

AN ACT

To amend sections 2151.142, 2151.421, and 3107.014 and to enact sections 2151.4210, 2151.4211, 2151.4212, 2151.4213, 2151.4215, 2151.4216, 2151.4218, 2151.4219, 2151.4220, 2151.4221, 2151.4222, 2151.4223, 2151.4224, 5101.89, 5101.891, 5101.892, 5101.893, 5101.894, 5101.895, 5101.897, and 5101.899 of the Revised Code regarding county child abuse and neglect memorandums of understanding, cross-reporting of child abuse and neglect reports by public children services agencies to law enforcement agencies, notification of reporter rights, home assessor eligibility, and creation of the youth and family ombudsman office.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio:

SECTION 1. That sections 2151.142, 2151.421, and 3107.014 be amended and sections 2151.4210, 2151.4211, 2151.4212, 2151.4213, 2151.4215, 2151.4216, 2151.4218, 2151.4219, 2151.4220, 2151.4221, 2151.4222, 2151.4223, 2151.4224, 5101.89, 5101.891, 5101.892, 5101.893, 5101.894, 5101.895, 5101.897, and 5101.899 of the Revised Code be enacted to read as follows:

Sec. 2151.142. (A) As used in this section, "public record" and "journalist" have the same meanings as in section 149.43 of the Revised Code.

(B) Both of the following apply to the residential address of each officer or employee of a public children services agency or a private child placing agency who performs official responsibilities or duties described in section 2151.14, 2151.141, 2151.33, 2151.353, 2151.412, 2151.413, 2151.414, 2151.415, 2151.416, 2151.417, ~~or 2151.421~~, or 2151.4210 to 2151.4224 or another section of the Revised Code and to the residential address of persons related to that officer or employee by consanguinity or affinity:

(1) Other officers and employees of a public children services agency, private child placing agency, juvenile court, or law enforcement agency shall consider those residential addresses to be confidential information. The officer or employee of the public children services agency or private child placing agency may waive the confidentiality of those residential addresses by giving express permission for their disclosure to other officers or employees of a public children services agency, private child placing agency, juvenile court, or law enforcement agency.

(2) To the extent that those residential addresses are contained in public records kept by a public children services agency, private child placing agency, juvenile court, or law enforcement agency, they shall not be considered to be information that is subject to inspection or copying as part of a public record under section 149.43 of the Revised Code.

(C) Except as provided in division (D) of this section, in the absence of a waiver as described in division (B)(1) of this section, no officer or employee of a public children services agency, private

child placing agency, juvenile court, or law enforcement agency shall disclose the residential address of an officer or employee of a public children services agency or private child placing agency, or the residential address of a person related to that officer or employee by consanguinity or affinity, that is confidential information under division (B)(1) of this section to any person, when the disclosing officer or employee knows that the person is or may be a subject of an investigation, interview, examination, criminal case, other case, or other matter with which the officer or employee to whom the residential address relates currently is or has been associated.

(D) If, on or after the effective date of this section, a journalist requests a public children services agency, private child placing agency, juvenile court, or law enforcement agency to disclose a residential address that is confidential information under division (B)(1) of this section, the agency or juvenile court shall disclose to the journalist the residential address if all of the following apply:

(1) The request is in writing, is signed by the journalist, includes the journalist's name and title, and includes the name and address of the journalist's employer.

(2) The request states that disclosure of the residential address would be in the public interest.

(3) The request adequately identifies the person whose residential address is requested.

(4) The public children services agency, private child placing agency, juvenile court, or law enforcement agency receiving the request is one of the following:

(a) The agency or juvenile court with which the official in question serves or with which the employee in question is employed;

(b) The agency or juvenile court that has custody of the records of the agency with which the official in question serves or with which the employee in question is employed.

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

(3) The client or patient in an attorney-client or physician-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 or physician receives from the client or patient in that attorney-client or physician-patient relationship, and the attorney or physician 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 or physician 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 or in person 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 2151.4211 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 ~~both~~ 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 2151.4211 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 job and family services 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 physician, the physician, 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 ~~division (K) of this section~~ sections 2151.4210 to 2151.4224 of the Revised Code. 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. The information 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.

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 job and family services shall maintain in accordance with section 5101.13 of the Revised Code. The public children services agency shall submit a report of its investigation, in writing, to the law enforcement agency.

(2) 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)~~(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 ~~(N)~~(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) 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.

(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, in an effort to prevent further neglect or abuse, to enhance their welfare, and, whenever possible, to preserve the family unit intact. 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.

~~(K)(1) Each public children services agency shall prepare a memorandum of understanding that is signed by all of the following:-~~

~~(a) If there is only one juvenile judge in the county, the juvenile judge of the county or the juvenile judge's representative;-~~

~~(b) If there is more than one juvenile judge in the county, a juvenile judge or the juvenile judges' representative selected by the juvenile judges or, if they are unable to do so for any reason, the juvenile judge who is senior in point of service or the senior juvenile judge's representative;-~~

~~(c) The county peace officer;-~~

~~(d) All chief municipal peace officers within the county;-~~

~~(e) Other law enforcement officers handling child abuse and neglect cases in the county;-~~

~~(f) The prosecuting attorney of the county;-~~

~~(g) If the public children services agency is not the county department of job and family services, the county department of job and family services;-~~

~~(h) The county humane society;-~~

~~(i) If the public children services agency participated in the execution of a memorandum of understanding under section 2151.426 of the Revised Code establishing a children's advocacy center, each participating member of the children's advocacy center established by the memorandum.-~~

~~(2) A memorandum of understanding shall set forth the normal operating procedure to be employed by all concerned officials in the execution of their respective responsibilities under this section and division (C) of section 2919.21, division (B)(1) of section 2919.22, division (B) of section 2919.23, and section 2919.24 of the Revised Code and shall have as two of its primary goals the elimination of all unnecessary interviews of children who are the subject of reports made pursuant to division (A) or (B) of this section and, when feasible, providing for only one interview of~~

~~a child who is the subject of any report made pursuant to division (A) or (B) of this section. A failure to follow the procedure set forth in the memorandum by the concerned officials is not grounds for, and shall not result in, the dismissal of any charges or complaint arising from any reported case of abuse or neglect or the suppression of any evidence obtained as a result of any reported child abuse or child neglect 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.~~

~~(3) A memorandum of understanding shall include all of the following:~~

~~(a) The roles and responsibilities for handling emergency and nonemergency cases of abuse and neglect;~~

~~(b) Standards and procedures to be used in handling and coordinating investigations of reported cases of child abuse and reported cases of child neglect, methods to be used in interviewing the child who is the subject of the report and who allegedly was abused or neglected, and standards and procedures addressing the categories of persons who may interview the child who is the subject of the report and who allegedly was abused or neglected.~~

~~(4) If a public children services agency participated in the execution of a memorandum of understanding under section 2151.426 of the Revised Code establishing a children's advocacy center, the agency shall incorporate the contents of that memorandum in the memorandum prepared pursuant to this section.~~

~~(5) The clerk of the court of common pleas in the county may sign the memorandum of understanding prepared under division (K)(1) of this section. If the clerk signs the memorandum of understanding, the clerk shall execute all relevant responsibilities as required of officials specified in the memorandum.~~

~~(L)(1) Except as provided in division (L)(4)-(K)(4) or (5) of this section, a person who is required to make a report pursuant to 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 (L)(1)-(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 (L)(1)-(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 ~~(L)(1)~~(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 ~~(L)(1)~~(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 ~~(L)~~(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 ~~(L)(1)~~(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.

~~(M)~~(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 job and family services shall adopt rules in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code to implement this section. The department of job and family services 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.

~~(N)~~(2) Not later than ninety days after the effective date of this amendment, the director of job and family services 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.

~~(O)(1)~~~~(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.

~~(P)~~~~(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 including a physician, hospital intern or resident, dentist, podiatrist, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, visiting nurse, licensed psychologist, speech pathologist, audiologist, person engaged in social work or the practice of professional counseling, and 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.

Sec. 2151.4210. (A) Each public children services agency shall prepare a memorandum of understanding that is signed by all of the following:

(1) If there is only one juvenile judge in the county, the juvenile judge of the county or the juvenile judge's representative upon the judge's review and approval;

(2) If there is more than one juvenile judge in the county, a juvenile judge or the juvenile judges' representative selected by the juvenile judges or, if they are unable to do so for any reason, the juvenile judge who is senior in point of service or the senior juvenile judge's representative upon the judge's review and approval;

(3) The county peace officer;

(4) All chief municipal peace officers within the county;

(5) Other law enforcement officers handling child abuse and neglect cases in the county;

(6) The prosecuting attorney of the county;

(7) If the public children services agency is not the county department of job and family services, the county department of job and family services;

(8) The county humane society;

(9) If the public children services agency participated in the execution of a memorandum of understanding under section 2151.426 of the Revised Code establishing a children's advocacy center, each participating member of the children's advocacy center established by the memorandum.

(B)(1) The clerk of the court of common pleas in the county may sign the memorandum of understanding prepared under division (A) of this section.

(2) If the clerk signs the memorandum of understanding, the clerk shall execute all relevant responsibilities as required of officials specified in the memorandum.

Sec. 2151.4211. (A) A memorandum of understanding shall do both of the following:

(1) Set forth the normal operating procedure to be employed by all concerned officials in the execution of their respective responsibilities under this section and division (C) of section 2919.21, division (B)(1) of section 2919.22, division (B) of section 2919.23, and section 2919.24 of the Revised Code;

(2) Have as two of its primary goals both of the following:

(a) The elimination of all unnecessary interviews of children who are the subject of reports of child abuse or neglect;

(b) When feasible, providing for only one interview of a child who is the subject of a report of child abuse or neglect.

(B) A memorandum of understanding shall include all of the following:

(1) The roles and responsibilities for handling emergency and nonemergency cases of abuse

and neglect:

(2) Standards and procedures to be used in handling and coordinating investigations of reported cases of child abuse or neglect, methods to be used in interviewing the child who is the subject of the report and who allegedly was abused or neglected, and standards and procedures addressing the categories of persons who may interview the child who is the subject of the report and who allegedly was abused or neglected;

(3) If a public children services agency participated in the execution of a memorandum of understanding under section 2151.426 of the Revised Code establishing a children's advocacy center, the agency shall incorporate the contents of that memorandum in the memorandum prepared pursuant to this section.

(4) After the effective date of this section, a statement that section 2151.423 of the Revised Code requires a public children services agency to disclose confidential information discovered during an investigation conducted pursuant to section 2151.421 or 2151.422 of the Revised Code to any federal, state, or local government entity that needs the information to carry out its responsibilities to protect children from abuse or neglect.

(5) After the effective date of this section, a description of the type of information that may be discovered during an investigation conducted pursuant to section 2151.421 of the Revised Code that a law enforcement agency may share with a public children services agency in order for the public children services agency to carry out its responsibilities to protect children from abuse or neglect.

(6) After the effective date of this section, a description of how the information described in divisions (B)(4) and (5) of this section is to be shared between a public children services agency and a law enforcement agency.

(7) After the effective date of this section, and subject to divisions (I) and (N) of section 2151.421 of the Revised Code, a description of information that may be obtained from an investigation under section 2151.421 of the Revised Code that a law enforcement agency and a public children services agency is permitted to, or prohibited from, disclosing to the public.

Sec. 2151.4212. Every official who signed a memorandum of understanding under section 2151.4210 of the Revised Code shall biennially do the following regarding the memorandum:

(A) Review and evaluate the memorandum for necessary updates to terms and procedures;

(B) Update the memorandum's terms and procedures, if the concerned officials determine an update is necessary;

(C) Sign the reviewed memorandum;

(D) Submit the memorandum to the board of county commissioners for approval.

Sec. 2151.4213. Failure to follow the procedure set forth in the memorandum of understanding by the concerned officials is not grounds for, and shall not result in, the dismissal of any charges or complaint arising from any reported case of abuse or neglect or the suppression of any evidence obtained as a result of any reported child abuse or child neglect 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.

Sec. 2151.4215. (A) On receipt of a county's memorandum of understanding submitted to the board of county commissioners in accordance with section 2151.4212 of the Revised Code, the board

shall review and evaluate if the memorandum meets the requirements under sections 2151.4210 to 2151.4212 of the Revised Code.

(B)(1) If the board determines the memorandum meets those requirements, it shall adopt a resolution to approve the memorandum.

(2) If the board determines the memorandum does not meet those requirements, it shall notify the responsible public children services agency that the memorandum does not meet requirements and the memorandum shall be reviewed in accordance with section 2151.4212 of the Revised Code.

Sec. 2151.4216. The biennial review of a county memorandum of understanding pursuant to division 2151.4212 of the Revised Code and the biennial adoption of a resolution by the board of county commissioners to approve the memorandum under section 2151.4215 of the Revised Code shall be completed by the thirty-first day of December following the first full calendar year after the effective date of this section, and by the thirty-first day of December every other year thereafter.

Sec. 2151.4218. (A) The department of job and family services shall create a model memorandum of understanding to provide guidance to public children services agencies and other concerned officials in creating a memorandum of understanding in compliance with sections 2151.4210 to 2151.4216 of the Revised Code.

(B) The model memorandum of understanding shall be updated as the department determines is necessary.

Sec. 2151.4219. The department of job and family services shall biennially audit the memorandum of understanding prepared by each public children services agency to ensure compliance in accordance with sections 2151.4210 to 2151.4216 of the Revised Code.

Sec. 2151.4220. The department of job and family services shall determine that a public children services agency is compliant regarding the memorandum of understanding if the department finds all of the following:

(A) The memorandum meets the requirements under sections 2151.4210 to 2151.4216 of the Revised Code.

(B) The memorandum has been either reviewed and signed or reviewed, updated, and signed, as applicable, pursuant to division 2151.4212 of the Revised Code and the department is in agreement with the concerned officials' review and, if applicable, update.

(C) The memorandum has been approved by resolution by the board of county commissioners pursuant to section 2151.4215 of the Revised Code.

Sec. 2151.4221. (A) If the department of job and family services determines that a public children services agency is not compliant under section 2151.4220 of the Revised Code, the agency shall develop and submit a compliance assurance plan to the department.

(B) The compliance assurance plan shall describe the steps the agency and other concerned officials will take in order to become compliant.

(C) The agency shall submit the compliance assurance plan not later than sixty days after the department determines the agency not compliant.

Sec. 2151.4222. A county's reviewed and signed, or reviewed, updated, and signed, memorandum of understanding, as applicable, shall go into effect and supersede any previous memorandum upon the department of job and family services determination that the memorandum is compliant under section 2151.4220 of the Revised Code.

Sec. 2151.4223. The department of job and family services shall maintain on the department's web site a current list of counties with memorandums of understanding that the department has determined to be compliant under section 2151.4220 of the Revised Code and a list of counties with memorandums that the department has determined not to be compliant.

Sec. 2151.4224. The county memorandum of understanding that is in effect in accordance with section 2151.4222 of the Revised Code shall be posted to the general web site of the county.

Sec. 3107.014. (A) Except as provided in division (B) of this section, only an individual who meets all of the following requirements may perform the duties of an assessor under sections 3107.031, 3107.032, 3107.082, 3107.09, 3107.101, 3107.12, 5103.0324, and 5103.152 of the Revised Code:

(1) The individual must be in the employ of, appointed by, or under contract with a court, public children services agency, private child placing agency, or private noncustodial agency;

(2) The individual must be one of the following:

(a) A licensed professional clinical counselor, licensed professional counselor, independent social worker, social worker, independent marriage and family therapist, or marriage and family therapist licensed under Chapter 4757. of the Revised Code;

(b) A psychologist licensed under Chapter 4732. of the Revised Code;

(c) A student working to earn a four-year, post-secondary degree, or higher, in a social or behavior science, or both, who conducts assessor's duties under the supervision of a licensed professional clinical counselor, licensed professional counselor, independent social worker, social worker, independent marriage and family therapist, or marriage and family therapist licensed under Chapter 4757. of the Revised Code or a psychologist licensed under Chapter 4732. of the Revised Code. Beginning July 1, 2009, a student is eligible under this division only if the supervising licensed professional clinical counselor, licensed professional counselor, independent social worker, social worker, independent marriage and family therapist, marriage and family therapist, or psychologist has completed training in accordance with rules adopted under section 3107.015 of the Revised Code.

(d) A civil service employee engaging in social work without a license under Chapter 4757. of the Revised Code, as permitted by division (A)(5) of section 4757.41 of the Revised Code;

(e) A former employee of a public children services agency who, while so employed, conducted the duties of an assessor or the duties of a PCSA caseworker or PCSA caseworker supervisor as defined in section 5153.01 of the Revised Code;

(f) An employee of a court or public children services agency who is employed to conduct the duties of an assessor;

(g) A PCSA caseworker or PCSA caseworker supervisor as defined in section 5153.01 of the Revised Code;

(h) An individual who holds at least a bachelor's degree in any of the following human services fields and has at least one year of experience working with families and children:

(i) Social work;

(ii) Sociology;

(iii) Psychology;

(iv) Guidance and counseling;

(v) Education;

(vi) Religious education;

(vii) Business administration;

(viii) Criminal justice;

(ix) Public administration;

(x) Child care administration;

(xi) Nursing;

(xii) Family studies;

(xiii) Any other human services field related to working with children and families.

(3) The individual must complete training in accordance with rules adopted under section 3107.015 of the Revised Code.

(B) An individual in the employ of, appointed by, or under contract with a court prior to September 18, 1996, to conduct adoption investigations of prospective adoptive parents may perform the duties of an assessor under sections 3107.031, 3107.032, 3107.082, 3107.09, 3107.101, 3107.12, 5103.0324, and 5103.152 of the Revised Code if the individual complies with division (A)(3) of this section regardless of whether the individual meets the requirement of division (A)(2) of this section.

(C) A court, public children services agency, private child placing agency, or private noncustodial agency may employ, appoint, or contract with an assessor in the county in which a petition for adoption is filed and in any other county or location outside this state where information needed to complete or supplement the assessor's duties may be obtained. More than one assessor may be utilized for an adoption.

(D) Not later than January 1, 2008, the department of job and family services shall develop and maintain an assessor registry. The registry shall list all individuals who are employed, appointed by, or under contract with a court, public children services agency, private child placing agency, or private noncustodial agency and meet the requirements of an assessor as described in this section. A public children services agency, private child placing agency, private noncustodial agency, court, or any other person may contact the department to determine if an individual is listed in the assessor registry. An individual listed in the assessor registry shall immediately inform the department when that individual is no longer employed, appointed by, or under contract with a court, public children services agency, private child placing agency, or private noncustodial agency to perform the duties of an assessor as described in this section. The director of job and family services shall adopt rules in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code necessary for the implementation, contents, and maintenance of the registry, and any sanctions related to the provision of information, or the failure to provide information, that is needed for the proper operation of the assessor registry.

Sec. 5101.89. As used in sections 5101.89 to 5101.899 of the Revised Code:

(A) "Youth" means a person who is any of the following:

(1) Less than eighteen years of age;

(2) An emancipated young adult;

(3) Is in the temporary or permanent custody of a public children services agency, a planned permanent living arrangement, or in the Title-IV-E-eligible care and placement responsibility of a juvenile court or other governmental agency that provides Title IV-E reimbursable placement services.

(B) "Emancipated young adult" has the same meaning as in section 5101.141 of the Revised Code.

Sec. 5101.891. (A) There is created a youth and family ombudsman office under the department of job and family services consisting of the following:

(1) A family ombudsman, who shall be appointed by the governor, to investigate complaints made by adults;

(2) A youth ombudsman, who shall be appointed by the governor with advice from the overcoming hurdles in Ohio youth advisory board, to investigate complaints made by youth and to advocate for the best interests of children involved in concerns investigated by the office;

(3) Not fewer than two regional ombudsmen;

(4) Any necessary support staff.

(B) The office shall investigate and resolve concerns made by or on behalf of children and families involved with public children services agencies, Title IV-E agencies, or private provider agencies that administer or oversee foster care or placement services for the children services system. The office shall ensure the independent and impartial review of youth, family, and community complaints or concerns.

Sec. 5101.892. The youth and family ombudsman office shall perform all of the following duties:

(A) Receive, investigate, and attempt to resolve complaints from citizens, including children in the custody of a public children services agency or in the care and placement of a Title IV-E agency, related to government services regarding child protective services, foster care, and adoption;

(B) Establish procedures for receiving and resolving complaints, consistent with state and federal law;

(C) Provide an annual report to the governor, speaker of the house of representatives, president of the senate, minority leadership of the house of representatives and senate, the director of job and family services, and representatives of the overcoming hurdles in Ohio youth advisory board.

Sec. 5101.893. Not later than sixty days after release of the annual report described under section 5101.892 of the Revised Code, the overcoming hurdles in Ohio youth advisory board shall provide an evaluation of the report to the governor and the youth ombudsman of the youth and family ombudsman office.

Sec. 5101.894. To the extent permitted by state or federal law, a representative of the youth and family ombudsman office may report to an appropriate authority any suspected violation of state law discovered during the course of a complaint review.

Sec. 5101.895. The department of job and family services shall be responsible for all administrative undertakings for the youth and family ombudsman office, including the provision of offices, equipment, and supplies, as necessary.

Sec. 5101.897. (A) No employee of the youth and family ombudsman office shall do any of the following:

(1) Hold any office of trust or profit;

(2) Engage in any occupation or business interfering or inconsistent with the duties of the office;

(3) Serve on any committee of any political party;

(4) Have any interest that is, or may be, in conflict with the interests and concerns of the office.

(B) As used in this section, "office of trust or profit" means any of the following:

(1) A federal or state elective office or an elective office of a political subdivision of the state;

(2) A position on a board or commission of the state that is appointed by the governor;

(3) An office set forth in section 121.03, 121.04, or 121.05 of the Revised Code;

(4) An office of the government of the United States that is appointed by the president of the United States.

Sec. 5101.899. (A) The youth and family ombudsman office shall have access to only the records of the department of job and family services that are necessary for the administration of sections 5101.89 to 5101.899 of the Revised Code and in the performance of its official duties, including any records maintained in the uniform statewide automated child welfare information system under section 5101.13 of the Revised Code. The office has the right to request of the director of job and family services necessary information from any work unit of the department having information. The collection, compilation, analysis, and dissemination of information by the office shall be performed in a manner that protects complainants, individuals providing information about a complaint, public entities, and confidential records.

(B) The office shall have access to any necessary records in the control of a public children services agency, a Title IV-E agency, or a private provider agency that administers or oversees foster care or placement services for the children services system.

(C) Files of the office and any records contained in those files are not public records subject to inspection or copying under section 149.43 of the Revised Code. Information contained in investigative and other files maintained by the office shall be disclosed only at the discretion of the office or if disclosure is required by a court order.

SECTION 2. That existing sections 2151.142, 2151.421, and 3107.014 of the Revised Code are hereby repealed.

SECTION 3. Section 2151.421 of the Revised Code is presented in this act as a composite of the section as amended by both H.B. 92 and H.B. 110 of the 134th General Assembly. The General Assembly, applying the principle stated in division (B) of section 1.52 of the Revised Code that amendments are to be harmonized if reasonably capable of simultaneous operation, finds that the composite is the resulting version of the section in effect prior to the effective date of the section as presented in this act.

Speaker _____ *of the House of Representatives.*

President _____ *of the Senate.*

Passed _____, 20____

Approved _____, 20____

Governor.

The section numbering of law of a general and permanent nature is complete and in conformity with the Revised Code.

Director, Legislative Service Commission.

Filed in the office of the Secretary of State at Columbus, Ohio, on the ____ day of _____, A. D. 20 ____.

Secretary of State.

File No. _____ Effective Date _____