

*ENROLLED BILL*  
*-- Judiciary/Judicial Proceedings --*

Introduced by **Delegates Branch, Barkley, Bohanan, Conway, DeBoy, Gaines, Griffith, Haynes, Niemann, and Rosenberg**

Read and Examined by Proofreaders:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Proofreader.

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Proofreader.

Sealed with the Great Seal and presented to the Governor, for his approval this  
\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock, \_\_\_\_ M.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Speaker.

CHAPTER \_\_\_\_\_

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Department of Human Resources - Child Abuse and Neglect - Differential**  
3 **Response System Study**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring the Department of Human Resources to conduct a  
5 Differential Response System Study on the implementation of a differential  
6 response system for allegations of child abuse and neglect in the State;  
7 providing for the purpose of the Study; requiring the Department to submit a  
8 report on the findings and statutory recommendations of the Study on or before  
9 a certain date; providing for the termination of this Act; and generally relating  
10 to the Differential Response System Study.

11 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF  
12 MARYLAND, That:

13 (a) The Department of Human Resources, ~~in consultation with the University~~  
14 ~~of Maryland School of Social Work, child advocacy organizations, and service~~  
15 ~~providers,~~ shall conduct a Differential Response System Study on the implementation

1 of a research-based differential response system for allegations of child abuse and  
 2 neglect in the State.

3 (b) The Differential Response System Study shall:

4 (1) define levels of safety concerns associated with allegations of child  
 5 abuse and neglect in relation to a differential response system, including low safety  
 6 concerns and high safety concerns;

7 (2) determine specific responses and time frames for initiating and  
 8 completing responses for varying allegations of child abuse and neglect;

9 (3) develop a database of child welfare programs within local  
 10 departments and community resources in the State to assist the Department in  
 11 responding to allegations of child abuse and neglect by providing ongoing family  
 12 preservation services, when appropriate;

13 (4) determine existing capacity outside the child protective services  
 14 system to meet the needs of lower risk families and identify services and funding to  
 15 fill service gaps as part of an effective differential response system;

16 ~~(4)~~ (5) develop a plan to implement and evaluate a differential  
 17 response system for allegations of child abuse and neglect in the State, including  
 18 consideration of:

19 (i) workload standards;

20 (ii) multidisciplinary responses relating to mental health,  
 21 substance abuse assessment and treatment, domestic violence services, and services  
 22 for abused and neglected children;

23 (iii) the role of law enforcement;

24 (iv) staff training requirements and cost; and

25 (v) implications for reporting statistics on child abuse and neglect;  
 26 and

27 ~~(5)~~ (6) recommend specific statutory changes necessary to implement a  
 28 differential response system for allegations of child abuse and neglect in the State.

29 (c) On or before December 1, 2006, the Department shall submit a report to  
 30 the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, the  
 31 Senate Finance Committee, the House Appropriations Committee, and the House  
 32 Judiciary Committee, on the findings and statutory recommendations of the  
 33 Differential Response System Study.

34 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
 35 June 1, 2006. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and, at the end of May 31,

1 2007, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this Act shall be  
2 abrogated and of no further force and effect.