after a case plan issued pursuant to section 2151.412 of the Revised Code requiring treatment of the parent was journalized as part of a dispositional order issued with respect to the child or an order was issued by any other court requiring such treatment of the parent.

(d) The parent from whom the child was removed has abandoned the child.

(e) The parent from whom the child was removed has had parental rights involuntarily terminated with respect to a sibling of the child pursuant to section 2151.353, 2151.414, or 2151.415 of the Revised Code or under an existing or former law of this state, any other state, or the United States that is substantially equivalent to those sections.

(3) At any hearing in which the court determines whether to return a child to the child's home, the court may issue an order that returns the child in situations in which the conditions described in divisions (A)(2)(a) to (e) of this section are present.

(B)(1) A court that is required to make a determination as described in division (A)(1) or (2) of this section shall issue written findings of fact setting forth the reasons supporting its determination. If the court makes a written determination under division (A)(1) of this section, it shall briefly describe

in the findings of fact the relevant services provided by the agency to the family of the child and why those services did not prevent the removal of the child from the child's home or enable the child to return safely home.

(2) If a court issues an order that returns the child to the child's home in situations in which division (A)(2)(a), (b), (c), (d), or (e) of this section applies, the court shall issue written findings of fact setting forth the reasons supporting its determination.

(C) If the court makes a determination pursuant to division (A)(2) of this section, the court shall conduct a review hearing pursuant to section 2151.417 of the Revised Code to approve a permanency plan with respect to the child, unless the court issues an order returning the child home pursuant to division (A)(3) of this section. The hearing to approve the permanency plan may be held immediately following the court's determination pursuant to division (A)(2) of this section and shall be held no later than thirty days following that determination.

(D) At any hearing at which the court is required pursuant to this section to make a determination whether the agency has made reasonable efforts to prevent the removal of the child, to eliminate the continued removal of the child, or to make it possible for the child to return safely home, the agency shall file with the court and provide to all parties a plain language reasonable efforts statement. If the agency fails to file a reasonable efforts statement, the court shall not make a finding under this section and may order a continuance or remediation order.

The plain language reasonable efforts statement shall

explain, in clear and simple language, all of the following:

(1) The services that the child's family has been offered and provided by the agency;

(2) The dates, intensity, and duration of the services provided;

(3) The family's progress and the outcomes of the services;

(4) Any barriers to the family's participation in the services and the agency's response.

Sec. 2151.4116. ~~A~~ Not later than seven days after removal of a child, a public children services agency or private child placing agency shall ~~make~~ initiate intensive efforts to identify and engage an appropriate and willing kinship caregiver for the care of a child who is in one of following:

(A) Temporary custody of the agency;

(B) A planned permanent living arrangement with the agency.

Sec. 2151.4123. (A) A public children services agency shall request that the department of children and youth search the putative father registry to determine whether a man is registered as the putative father of a child who is taken into custody under section 2151.31 of the Revised Code. The request shall include the mother's name. On receipt of the request, the department shall search the registry. If the department determines that a man is registered as the child's putative father, it shall provide the agency a certified copy of the man's registration form. If the department determines that no man is registered as the minor's putative father, it shall

provide the agency a certified written statement to that effect. The department shall specify in the statement the date the search was conducted. No fee shall be charged for searching the registry.

Division (B) of section 3107.17 of the Revised Code does not apply to this section.

(B) If the department of children and youth provides a certified copy of a putative father's registration form pursuant to division (A) of this section, the department also shall provide written notice to the putative father of the following:

(1) That he may be the father of the child he claims as his child on the registration form;

(2) That the child is the subject of an investigation under section 2151.421 or 2151.422 of the Revised Code;

(3) That he has a right to receive notice of all hearings, administrative reviews, and other proceedings involving the child.

(C) The department shall provide the notice under division (B) of this section not later than ten business days after the date it provides the agency the certified copy of the registration form pursuant to division (A) of this section.

(D) The court shall give the putative father notice of all hearings, administrative reviews, and other proceedings in the same manner as notice is given to parties to the action.

Sec. 2151.421. (A)(1)(a) No person described in division (A)(1)(b) of this section who is acting in an official or professional capacity and knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect based on facts that would cause a reasonable person in a

similar position to suspect, that a child under eighteen years of age, or a person under twenty-one years of age with a developmental disability or physical impairment, has suffered or faces a threat of suffering any physical or mental wound, injury, disability, or condition of a nature that reasonably indicates abuse or neglect of the child shall fail to immediately report that knowledge or reasonable cause to suspect to the entity or persons specified in this division. Except as otherwise provided in this division or section 5120.173 of the Revised Code, the person making the report shall make it to the public children services agency or a peace officer in the county in which the child resides or in which the abuse or neglect is occurring or has occurred. If the person making the report is a peace officer, the officer shall make it to the public children services agency in the county in which the child resides or in which the abuse or neglect is occurring or has occurred. In the circumstances described in section 5120.173 of the Revised Code, the person making the report shall make it to the entity specified in that section.

(b) Division (A)(1)(a) of this section applies to any person who is an attorney; health care professional; practitioner of a limited branch of medicine as specified in section 4731.15 of the Revised Code; licensed school psychologist; independent marriage and family therapist or marriage and family therapist; coroner; administrator or employee of a child care center; administrator or employee of a residential camp, child day camp, or private, nonprofit therapeutic wilderness camp; administrator or employee of a certified child care agency or other public or private children services agency; school teacher; school employee; school authority; peace officer; humane society agent; dog warden,

deputy dog warden, or other person appointed to act as an animal control officer for a municipal corporation or township in accordance with state law, an ordinance, or a resolution; person, other than a cleric, rendering spiritual treatment through prayer in accordance with the tenets of a well-recognized religion; employee of a county department of job and family services who is a professional and who works with children and families; employee of an entity that provides home visiting services under the help me grow program established by the department of children and youth pursuant to section 5180.21 of the Revised Code; superintendent or regional administrator employed by the department of youth services; superintendent, board member, or employee of a county board of developmental disabilities; investigative agent contracted with by a county board of developmental disabilities; employee of the department of developmental disabilities; employee of a facility or home that provides respite care in accordance with section 5123.171 of the Revised Code; employee of an entity that provides homemaker services; employee of a qualified organization as defined in section 2151.90 of the Revised Code; a host family as defined in section 2151.90 of the Revised Code; foster caregiver; a person performing the duties of an assessor pursuant to Chapter 3107. or 5103. of the Revised Code; third party employed by a public children services agency to assist in providing child or family related services; court appointed special advocate; or guardian ad litem.

(c) If two or more health care professionals, after providing health care services to a child, determine or suspect that the child has been or is being abused or neglected, the health care professionals may designate one of the health care professionals to report the abuse or neglect. A single report

made under this division shall meet the reporting requirements of division (A)(1) of this section.

(2) Except as provided in division (A)(3) of this section, an attorney, physician, or advanced practice registered nurse is not required to make a report pursuant to division (A)(1) of this section concerning any communication the attorney, physician, or advanced practice registered nurse receives from a client or patient in an attorney-client, physician-patient, or advanced practice registered nurse-patient relationship, if, in accordance with division (A) or (B) of section 2317.02 of the Revised Code, the attorney, physician, or advanced practice registered nurse could not testify with respect to that communication in a civil or criminal proceeding.

(3) The client or patient in an attorney-client, physician-patient, or advanced practice registered nurse-patient relationship described in division (A)(2) of this section is deemed to have waived any testimonial privilege under division (A) or (B) of section 2317.02 of the Revised Code with respect to any communication the attorney, physician, or advanced practice registered nurse receives from the client or patient in that relationship, and the attorney, physician, or advanced practice registered nurse shall make a report pursuant to division (A)(1) of this section with respect to that communication, if all of the following apply:

(a) The client or patient, at the time of the communication, is a child under eighteen years of age or is a person under twenty-one years of age with a developmental disability or physical impairment.

(b) The attorney, physician, or advanced practice registered nurse knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect based

on facts that would cause a reasonable person in similar position to suspect that the client or patient has suffered or faces a threat of suffering any physical or mental wound, injury, disability, or condition of a nature that reasonably indicates abuse or neglect of the client or patient.

(c) The abuse or neglect does not arise out of the client's or patient's attempt to have an abortion without the notification of her parents, guardian, or custodian in accordance with section 2151.85 of the Revised Code.

(4)(a) No cleric and no person, other than a volunteer, designated by any church, religious society, or faith acting as a leader, official, or delegate on behalf of the church, religious society, or faith who is acting in an official or professional capacity, who knows, or has reasonable cause to believe based on facts that would cause a reasonable person in a similar position to believe, that a child under eighteen years of age, or a person under twenty-one years of age with a developmental disability or physical impairment, has suffered or faces a threat of suffering any physical or mental wound, injury, disability, or condition of a nature that reasonably indicates abuse or neglect of the child, and who knows, or has reasonable cause to believe based on facts that would cause a reasonable person in a similar position to believe, that another cleric or another person, other than a volunteer, designated by a church, religious society, or faith acting as a leader, official, or delegate on behalf of the church, religious society, or faith caused, or poses the threat of causing, the wound, injury, disability, or condition that reasonably indicates abuse or neglect shall fail to immediately report that knowledge or reasonable cause to believe to the entity or persons specified in this division. Except as provided in

section 5120.173 of the Revised Code, the person making the report shall make it to the public children services agency or a peace officer in the county in which the child resides or in which the abuse or neglect is occurring or has occurred. In the circumstances described in section 5120.173 of the Revised Code, the person making the report shall make it to the entity specified in that section.

(b) Except as provided in division (A)(4)(c) of this section, a cleric is not required to make a report pursuant to division (A)(4)(a) of this section concerning any communication the cleric receives from a penitent in a cleric-penitent relationship, if, in accordance with division (C) of section 2317.02 of the Revised Code, the cleric could not testify with respect to that communication in a civil or criminal proceeding.

(c) The penitent in a cleric-penitent relationship described in division (A)(4)(b) of this section is deemed to have waived any testimonial privilege under division (C) of section 2317.02 of the Revised Code with respect to any communication the cleric receives from the penitent in that cleric-penitent relationship, and the cleric shall make a report pursuant to division (A)(4)(a) of this section with respect to that communication, if all of the following apply:

(i) The penitent, at the time of the communication, is a child under eighteen years of age or is a person under twenty-one years of age with a developmental disability or physical impairment.

(ii) The cleric knows, or has reasonable cause to believe based on facts that would cause a reasonable person in a similar position to believe, as a result of the communication or any observations made during that communication, the penitent has

suffered or faces a threat of suffering any physical or mental wound, injury, disability, or condition of a nature that reasonably indicates abuse or neglect of the penitent.

(iii) The abuse or neglect does not arise out of the penitent's attempt to have an abortion performed upon a child under eighteen years of age or upon a person under twenty-one years of age with a developmental disability or physical impairment without the notification of her parents, guardian, or custodian in accordance with section 2151.85 of the Revised Code.

(d) Divisions (A)(4)(a) and (c) of this section do not apply in a cleric-penitent relationship when the disclosure of any communication the cleric receives from the penitent is in violation of the sacred trust.

(e) As used in divisions (A)(1) and (4) of this section, "cleric" and "sacred trust" have the same meanings as in section 2317.02 of the Revised Code.

(B) Anyone who knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect based on facts that would cause a reasonable person in similar circumstances to suspect, that a child under eighteen years of age, or a person under twenty-one years of age with a developmental disability or physical impairment, has suffered or faces a threat of suffering any physical or mental wound, injury, disability, or other condition of a nature that reasonably indicates abuse or neglect of the child may report or cause reports to be made of that knowledge or reasonable cause to suspect to the entity or persons specified in this division. Except as provided in section 5120.173 of the Revised Code, a person making a report or causing a report to be made under this division shall make it or cause it to be made to the public

children services agency or to a peace officer. In the circumstances described in section 5120.173 of the Revised Code, a person making a report or causing a report to be made under this division shall make it or cause it to be made to the entity specified in that section.

(C) Any report made pursuant to division (A) or (B) of this section shall be made forthwith either by telephone, in person, or electronically and shall be followed by a written report, if requested by the receiving agency or officer. The written report shall contain:

(1) The names and addresses of the child and the child's parents or the person or persons having custody of the child, if known;

(2) The child's age and the nature and extent of the child's injuries, abuse, or neglect that is known or reasonably suspected or believed, as applicable, to have occurred or of the threat of injury, abuse, or neglect that is known or reasonably suspected or believed, as applicable, to exist, including any evidence of previous injuries, abuse, or neglect;

(3) Any other information, including, but not limited to, results and reports of any medical examinations, tests, or procedures performed under division (D) of this section, that might be helpful in establishing the cause of the injury, abuse, or neglect that is known or reasonably suspected or believed, as applicable, to have occurred or of the threat of injury, abuse, or neglect that is known or reasonably suspected or believed, as applicable, to exist.

(D)(1) Any person, who is required by division (A) of this section to report child abuse or child neglect that is known or

reasonably suspected or believed to have occurred, may take or cause to be taken color photographs of areas of trauma visible on a child and, if medically necessary for the purpose of diagnosing or treating injuries that are suspected to have occurred as a result of child abuse or child neglect, perform or cause to be performed radiological examinations and any other medical examinations of, and tests or procedures on, the child.

(2) The results and any available reports of examinations, tests, or procedures made under division (D)(1) of this section shall be included in a report made pursuant to division (A) of this section. Any additional reports of examinations, tests, or procedures that become available shall be provided to the public children services agency, upon request.

(3) If a health care professional provides health care services in a hospital, children's advocacy center, or emergency medical facility to a child about whom a report has been made under division (A) of this section, the health care professional may take any steps that are reasonably necessary for the release or discharge of the child to an appropriate environment. Before the child's release or discharge, the health care professional may obtain information, or consider information obtained, from other entities or individuals that have knowledge about the child. Nothing in division (D)(3) of this section shall be construed to alter the responsibilities of any person under sections 2151.27 and 2151.31 of the Revised Code.

(4) A health care professional may conduct medical examinations, tests, or procedures on the siblings of a child about whom a report has been made under division (A) of this section and on other children who reside in the same home as the child, if the professional determines that the examinations,

tests, or procedures are medically necessary to diagnose or treat the siblings or other children in order to determine whether reports under division (A) of this section are warranted with respect to such siblings or other children. The results of the examinations, tests, or procedures on the siblings and other children may be included in a report made pursuant to division (A) of this section.

(5) Medical examinations, tests, or procedures conducted under divisions (D)(1) and (4) of this section and decisions regarding the release or discharge of a child under division (D)(3) of this section do not constitute a law enforcement investigation or activity.

(E)(1) When a peace officer receives a report made pursuant to division (A) or (B) of this section, upon receipt of the report, the peace officer who receives the report shall refer the report to the appropriate public children services agency, in accordance with requirements specified under division (B)(6) of section 2151.4221 of the Revised Code, unless an arrest is made at the time of the report that results in the appropriate public children services agency being contacted concerning the possible abuse or neglect of a child or the possible threat of abuse or neglect of a child.

(2) When a public children services agency receives a report pursuant to this division or division (A) or (B) of this section, upon receipt of the report, the public children services agency shall do all of the following:

(a) Comply with section 2151.422 of the Revised Code;

(b) If the county served by the agency is also served by a children's advocacy center and the report alleges sexual abuse

of a child or another type of abuse of a child that is specified in the memorandum of understanding that creates the center as being within the center's jurisdiction, comply regarding the report with the protocol and procedures for referrals and investigations, with the coordinating activities, and with the authority or responsibility for performing or providing functions, activities, and services stipulated in the interagency agreement entered into under section 2151.428 of the Revised Code relative to that center;

(c) Unless an arrest is made at the time of the report that results in the appropriate law enforcement agency being contacted concerning the possible abuse or neglect of a child or the possible threat of abuse or neglect of a child, and in accordance with requirements specified under division (B)(6) of section 2151.4221 of the Revised Code, notify the appropriate law enforcement agency of the report, if the public children services agency received either of the following:

(i) A report of abuse of a child;

(ii) A report of neglect of a child that alleges a type of neglect identified by the department of children and youth in rules adopted under division (L)(2) of this section.

(F) No peace officer shall remove a child about whom a report is made pursuant to this section from the child's parents, stepparents, or guardian or any other persons having custody of the child without consultation with the public children services agency, unless, in the judgment of the officer, and, if the report was made by a physician or advanced practice registered nurse, the physician or nurse, immediate removal is considered essential to protect the child from further abuse or neglect. The agency that must be consulted

shall be the agency conducting the investigation of the report as determined pursuant to section 2151.422 of the Revised Code.

(G)(1) Except as provided in section 2151.422 of the Revised Code or in an interagency agreement entered into under section 2151.428 of the Revised Code that applies to the particular report, the public children services agency shall investigate, within twenty-four hours, each report of child abuse or child neglect that is known or reasonably suspected or believed to have occurred and of a threat of child abuse or child neglect that is known or reasonably suspected or believed to exist that is referred to it under this section to determine the circumstances surrounding the injuries, abuse, or neglect or the threat of injury, abuse, or neglect, the cause of the injuries, abuse, neglect, or threat, and the person or persons responsible. The investigation shall be made in cooperation with the law enforcement agency and in accordance with the memorandum of understanding prepared under sections 2151.4220 to 2151.4234 of the Revised Code.

(2)(a) A representative of the public children services agency shall, at the time of initial contact with the person subject to the investigation, inform the person of the specific complaints or allegations made against the person.

(b) If a child is taken into custody pursuant to section 2151.31 of the Revised Code, a representative of the public children services agency shall do both of the following:

(i) Immediately verbally inform the child's parent, guardian, or custodian of the specific complaints or allegations that resulted in the child being taken into custody and the date, time, and location of the informal detention or shelter care hearing held pursuant to section 2151.314 of the Revised

Code;

(ii) Not later than twenty-four hours after the child is taken into custody, provide written notice to the child's parent, guardian, or custodian that includes the allegations against the parent, guardian, or custodian; a copy of the complaint, petition, and affidavit supporting the removal of the child; and a copy of the parents' bill of rights pamphlet created in accordance with section 2151.318 of the Revised Code.

(c) The information described in division (G)(2) of this section shall be given in a manner that is consistent with division (I)(1) of this section and protects the rights of the person making the report under this section.

(3) A failure to make the investigation in accordance with the memorandum is not grounds for, and shall not result in, the dismissal of any charges or complaint arising from the report or the suppression of any evidence obtained as a result of the report and does not give, and shall not be construed as giving, any rights or any grounds for appeal or post-conviction relief to any person. The public children services agency shall report each case to the uniform statewide automated child welfare information system that the department of children and youth shall maintain in accordance with section 5180.40 of the Revised Code. The public children services agency shall submit a report of its investigation, in writing, to the law enforcement agency.

~~(2)~~ (4) The public children services agency shall make any recommendations to the county prosecuting attorney or city director of law that it considers necessary to protect any children that are brought to its attention.

(H)(1)(a) Except as provided in divisions (H)(1)(b) and

(I)(3) of this section, any person, health care professional, hospital, institution, school, health department, or agency shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability for injury, death, or loss to person or property that otherwise might be incurred or imposed as a result of any of the following:

(i) Participating in the making of reports pursuant to division (A) of this section or in the making of reports in good faith, pursuant to division (B) of this section;

(ii) Participating in medical examinations, tests, or procedures under division (D) of this section;

(iii) Providing information used in a report made pursuant to division (A) of this section or providing information in good faith used in a report made pursuant to division (B) of this section;

(iv) Participating in a judicial proceeding resulting from a report made pursuant to division (A) of this section or participating in good faith in a proceeding resulting from a report made pursuant to division (B) of this section.

(b) Immunity under division (H)(1)(a)(ii) of this section shall not apply when a health care provider has deviated from the standard of care applicable to the provider's profession.

(c) Notwithstanding section 4731.22 of the Revised Code, the physician-patient privilege shall not be a ground for excluding evidence regarding a child's injuries, abuse, or neglect, or the cause of the injuries, abuse, or neglect in any judicial proceeding resulting from a report submitted pursuant to this section.

(2) In any civil or criminal action or proceeding in which it is alleged and proved that participation in the making of a

report under this section was not in good faith or participation in a judicial proceeding resulting from a report made under this section was not in good faith, the court shall award the prevailing party reasonable attorney's fees and costs and, if a civil action or proceeding is voluntarily dismissed, may award reasonable attorney's fees and costs to the party against whom the civil action or proceeding is brought.

(I)(1) Except as provided in divisions (I)(4) and (N) of this section and sections 2151.423 and 2151.4210 of the Revised Code, a report made under this section is confidential. The information provided in a report made pursuant to this section and the name of the person who made the report shall not be released for use, and shall not be used, as evidence in any civil action or proceeding brought against the person who made the report. Nothing in this division shall preclude the use of reports of other incidents of known or suspected abuse or neglect in a civil action or proceeding brought pursuant to division (M) of this section against a person who is alleged to have violated division (A)(1) of this section, provided that any information in a report that would identify the child who is the subject of the report or the maker of the report, if the maker of the report is not the defendant or an agent or employee of the defendant, has been redacted. In a criminal proceeding, the report is admissible in evidence in accordance with the Rules of Evidence and is subject to discovery in accordance with the Rules of Criminal Procedure.

(2)(a) Except as provided in division (I)(2)(b) of this section, no person shall permit or encourage the unauthorized dissemination of the contents of any report made under this section.

(b) A health care professional that obtains the same information contained in a report made under this section from a source other than the report may disseminate the information, if its dissemination is otherwise permitted by law.

(3) A person who knowingly makes or causes another person to make a false report under division (B) of this section that alleges that any person has committed an act or omission that resulted in a child being an abused child or a neglected child is guilty of a violation of section 2921.14 of the Revised Code.

(4) If a report is made pursuant to division (A) or (B) of this section and the child who is the subject of the report dies for any reason at any time after the report is made, but before the child attains eighteen years of age, the public children services agency or peace officer to which the report was made or referred, on the request of the child fatality review board, the suicide fatality review committee, or the director of health pursuant to guidelines established under section 3701.70 of the Revised Code, shall submit a summary sheet of information providing a summary of the report to the review board or review committee of the county in which the deceased child resided at the time of death or to the director. On the request of the review board, review committee, or director, the agency or peace officer may, at its discretion, make the report available to the review board, review committee, or director. If the county served by the public children services agency is also served by a children's advocacy center and the report of alleged sexual abuse of a child or another type of abuse of a child is specified in the memorandum of understanding that creates the center as being within the center's jurisdiction, the agency or center shall perform the duties and functions specified in this division in accordance with the interagency agreement entered

into under section 2151.428 of the Revised Code relative to that advocacy center.

(5) Not later than five business days after the determination of a disposition, a public children services agency shall advise a person alleged to have inflicted abuse or neglect on a child who is the subject of a report made pursuant to this section, including a report alleging sexual abuse of a child or another type of abuse of a child referred to a children's advocacy center pursuant to an interagency agreement entered into under section 2151.428 of the Revised Code, in writing of the disposition of the investigation. The agency shall not provide to the person any information that identifies the person who made the report, statements of witnesses, or police or other investigative reports. The written notice of disposition shall be made in a form designated by the department of children and youth and shall inform the person of the right to appeal the disposition.

(J) Any report that is required by this section, other than a report that is made to the state highway patrol as described in section 5120.173 of the Revised Code, shall result in protective services and emergency supportive services being made available by the public children services agency on behalf of the children about whom the report is made. The agency required to provide the services shall be the agency conducting the investigation of the report pursuant to section 2151.422 of the Revised Code. If a family is determined to benefit from prevention services, the agency also may make efforts to prevent neglect or abuse, to enhance a child's welfare, and to preserve the family unit intact by referring a report for assessment and provision of services to an agency providing prevention services, if appropriate prevention services are available from

a local provider or other reasonable source.

(K)(1) Except as provided in division (K)(4) or (5) of this section, a person who is required to make a report under division (A) of this section may make a reasonable number of requests of the public children services agency that receives or is referred the report, or of the children's advocacy center that is referred the report if the report is referred to a children's advocacy center pursuant to an interagency agreement entered into under section 2151.428 of the Revised Code, to be provided with the following information:

(a) Whether the agency or center has initiated an investigation of the report;

(b) Whether the agency or center is continuing to investigate the report;

(c) Whether the agency or center is otherwise involved with the child who is the subject of the report;

(d) The general status of the health and safety of the child who is the subject of the report;

(e) Whether the report has resulted in the filing of a complaint in juvenile court or of criminal charges in another court.

(2)(a) A person may request the information specified in division (K)(1) of this section only if, at the time the report is made, the person's name, address, and telephone number are provided to the person who receives the report.

(b) When a peace officer or employee of a public children services agency receives a report pursuant to division (A) or (B) of this section the recipient of the report shall inform the

person of the right to request the information described in division (K)(1) of this section. The recipient of the report shall include in the initial child abuse or child neglect report that the person making the report was so informed and, if provided at the time of the making of the report, shall include the person's name, address, and telephone number in the report.

(c) If the person making the report provides the person's name and contact information on making the report, the public children services agency that received or was referred the report shall send a written notice via United States mail or electronic mail, in accordance with the person's preference, to the person not later than seven calendar days after receipt of the report. The notice shall provide the status of the agency's investigation into the report made, who the person may contact at the agency for further information, and a description of the person's rights under division (K)(1) of this section.

(d) Each request is subject to verification of the identity of the person making the report. If that person's identity is verified, the agency shall provide the person with the information described in division (K)(1) of this section a reasonable number of times, except that the agency shall not disclose any confidential information regarding the child who is the subject of the report other than the information described in those divisions.

(3) A request made pursuant to division (K)(1) of this section is not a substitute for any report required to be made pursuant to division (A) of this section.

(4) If an agency other than the agency that received or was referred the report is conducting the investigation of the report pursuant to section 2151.422 of the Revised Code, the

agency conducting the investigation shall comply with the requirements of division (K) of this section.

(5) A health care professional who made a report under division (A) of this section, or on whose behalf such a report was made as provided in division (A)(1)(c) of this section, may authorize a person to obtain the information described in division (K)(1) of this section if the person requesting the information is associated with or acting on behalf of the health care professional who provided health care services to the child about whom the report was made.

(6) If the person making the report provides the person's name and contact information on making the report, the public children services agency that received or was referred the report shall send a written notice via United States mail or electronic mail, in accordance with the person's preference, to the person not later than seven calendar days after the agency closes the investigation into the case reported by the person. The notice shall notify the person that the agency has closed the investigation.

(L)(1) The director of children and youth shall adopt rules in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code to implement this section. The department of children and youth may enter into a plan of cooperation with any other governmental entity to aid in ensuring that children are protected from abuse and neglect. The department shall make recommendations to the attorney general that the department determines are necessary to protect children from child abuse and child neglect.

(2) The director of children and youth shall adopt rules in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code to identify the types of neglect of a child that a public children services

agency shall be required to notify law enforcement of pursuant to division (E)(2)(c)(ii) of this section.

(M) Whoever violates division (A) of this section is liable for compensatory and exemplary damages to the child who would have been the subject of the report that was not made. A person who brings a civil action or proceeding pursuant to this division against a person who is alleged to have violated division (A)(1) of this section may use in the action or proceeding reports of other incidents of known or suspected abuse or neglect, provided that any information in a report that would identify the child who is the subject of the report or the maker of the report, if the maker is not the defendant or an agent or employee of the defendant, has been redacted.

(N)(1) As used in this division:

(a) "Out-of-home care" includes a nonchartered nonpublic school if the alleged child abuse or child neglect, or alleged threat of child abuse or child neglect, described in a report received by a public children services agency allegedly occurred in or involved the nonchartered nonpublic school and the alleged perpetrator named in the report holds a certificate, permit, or license issued by the state board of education under section 3301.071 or Chapter 3319. of the Revised Code.

(b) "Administrator, director, or other chief administrative officer" means the superintendent of the school district if the out-of-home care entity subject to a report made pursuant to this section is a school operated by the district.

(2) No later than the end of the day following the day on which a public children services agency receives a report of alleged child abuse or child neglect, or a report of an alleged

threat of child abuse or child neglect, that allegedly occurred in or involved an out-of-home care entity, the agency shall provide written notice of the allegations contained in and the person named as the alleged perpetrator in the report to the administrator, director, or other chief administrative officer of the out-of-home care entity that is the subject of the report unless the administrator, director, or other chief administrative officer is named as an alleged perpetrator in the report. If the administrator, director, or other chief administrative officer of an out-of-home care entity is named as an alleged perpetrator in a report of alleged child abuse or child neglect, or a report of an alleged threat of child abuse or child neglect, that allegedly occurred in or involved the out-of-home care entity, the agency shall provide the written notice to the owner or governing board of the out-of-home care entity that is the subject of the report. The agency shall not provide witness statements or police or other investigative reports.

(3) No later than three days after the day on which a public children services agency that conducted the investigation as determined pursuant to section 2151.422 of the Revised Code makes a disposition of an investigation involving a report of alleged child abuse or child neglect, or a report of an alleged threat of child abuse or child neglect, that allegedly occurred in or involved an out-of-home care entity, the agency shall send written notice of the disposition of the investigation to the administrator, director, or other chief administrative officer and the owner or governing board of the out-of-home care entity. The agency shall not provide witness statements or police or other investigative reports.

(O) As used in this section:

(1) "Children's advocacy center" and "sexual abuse of a child" have the same meanings as in section 2151.425 of the Revised Code.

(2) "Health care professional" means an individual who provides health-related services. "Health care professional" includes all of the following: a physician, including a hospital intern or resident; a dentist; a podiatrist; a registered nurse, including such a nurse who is an advanced practice registered nurse; a licensed practical nurse; a home care nurse; a licensed psychologist; a speech-language pathologist; an audiologist; a person engaged in social work or the practice of professional counseling; and an employee of a home health agency. "Health care professional" does not include a practitioner of a limited branch of medicine as specified in section 4731.15 of the Revised Code, licensed school psychologist, independent marriage and family therapist or marriage and family therapist, or coroner.

(3) "Investigation" means the public children services agency's response to an accepted report of child abuse or neglect through either an alternative response or a traditional response.

(4) "Peace officer" means a sheriff, deputy sheriff, constable, police officer of a township or joint police district, marshal, deputy marshal, municipal police officer, or a state highway patrol trooper.

Section 2. That existing sections 2151.314, 2151.419, 2151.4116, and 2151.421 of the Revised Code are hereby repealed.