



**Testimony before the House Ways and Means Committee  
March 4, 2026**

**House Bill 1046: School and School-Sponsored Activities - Report of Suspected Abuse or Neglect -  
Parental Notification**

**\*\*OPPOSE\*\***

Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

As members of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and its Social Workers in Schools Committee, we must respectfully oppose House Bill 1046 because we believe that the risk presented by potential unintended consequences to abused or neglected students overrides its benefits.

This legislation mandates that all protective services reports of suspected abuse or neglect occurring at school or school-sponsored activities be reported to the student's parent, guardian, or caregiver within 24 hours of when the report is made, with an exception if the parent, guardian, or caregiver is the subject of the report. With this limitation, the likely subject of the report and subsequent parental notification would be either someone known to the family (a relative or someone caring for their child), or a school employee. These two scenarios present very different situations in regard to notification.

As School Social Workers, we are leaders in promoting family engagement in the education of children, and transparency is a critical component of nurturing that partnership. But as social workers, we understand how complicated families can be. This bill allows for no nuance or the exercise of professional judgment and may interfere with the effectiveness of a subsequent investigation, particularly when the subject of the report is not a school employee. For the sake of the child, we must take care to protect the integrity of the investigation.

Our colleagues who conduct abuse and neglect investigations are highly-trained professionals who, in the course of their exploration, use their clinical skills throughout their interviews. They are listening to not only the replies that their questions evoke, they are observers of tone, body language, and the reaction of those around them. Important investigative information may be lost when abusers have prior notice or when children have been coached.

While we strongly support the right of parents to be informed about what happens at school, that notification must not risk the safety of children due to unintended consequences. We urge the sponsor to find a way to balance both. As such, we ask for an unfavorable report on this bill.

Respectfully,

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NASW-MD Chapter, Social Work in Schools Committee