

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1005
Judiciary

(Delegate Forbes)

Child Abuse and Neglect - Reporting (Survivor Reporting Reform Act)

This bill requires the Department of Human Services (DHS), by May 1, 2028, to develop a form for submitting a written report of suspected child abuse or neglect for cases in which the individual is believed to have been subjected to abuse or neglect as a child and is currently at least age 18. DHS must consult with health practitioners, survivors of child abuse, local departments of social services, law enforcement agencies, and the State's Attorney in the process of developing the form. DHS must make the form available to individuals who are mandatory reporters under § 5-704 of the Family Law Article; additional requirements for the form are also specified in the bill.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: DHS can implement the bill using existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The form must:

- include a document to be given to the individual who is the subject of the report regarding how the information in the report may be used;

- require the individual making the report to document whether the individual who is the subject of the report prefers the suspected abuse or neglect to be investigated; and
- require the individual making the report to include, insofar as reasonable possible, (1) the name, age, home address, and preferred method of contact of the individual who is the subject of the report; (2) the name and home address of the individual's parent or other person who was responsible for the individual's care at the time of the suspected abuse or neglect; (3) the nature and extent of the abuse or neglect of the individual, including any evidence or information available to the reporter concerning possible previous instances of abuse or neglect; and (4) any other information that would help to determine the identity of any individual responsible for the abuse or neglect.

The bill's provisions are applicable to reports required under § 5-704 of the Family Law Article, which addresses mandatory reporting based on an individual's professional capacity.

Current Law: 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, must notify the local department of social services or the appropriate law enforcement agency. An "educator or human service worker" includes any teacher, counselor, social worker, caseworker, and parole or probation officer. If the worker is acting as a staff member of a hospital, public health agency, child care institution, juvenile detention center, school, or similar institution, then the individual must notify the head of the institution or the designee.

A worker who notifies the appropriate authorities must make an oral report by telephone or direct communication as soon as possible to the local department or the appropriate law enforcement agency if the worker has reason to believe the child has been subjected to abuse or neglect. A written report to the local department is required not later than 48 hours after the contact, examination, or treatment that caused the worker to believe that the child had been subjected to abuse or neglect. A copy of the written report must be provided to the local State's Attorney. An agency that receives an oral report of suspected abuse or neglect must immediately notify the other agency. Statute specifies the information that must be included in a report, to the extent inclusion is reasonably possible.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Human Services; Department of Legislative Services

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caw/jkb

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