

HB 2155 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Sen. Lieber

Senate Committee On Human Services, Mental Health and Recovery

Action Date: 05/18/21

Action: Do pass.

Vote: 4-0-1-0

Yeas: 4 - Anderson, Gelser, Lieber, Taylor

Exc: 1 - Robinson

Fiscal: No fiscal impact

Revenue: No revenue impact

Prepared By: C. Ross, Counsel

Meeting Dates: 5/6, 5/18

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Modifies definition of public or private official to clarify mandatory reporting exemption for victim assistance providers otherwise required to report suspected child abuse.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Importance of confidentiality for abuse survivors and their providers

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Public and private officials are required to inform the Department of Human Services (DHS) or law enforcement immediately if they reasonably suspect that a child they have come in contact with may have been abused. These individuals are called “mandatory reporters” and include law enforcement, social workers, medical and other treatment providers, school personnel, child care providers, foster care providers, legal professionals, and clergy members.

Certain programs that assist survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and trafficking are exempt from mandatory reporting requirements because confidentiality improves success and is sometimes necessary to protect survivors. However, when programs for domestic violence and sexual assault survivors are housed or nested within larger entities whose primary purpose is to offer a broader range of services to a community, it is not clear whether the mandatory reporting exemption applies.

House Bill 2155 clarifies that the mandatory reporting exemption for stand-alone domestic violence and sexual assault programs includes programs nested within larger organizations that have a broader purpose.