
By: **Delegates Branch, Barkley, Bohanan, Conway, DeBoy, Gaines, Griffith,
Haynes, Niemann, and Rosenberg**

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Committee Report: Favorable with amendments
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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
16 of a research-based differential response system for allegations of child abuse and
17 neglect in the State.

18 (b) The Differential Response System Study shall:

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

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

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

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

10 (4) (5) develop a plan to implement and evaluate a differential
11 response system for allegations of child abuse and neglect in the State, including
12 consideration of:

13 (i) workload standards;

14 (ii) multidisciplinary responses relating to mental health,
15 substance abuse assessment and treatment, domestic violence services, and services
16 for abused and neglected children;

17 (iii) the role of law enforcement;

18 (iv) staff training requirements and cost; and

19 (v) implications for reporting statistics on child abuse and neglect;
20 and

21 (5) (6) recommend specific statutory changes necessary to implement a
22 differential response system for allegations of child abuse and neglect in the State.

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

28 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
29 June 1, 2006. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and, at the end of May 31,
30 2007, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this Act shall be
31 abrogated and of no further force and effect.

