

SB 101 B -B9 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Human Services and Housing

Prepared By: Cassandra Soucy, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 5/18, 5/23, 5/30

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Prohibits school personnel from disclosing existence of, and information related to, child abuse investigation conducted on school grounds, while investigation is pending. Provides that Department of Human Services or law enforcement agency conducting investigation is not required to reveal information about the investigation to school personnel. Applies statute to private schools. Excludes investigations or interviews of persons suspected of committing abuse from application of statute.

Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-B9 Allows DHS or law enforcement agency to not reveal information about a child abuse investigation to the school as condition of investigation. Prohibits a school administrator or staff member from notifying any person other than DHS or law enforcement of the investigation or disclosing information obtained during the investigation. Specifies that school district, school administrator, or staff member may not be held liable for civil damages as a result of compliance with notification and disclosure prohibitions. Specifies application of provisions to interview of suspected victim and not to person who is suspected of committing the abuse.

Declares emergency, effective upon passage.

BACKGROUND:

Current law requires law enforcement and the Department of Human Services (DHS) to notify school administrators when child abuse investigations occur on public school premises.

Senate Bill 101 B provides that these investigators are not required to disclose information about the investigation to school personnel and prohibits school personnel from disclosing any information about a pending investigation. The bill applies these changes to both private and public schools. It applies these provisions to investigations or interviews of suspected victims and witnesses, and excludes investigations or interviews of people suspected of committing abuse from their coverage.