

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2020 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 1041
Rules

(Senator Hayes)

Child Abuse and Neglect - Disclosure of Identifying Information

This bill requires the Executive Director of the Social Services Administration (SSA) to provide the Secretary of Health with identifying information regarding an individual whose parental rights have been terminated and who has been suspected of child abuse or neglect. By December 1, 2021, the Department of Human Services (DHS) must report to the Governor and the General Assembly on how the State may implement a plan to search the databases of other states for the purpose of identifying individuals in Maryland who have been identified as responsible for or suspected of abuse or neglect in other states.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill's requirements can be handled with existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The Executive Director of SSA within DHS must provide the Secretary of Health with identifying information regarding individuals who, as to any child, have had their parental rights terminated and have been identified as responsible for abuse or neglect in a central registry. The Secretary of Health must provide to the Executive Director of SSA birth record information for a child born to an individual whose identifying information has been provided within the previous 10 years.

When birth record information is provided, the Executive Director of SSA must verify the identity of the birth parent and immediately notify the local department of social services in the jurisdiction in which the child resides so that the local department may review its records and, when appropriate, provide an assessment of the family and offer services, if needed.

Statutory provisions set forth a process by which SSA maintains a centralized confidential database of reported cases of child abuse and neglect. An individual may be identified in the database as responsible for child abuse and neglect only if the individual (1) has been found guilty of any criminal charge arising out of the allegations or found responsible for indicated abuse or neglect and (2) has either unsuccessfully appealed the finding in accordance with specified procedures or failed to exercise the right to appeal.

Background: The State's birth match program is an initiative intended to ensure the safety of newborns by identifying and offering supportive services to individuals who have additional children, after being identified as responsible for child abuse and neglect and having their parental rights terminated.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: HB 887 (Delegate R. Lewis) - Judiciary.

Information Source(s): Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Maryland Department of Health; Department of Human Services; Department of Legislative Services

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Analysis by: Jennifer K. Botts

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510