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\*\*\* BILL NO. \*\*\*

INTRODUCED BY \*\*\*

BY REQUEST OF THE \*\*\*

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REQUIRING A HEARING WITHIN 72 HOURS OF A CHILD'S REMOVAL FROM THE HOME; AND AMENDING SECTION 41-3-301, MCA."

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

**NEW SECTION. Section 1. Emergency protective services hearing.** (1)(a) A district court shall

hold a hearing within 72 hours, excluding weekends and holidays, of a child's removal from the home pursuant to 41-3-301 to determine whether to continue the removal beyond 72 hours.

(b) The department must provide notification of the hearing as required under 41-3-301.

(c) A hearing is not required if the child is released prior to the time of the required hearing.

(2) The hearing may be held in person, by videoconference, or, if no other means are available, by telephone.

(3) The child and the child's parents, parent, guardian, or other person having physical or legal custody of the child must be represented by counsel at the hearing.

(4) If the court determines that continued out-of-home placement is needed, the court shall:

(a) establish guidelines for visitation by the parent, parents, guardian, or other person having physical or legal custody of the child pending the show cause hearing; and

(b) review the availability of options for a kinship placement and make recommendations if appropriate.

(5) The court may direct the department to develop and implement a treatment plan before the show cause hearing if the parents, parent, guardian or other person having physical or legal custody of the child stipulates to a condition subject to a treatment plan and agrees to immediately comply with the treatment plan if a plan is developed.

(6) If the court determines continued removal is not appropriate, the child must be immediately returned to the parent, parents, guardian, or other person having physical or legal custody.

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**Section 2.** Section 41-3-301, MCA, is amended to read:

**"41-3-301. Emergency protective service.** (1) Any child protective social worker of the department, a peace officer, or the county attorney who has reason to believe any child is in immediate or apparent danger of harm may immediately remove the child and place the child in a protective facility. After ensuring that the child is safe, the department may make a request for further assistance from the law enforcement agency or take appropriate legal action. The person or agency placing the child shall notify the parents, parent, guardian, or other person having physical or legal custody of the child of the placement at the time the placement is made or as soon after placement as possible. Notification under this subsection must:

(a) include the reason for removal;

(b) include information regarding the emergency removal and show cause hearing, hearings and the purpose of the show cause hearing, hearings; and

(c) ~~must~~ advise the parents, parent, guardian, or other person having physical or legal custody of the child that the parents, parent, guardian, or other person may have a support person present during any in-person meeting with the social worker concerning emergency protective services.

(2) If a social worker of the department, a peace officer, or the county attorney determines in an investigation of abuse or neglect of a child that the child is in danger because of the occurrence of partner or family member assault, as provided for in 45-5-206, or strangulation of a partner or family member, as provided for in 45-5-215, against an adult member of the household or that the child needs protection as a result of the occurrence of partner or family member assault or strangulation of a partner or family member against an adult member of the household, the department shall take appropriate steps for the protection of the child, which may include:

(a) making reasonable efforts to protect the child and prevent the removal of the child from the parent or guardian who is a victim of alleged partner or family member assault or strangulation of a partner or family member;

(b) making reasonable efforts to remove the person who allegedly committed the partner or family member assault or strangulation of a partner or family member from the child's residence if it is determined that the child or another family or household member is in danger of partner or family member assault or

1 strangulation of a partner or family member; and

2 (c) providing services to help protect the child from being placed with or having unsupervised  
3 visitation with the person alleged to have committed partner or family member assault or strangulation of a  
4 partner or family member until the department determines that the alleged offender has met conditions  
5 considered necessary to protect the safety of the child.

6 (3) If the department determines that an adult member of the household is the victim of partner or  
7 family member assault or strangulation of a partner or family member, the department shall provide the adult  
8 victim with a referral to a domestic violence program.

9 (4) A child who has been removed from the child's home or any other place for the child's protection  
10 or care may not be placed in a jail.

11 (5) The department may locate and contact extended family members upon placement of a child in  
12 out-of-home care. The department may share information with extended family members for placement and  
13 case planning purposes.

14 (6) If a child is removed from the child's home by the department, a child protective social worker shall  
15 submit an affidavit regarding the circumstances of the emergency removal to the county attorney and provide a  
16 copy of the affidavit to the parents or guardian, if possible, within 2 working days of the emergency removal. An  
17 abuse and neglect petition must be filed within 5 working days, excluding weekends and holidays, of the  
18 emergency removal of a child unless arrangements acceptable to the agency for the care of the child have  
19 been made by the parents or voluntary protective services are provided pursuant to 41-3-302.

20 (7) Except as provided in the federal Indian Child Welfare Act, if applicable, a show cause hearing  
21 must be held within 20 days of the filing of the petition unless otherwise stipulated by the parties pursuant to 41-  
22 3-434.

23 (8) If the department determines that a petition for immediate protection and emergency protective  
24 services must be filed to protect the safety of the child, the social worker shall interview the parents of the child  
25 to whom the petition pertains, if the parents are reasonably available, before the petition may be filed. The  
26 district court may immediately issue an order for immediate protection of the child.

27 (9) The department shall make the necessary arrangements for the child's well-being as are required  
28 prior to the court hearing."

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2 NEW SECTION. Section 3. Codification instruction. [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an  
3 integral part of Title 40, chapter 3, part 3, and the provisions of Title 40, chapter 3, part 3, apply to [section 1].  
4 - END -

DRAFT