

Submitter: Kelsey Scott
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4059

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kelsey Scott, and I am here to voice my passionate opposition to HB4059.

Currently law requires intervention when there is a "substantial risk" of harm while his bill narrows that to an "imminent risk of severe harm". Children shouldn't have to experience "severe" harm when we can intervene when the trauma starts. This removes protective action and makes it responsive after the fact.

No child abuse is at an acceptable level to wait for intervention.

This bill is full of loopholes that would allow students, teachers and strangers to abuse a child without mandatory investigation into the event(s) just because they don't fit into the proposed section 4 definition of who can be investigated for abuse; parents, guardians, or household caregivers. The loosening of the laws seems to imply that it is just to save time and money from necessary investigations. A "imminent risk of severe harm" shouldn't be needed to protect a child from abuse that we currently deem necessary to intervene for.

This bill makes it harder for children with Intellectual and developmental disabilities to be protected because abuse is often slow to start and increases in severity, which is often hard to be expressed by this population— they depend on state services and mandated reporters to notice changes and protect them, especially if they're nonverbal or delayed. They are often unable to express that a threat is coming, a demand of the proposed bill.

HB4059 Changing definitions, standards, and investigative authority, keeping children in unsafe environments long before intervention would be allowed.

I oppose HB 4059

Kelsey Scott
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