

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2020 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
Third Reader

House Bill 460  
Judiciary

(Delegate Shetty, *et al.*)

Judicial Proceedings

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Department of Human Services - Child Abuse Prevention - Online Course

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This bill requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) to post on its website a free online course on the identification, prevention, and reporting of child abuse.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** Any minimal costs to DHS associated with the bill's requirement can be absorbed within existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Current Law:** Child abuse is the physical or mental injury of a child younger than age 18 that indicate the child's health or welfare is harmed or at substantial risk of being harmed by a (1) parent; (2) family or household member; (3) person who has permanent or temporary custody of the child; (4) person who has responsibility for supervision of the child; or (5) exercises authority over the child because of their position or occupation. Child abuse is also any sexual injury of a child, whether physical injuries are sustained or not.

Mandatory reporters of child abuse include health care practitioners, police officers, educators, and human service workers who are acting in a professional capacity and who have reason to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect. Mandatory reporters must notify the local department of social services or the appropriate

law enforcement agency. In general, a person other than a mandatory reporter who has reason to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect must notify the local department of social services or the appropriate law enforcement agency.

**Background:** The DHS website contains the following information about child abuse:

- the definition of child abuse and neglect;
- the signs of child abuse or neglect;
- how to report child abuse or neglect;
- information for mandated reporters;
- what Child Protective Services does after child abuse is reported; and
- the locations and contact information for local DHS offices and toll-free child abuse reporting numbers for other states.

A variety of free resources regarding child abuse are readily available elsewhere online. States such as, [Virginia](#), [New York](#), and [California](#) offer free online training specifically for mandated reporters. Some states, like [New Jersey](#), require school personnel to complete child abuse training. The Child Welfare Information Gateway (CWIG) publishes a variety of fact sheets with basic information about child abuse and neglect, including the signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect. CWIG has also published [resources](#) compiled from a variety of universities and government agencies that provide training materials to help child welfare and related professionals identify child abuse and neglect.

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## **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Human Services; Child Welfare Information Gateway; California Department of Social Services; New Jersey Department of Education; New York Department of Health and Human Services; Virginia Department of Social Services; Department of Legislative Services.

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 4, 2020  
mr/jc Third Reader - February 21, 2020

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