

1 SENATE BILL NO. 115

2 INTRODUCED BY D. LENZ

3
4 A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REVISING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT LAWS CONCERNING
5 THE TERMS "PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE OR NEGLECT" AND "PHYSICAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL HARM";
6 PROVIDING THAT ~~AN ACT OR OMISSION~~ MALTREATMENT CONSTITUTES "PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE
7 OR NEGLECT" OF A CHILD ONLY WHEN ~~THE ACT OR OMISSION RESULTS IN THE CHILD BEING~~
8 DIAGNOSED WITH A MENTAL DISORDER IDENTIFIED BY A LICENSED PROFESSIONAL; AND
9 AMENDING SECTION 41-3-102, MCA."

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11 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

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13 **Section 1.** Section 41-3-102, MCA, is amended to read:

14 **"41-3-102. Definitions.** As used in this chapter, the following definitions apply:

15 (1) (a) "Abandon", "abandoned", and "abandonment" mean:

16 (i) leaving a child under circumstances that make reasonable the belief that the parent does not
17 intend to resume care of the child in the future;

18 (ii) willfully surrendering physical custody for a period of 6 months and during that period not
19 manifesting to the child and the person having physical custody of the child a firm intention to resume physical
20 custody or to make permanent legal arrangements for the care of the child;

21 (iii) that the parent is unknown and has been unknown for a period of 90 days and that reasonable
22 efforts to identify and locate the parent have failed; or

23 (iv) the voluntary surrender, as defined in 40-6-402, by a parent of a newborn who is no more than
24 30 days old to an emergency services provider, as defined in 40-6-402.

25 (b) The terms do not include the voluntary surrender of a child to the department solely because of
26 parental inability to access publicly funded services.

27 (2) "A person responsible for a child's welfare" means:

28 (a) the child's parent, guardian, or foster parent or an adult who resides in the same home in which

1 the child resides;

2 (b) a person providing care in a day-care facility;

3 (c) an employee of a public or private residential institution, facility, home, or agency; or

4 (d) any other person responsible for the child's welfare in a residential setting.

5 (3) "Abused or neglected" means the state or condition of a child who has suffered child abuse or
6 neglect.

7 (4) (a) "Adequate health care" means any medical care or nonmedical remedial health care
8 recognized by an insurer licensed to provide disability insurance under Title 33, including the prevention of the
9 withholding of medically indicated treatment or medically indicated psychological care permitted or authorized
10 under state law.

11 (b) This chapter may not be construed to require or justify a finding of child abuse or neglect for the
12 sole reason that a parent or legal guardian, because of religious beliefs, does not provide adequate health care
13 for a child. However, this chapter may not be construed to limit the administrative or judicial authority of the
14 state to ensure that medical care is provided to the child when there is imminent substantial risk of serious harm
15 to the child.

16 (5) "Best interests of the child" means the physical, mental, and psychological conditions and
17 needs of the child and any other factor considered by the court to be relevant to the child.

18 (6) "Child" or "youth" means any person under 18 years of age.

19 (7) (a) "Child abuse or neglect" means:

20 (i) actual physical or psychological harm to a child;

21 (ii) substantial risk of physical or psychological harm to a child; or

22 (iii) abandonment.

23 (b) (i) The term includes:

24 (A) actual physical or psychological harm to a child or substantial risk of physical or psychological
25 harm to a child by the acts or omissions of a person responsible for the child's welfare;

26 (B) exposing a child to the criminal distribution of dangerous drugs, as prohibited by 45-9-101, the
27 criminal production or manufacture of dangerous drugs, as prohibited by 45-9-110, or the operation of an
28 unlawful clandestine laboratory, as prohibited by 45-9-132; or

1 (C) any form of child sex trafficking or human trafficking.

2 (ii) For the purposes of this subsection (7), "dangerous drugs" means the compounds and
3 substances described as dangerous drugs in Schedules I through IV in Title 50, chapter 32, part 2.

4 (c) In proceedings under this chapter in which the federal Indian Child Welfare Act is applicable,
5 this term has the same meaning as "serious emotional or physical damage to the child" as used in 25 U.S.C.
6 1912(f).

7 (d) The term does not include:

8 (i) self-defense, defense of others, or action taken to prevent the child from self-harm that does
9 not constitute physical or psychological harm to a child; or

10 (ii) a youth not receiving supervision solely because of parental inability to control the youth's
11 behavior.

12 (8) "Child protection specialist" means an employee of the department who investigates allegations
13 of child abuse, neglect, and endangerment and has been certified pursuant to 41-3-127.

14 (9) "Concurrent planning" means to work toward reunification of the child with the family while at
15 the same time developing and implementing an alternative permanent plan.

16 (10) "Department" means the department of public health and human services provided for in 2-15-
17 2201.

18 (11) "Family engagement meeting" means a meeting that involves family members in either
19 developing treatment plans or making placement decisions, or both.

20 (12) "Indian child" means any unmarried person who is under 18 years of age and who is either:

21 (a) a member of an Indian tribe; or

22 (b) eligible for membership in an Indian tribe and is the biological child of a member of an Indian
23 tribe.

24 (13) "Indian child's tribe" means:

25 (a) the Indian tribe in which an Indian child is a member or eligible for membership; or

26 (b) in the case of an Indian child who is a member of or eligible for membership in more than one
27 Indian tribe, the Indian tribe with which the Indian child has the more significant contacts.

28 (14) "Indian custodian" means any Indian person who has legal custody of an Indian child under

1 tribal law or custom or under state law or to whom temporary physical care, custody, and control have been
2 transferred by the child's parent.

3 (15) "Indian tribe" means any Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community of
4 Indians recognized by:

5 (a) the state of Montana; or

6 (b) the United States secretary of the interior as being eligible for the services provided to Indians
7 or because of the group's status as Indians, including any Alaskan native village as defined in federal law.

8 (16) "Limited emancipation" means a status conferred on a youth by a court in accordance with 41-
9 1-503 under which the youth is entitled to exercise some but not all of the rights and responsibilities of a person
10 who is 18 years of age or older.

11 (17) "Parent" means a biological or adoptive parent or stepparent.

12 (18) "Parent-child legal relationship" means the legal relationship that exists between a child and the
13 child's birth or adoptive parents, as provided in Title 40, chapter 6, part 2, unless the relationship has been
14 terminated by competent judicial decree as provided in 40-6-234, Title 42, or part 6 of this chapter.

15 (19) "Permanent placement" means reunification of the child with the child's parent, adoption,
16 placement with a legal guardian, placement with a fit and willing relative, or placement in another planned
17 permanent living arrangement until the child reaches 18 years of age.

18 (20) "Physical abuse" means an intentional act, an intentional omission, or gross negligence
19 resulting in substantial skin bruising, internal bleeding, substantial injury to skin, subdural hematoma, burns,
20 bone fractures, extreme pain, permanent or temporary disfigurement, impairment of any bodily organ or
21 function, or death.

22 (21) "Physical neglect" means: ~~either~~

23 (A) failure to provide basic necessities, including but not limited to appropriate and adequate
24 nutrition, protective shelter from the elements, and appropriate clothing related to weather conditions, ~~or;~~

25 (B) failure to provide cleanliness and general supervision, or both, ~~or;~~

26 (C) exposing or allowing the child to be exposed to an unreasonable physical or psychological risk
27 to the child;

28 (D) ALLOWING SEXUAL ABUSE OR EXPLOITATION OF THE CHILD; OR

1 (E) CAUSING MALNUTRITION OR A FAILURE TO THRIVE.

2 (22) ~~(a)~~ "Physical or psychological harm to a child" means the harm that occurs whenever the parent
3 or other person responsible for the child's welfare;

4 ~~(i)(a)~~ inflicts or allows to be inflicted upon on the child physical abuse, physical neglect, or
5 psychological abuse or neglect; or

6 ~~(ii)(b)~~ commits or allows sexual abuse or exploitation of the child;

7 ~~(iii)~~ induces or attempts to induce a child to give untrue testimony that the child or another child was
8 abused or neglected by a parent or other person responsible for the child's welfare;

9 ~~(iv)~~ causes malnutrition or a failure to thrive or otherwise fails to supply the child with adequate food or
10 fails to supply clothing, shelter, education, or adequate health care, though financially able to do so or offered
11 financial or other reasonable means to do so;

12 ~~(v)~~ exposes or allows the child to be exposed to an unreasonable risk to the child's health or welfare
13 by failing to intervene or eliminate the risk; or

14 ~~(vi)~~ abandons the child.

15 ~~(b)~~ The term does not include a youth not receiving supervision solely because of parental inability to
16 control the youth's behavior.

17 (23) (a) "Protective services" means services provided by the department:

18 (i) to enable a child alleged to have been abused or neglected to remain safely in the home;

19 (ii) to enable a child alleged to have been abused or neglected who has been removed from the
20 home to safely return to the home; or

21 (iii) to achieve permanency for a child adjudicated as a youth in need of care when circumstances
22 and the best interests of the child prevent reunification with parents or a return to the home.

23 (b) The term includes emergency protective services provided pursuant to 41-3-301, written
24 prevention plans provided pursuant to 41-3-302, and court-ordered protective services provided pursuant to
25 parts 4 and 6 of this chapter.

26 (24) (a) "Psychological abuse or neglect" means severe maltreatment, through acts or omissions,
27 that ~~are~~ is injurious to the child's emotional, intellectual, or psychological capacity to function; ~~including the~~
28 ~~commission of acts of violence against another person residing in the child's home that results in the child being~~

1 ~~diagnosed, by a licensed psychologist, with a mental disorder recognized in the most recent edition of the~~
2 ~~Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders~~ AND THAT IS IDENTIFIED AS PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE OR
3 ~~NEGLECT BY A LICENSED PSYCHOLOGIST, A LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR, A LICENSED CLINICAL SOCIAL~~
4 ~~WORKER, A LICENSED PSYCHIATRIST, A LICENSED PEDIATRICIAN, OR A LICENSED ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED~~
5 ~~NURSE WITH A FOCUSED PRACTICE IN PSYCHIATRY.~~

6 (B) THE TERM INCLUDES BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO THE COMMISSION OF ACTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST
7 ANOTHER PERSON RESIDING IN THE CHILD'S HOME.

8 (b)(c) The term may not be construed to hold a victim responsible for failing to prevent the crime
9 against the victim.

10 (25) "Qualified expert witness" as used in cases involving an Indian child in proceedings subject to
11 the federal Indian Child Welfare Act means:

12 (a) a member of the Indian child's tribe who is recognized by the tribal community as
13 knowledgeable in tribal customs as they pertain to family organization and child-rearing practices;

14 (b) a lay expert witness who has substantial experience in the delivery of child and family services
15 to Indians and extensive knowledge of prevailing social and cultural standards and child-rearing practices within
16 the Indian child's tribe; or

17 (c) a professional person who has substantial education and experience in providing services to
18 children and families and who possesses significant knowledge of and experience with Indian culture, family
19 structure, and child-rearing practices in general.

20 (26) "Qualified individual" means a trained professional or licensed clinician who:

21 (a) has expertise in the therapeutic needs assessment used for placement of youth in a
22 therapeutic group home;

23 (b) is not an employee of the department; and

24 (c) is not connected to or affiliated with any placement setting in which children are placed.

25 (27) "Reasonable cause to suspect" means cause that would lead a reasonable person to believe
26 that child abuse or neglect may have occurred or is occurring, based on all the facts and circumstances known
27 to the person.

28 (28) "Residential setting" means an out-of-home placement where the child typically resides for

1 longer than 30 days for the purpose of receiving food, shelter, security, guidance, and, if necessary, treatment.

2 (29) "Safety and risk assessment" means an evaluation by a child protection specialist following an
3 initial report of child abuse or neglect to assess the following:

- 4 (a) the existing threat or threats to the child's safety;
- 5 (b) the protective capabilities of the parent or guardian;
- 6 (c) any particular vulnerabilities of the child;
- 7 (d) any interventions required to protect the child; and
- 8 (e) the likelihood of future physical or psychological harm to the child.

9 (30) (a) "Sexual abuse" means the commission of sexual assault, sexual intercourse without
10 consent, aggravated sexual intercourse without consent, indecent exposure, sexual abuse, ritual abuse of a
11 minor, or incest, as described in Title 45, chapter 5.

12 (b) Sexual abuse does not include any necessary touching of an infant's or toddler's genital area
13 while attending to the sanitary or health care needs of that infant or toddler by a parent or other person
14 responsible for the child's welfare.

15 (31) "Sexual exploitation" means:

- 16 (a) allowing, permitting, or encouraging a child to engage in a prostitution offense, as described in
17 45-5-601 through 45-5-603;
- 18 (b) allowing, permitting, or encouraging sexual abuse of children as described in 45-5-625; or
- 19 (c) allowing, permitting, or encouraging sexual servitude as described in 45-5-704 or 45-5-705.

20 (32) "Therapeutic needs assessment" means an assessment performed by a qualified individual
21 within 30 days of placement of a child in a therapeutic group home that:

- 22 (a) assesses the strengths and needs of the child using an age-appropriate, evidence-based,
23 validated, functional assessment tool;
- 24 (b) determines whether the needs of the child can be met with family members or through
25 placement in a youth foster home or, if not, which appropriate setting would provide the most effective and
26 appropriate level of care for the child in the least restrictive environment and be consistent with the short-term
27 and long-term goals for the child as specified in the child's permanency plan; and
- 28 (c) develops a list of child-specific short-term and long-term mental and behavioral health goals.

