

Senate Fiscal Agency
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SFA**BILL ANALYSIS**

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Senate Bill 1125 (as introduced 5-7-98)
Sponsor: Senator Dale L. Shugars
Committee: Judiciary

Date Completed: 5-12-98

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Child Protection Law to include a “nonparent adult” as a person responsible for a child’s health or welfare, for purposes of reporting child abuse and child neglect.

The Law requires various professionals to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the Family Independence Agency (FIA), which then must begin an investigation or notify a prosecuting attorney. The FIA also must keep a central registry of all reports in which relevant and accurate evidence of child abuse or neglect is found to exist.

The Law’s definitions of “child abuse” and “child neglect” refer to harm or threatened harm to a child’s health or welfare by a parent, legal guardian, or any other person responsible for the child’s health or welfare. “Person responsible for the child’s health or welfare” means a parent, a legal guardian, a person 18 years of age or older who resides for any length of time in the same home in which the child resides, or an owner, operator, volunteer, or employee of a child care organization or adult foster care home.

The bill would include a nonparent adult in the definition of “person responsible for the child’s health or welfare”. “Nonparent adult” would mean a person who met all of the following criteria:

- Was at least 18 years old.
- Had substantial and regular contact with a child under the jurisdiction of the family court in an abuse or neglect case.
- Was not that child’s parent or someone who acted in loco parentis to the child.
- Was not related to the child.

MCL 722.622

Legislative Analyst: S. Lowe

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have an indeterminate impact on State government. Currently the Family Independence Agency investigates allegations of abuse or neglect against parents, legal guardians, or other adults living in the household. To add adults who do not fall under those definitions would increase the reportable child abuse and neglect incidents that the department must investigate. The number of these cases is not known at this time. However, an estimate of costs would include staff time for investigation and services. Each protective services staff person responsible for case investigations usually handles an average of 12 cases at any one time. Each staff person responsible for case services handles an average of 24 cases at any one time. The average annual cost of a staff person, including associated benefits and support services and staff costs, is \$75,000 to \$77,000.

Fiscal Analyst: C. Cole

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