

Assembly Bill No. 261–Committee on
Health and Human Services

CHAPTER.....

AN ACT relating to children; authorizing an agency which provides child welfare services to release to certain governmental agencies certain information concerning missing children who are in protective custody or with whom the agency has had contact; requiring an agency which provides child welfare services to release, upon request, certain information relating to a case of abuse or neglect which results in a fatality or near fatality; requires the Legislative Auditor to receive and review certain information concerning certain children who suffer a fatality or near fatality; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.

Legislative Counsel's Digest:

Existing law makes certain reports and records concerning reports of child abuse or neglect confidential except in certain circumstances and authorizes the release of certain information relating to data and information concerning reports and investigations of abuse and neglect of a child to specific persons. (NRS 432B.280, 432B.290) **Section 2** of this bill authorizes an agency which provides child welfare services to release certain information relating to a missing child who is the subject of an investigation of abuse or neglect and who is in the protective custody of the agency which provides child welfare services or who is in the custody of another entity pursuant to the order of a juvenile court to certain governmental agencies that need the information to assist in locating the child and to carry out their duties in protecting children from abuse and neglect. The information that may be released includes the child's name, age, physical description and photograph. The agencies receiving this information may disclose the information to members of the general public upon request.

Section 3 of this bill requires an agency which provides child welfare services to release upon request certain information relating to a case of abuse or neglect of a child which results in a fatality or near fatality. The information that must be released includes the information that the Eighth Judicial District Court held in *In re Clark County*, 05-A510196 (April 4, 2006), may be disclosed in cases of child fatalities or near fatalities pursuant to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 1974, Public Law 93-247.

Sections 8-12 of this bill require the Legislative Auditor to receive and review certain information concerning any child who has had contact with or who has been in the custody of an agency which provides child welfare services and who suffers a fatality or near fatality. The Legislative Auditor is required to release certain information concerning such children upon request.



THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, REPRESENTED IN
SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Chapter 432B of NRS is hereby amended by adding thereto the provisions set forth as sections 2 and 3 of this act.

Sec. 2. 1. *For purposes of assisting in locating a missing child who is the subject of an investigation of abuse or neglect and who is in the protective custody of an agency which provides child welfare services or in the custody of another entity pursuant to the order of the juvenile court, an agency which provides child welfare services may provide the following information to a federal, state or local governmental entity, or an agency of such an entity, that needs access to the information to carry out its legal responsibilities to protect children from abuse or neglect:*

- (a) The name of the child;*
- (b) The age of the child;*
- (c) A physical description of the child; and*
- (d) A photograph of the child.*

2. Information provided pursuant to subsection 1 is not confidential and may be disclosed to any member of the general public upon request.

Sec. 3. 1. *Data or information concerning reports and investigations thereof made pursuant to this chapter must be made available pursuant to this section to any member of the general public upon request if the child who is the subject of a report of abuse or neglect suffered a fatality or near fatality. Any such data and information which is known must be made available not later than 48 hours after a fatality and not later than 5 business days after a near fatality. Except as otherwise provided in subsection 2, the data or information which must be disclosed includes, without limitation:*

- (a) A summary of the report of abuse or neglect and a factual description of the contents of the report;*
- (b) The date of birth and gender of the child;*
- (c) The date that the child suffered the fatality or near fatality;*
- (d) The cause of the fatality or near fatality, if such information has been determined;*
- (e) Whether the agency which provides child welfare services had any contact with the child or a member of the child's family or household before the fatality or near fatality and, if so:*

(1) The frequency of any contact or communication with the child or a member of the child's family or household before the fatality or near fatality and the date on which the last contact or communication occurred before the fatality or near fatality;



(2) Whether the agency which provides child welfare services provided any child welfare services to the child or to a member of the child's family or household before or at the time of the fatality or near fatality;

(3) Whether the agency which provides child welfare services made any referrals for child welfare services for the child or for a member of the child's family or household before or at the time of the fatality or near fatality;

(4) Whether the agency which provides child welfare services took any other actions concerning the welfare of the child before or at the time of the fatality or near fatality; and

(5) A summary of the status of the child's case at the time of the fatality or near fatality, including, without limitation, whether the child's case was closed by the agency which provides child welfare services before the fatality or near fatality and, if so, the reasons that the case was closed; and

(f) Whether the agency which provides child welfare services, in response to the fatality or near fatality:

(1) Has provided or intends to provide child welfare services to the child or to a member of the child's family or household;

(2) Has made or intends to make a referral for child welfare services for the child or for a member of the child's family or household; and

(3) Has taken or intends to take any other action concerning the welfare and safety of the child or any member of the child's family or household.

2. An agency which provides child welfare services shall not disclose the following data or information pursuant to subsection 1:

(a) Except as otherwise provided in subsection 3 of NRS 432B.290, data or information concerning the identity of the person responsible for reporting the abuse or neglect of the child to a public agency;

(b) The name of the child who suffered a near fatality or the name of any member of the family or other person who lives in the household of the child who suffered the fatality or near fatality;

(c) A privileged communication between an attorney and client; and

(d) Information that may undermine a criminal investigation or pending criminal prosecution.

3. The Division of Child and Family Services shall adopt regulations to carry out the provisions of this section.



4. As used in this section, “near fatality” means an act that places a child in serious or critical condition as verified orally or in writing by a physician, a registered nurse or other licensed provider of health care. Such verification may be given in person or by telephone, mail, electronic mail or facsimile.

Sec. 4. NRS 432B.280 is hereby amended to read as follows:

432B.280 1. ~~Reports~~ *Except as otherwise provided in sections 2 and 3 of this act, reports* made pursuant to this chapter, as well as all records concerning these reports and investigations thereof, are confidential.

2. Any person, law enforcement agency or public agency, institution or facility who willfully releases data or information concerning such reports and investigations, except:

(a) Pursuant to a criminal prosecution relating to the abuse or neglect of a child;

(b) *As otherwise authorized pursuant to section 2 or 3 of this act;*

(c) As otherwise authorized or required pursuant to NRS 432B.290; or

~~(e)~~ (d) As otherwise required pursuant to NRS 432B.513,
 ➔ is guilty of a misdemeanor.

Sec. 5. NRS 432B.290 is hereby amended to read as follows:

432B.290 1. Except as otherwise provided in subsections 2 ~~5 and 6~~ *and 3* and NRS 432B.513, *and sections 2 and 3 of this act*, data or information concerning reports and investigations thereof made pursuant to this chapter may be made available only to:

(a) A physician, if the physician has before him a child who he has reasonable cause to believe has been abused or neglected;

(b) A person authorized to place a child in protective custody, if the person has before him a child who he has reasonable cause to believe has been abused or neglected and the person requires the information to determine whether to place the child in protective custody;

(c) An agency, including, without limitation, an agency in another jurisdiction, responsible for or authorized to undertake the care, treatment or supervision of:

(1) The child; or

(2) The person responsible for the welfare of the child;

(d) A district attorney or other law enforcement officer who requires the information in connection with an investigation or prosecution of the abuse or neglect of a child;



(e) A court, for in camera inspection only, unless the court determines that public disclosure of the information is necessary for the determination of an issue before it;

(f) A person engaged in bona fide research or an audit, but information identifying the subjects of a report must not be made available to him;

(g) The attorney and the guardian ad litem of the child;

(h) A grand jury upon its determination that access to these records is necessary in the conduct of its official business;

(i) A federal, state or local governmental entity, or an agency of such an entity, that needs access to the information to carry out its legal responsibilities to protect children from abuse and neglect;

(j) A person or an organization that has entered into a written agreement with an agency which provides child welfare services to provide assessments or services and that has been trained to make such assessments or provide such services;

(k) A team organized pursuant to NRS 432B.350 for the protection of a child;

(l) A team organized pursuant to NRS 432B.405 to review the death of a child;

(m) A parent or legal guardian of the child and an attorney of a parent or guardian of the child, if the identity of the person responsible for reporting the ~~alleged~~ abuse or neglect of the child to a public agency is kept confidential;

(n) The persons who are the subject of a report;

(o) An agency that is authorized by law to license foster homes or facilities for children or to investigate persons applying for approval to adopt a child, if the agency has before it an application for that license or is investigating an applicant to adopt a child;

(p) Upon written consent of the parent, any officer of this State or a city or county thereof or Legislator authorized, by the agency or department having jurisdiction or by the Legislature, acting within its jurisdiction, to investigate the activities or programs of an agency which provides child welfare services if:

(1) The identity of the person making the report is kept confidential; and

(2) The officer, Legislator or a member of his family is not the person alleged to have committed the abuse or neglect;

(q) The Division of Parole and Probation of the Department of Public Safety for use pursuant to NRS 176.135 in making a presentence investigation and report to the district court or pursuant to NRS 176.151 in making a general investigation and report;



(r) Any person who is required pursuant to NRS 432B.220 to make a report to an agency which provides child welfare services or to a law enforcement agency;

(s) The Rural Advisory Board to Expedite Proceedings for the Placement of Children created pursuant to NRS 432B.602 or a local advisory board to expedite proceedings for the placement of children created pursuant to NRS 432B.604;

(t) The panel established pursuant to NRS 432B.396 to evaluate agencies which provide child welfare services; or

(u) An employer in accordance with subsection 3 of NRS 432.100.

2. ~~{Except as otherwise provided in subsection 3, data or information concerning reports and investigations thereof made pursuant to this chapter may be made available to any member of the general public if the child who is the subject of a report dies or is critically injured as a result of alleged abuse or neglect, except that the data or information which may be disclosed is limited to:~~

~~—(a) The fact that a report of abuse or neglect has been made and, if appropriate, a factual description of the contents of the report;~~

~~—(b) Whether an investigation has been initiated pursuant to NRS 432B.260, and the result of a completed investigation; and~~

~~—(c) Such other information as is authorized for disclosure by a court pursuant to subsection 4.~~

~~3.—An agency which provides child welfare services shall not disclose data or information pursuant to subsection 2 if the agency determines that the disclosure is not in the best interests of the child or if disclosure of the information would adversely affect any pending investigation concerning a report.~~

~~4. Upon petition, a court of competent jurisdiction may authorize the disclosure of additional information to the public pursuant to subsection 2 if good cause is shown by the petitioner for the disclosure of the additional information.~~

~~5.]~~ An agency investigating a report of the abuse or neglect of a child shall, upon request, provide to a person named in the report as allegedly causing the abuse or neglect of the child:

(a) A copy of:

(1) Any statement made in writing to an investigator for the agency by the person named in the report as allegedly causing the abuse or neglect of the child; or

(2) Any recording made by the agency of any statement made orally to an investigator for the agency by the person named in the report as allegedly causing the abuse or neglect of the child; or



(b) A written summary of the allegations made against the person who is named in the report as allegedly causing the abuse or neglect of the child. The summary must not identify the person responsible for reporting the alleged abuse or neglect.

~~[6-]~~ 3. An agency which provides child welfare services shall disclose the identity of a person who makes a report or otherwise initiates an investigation pursuant to this chapter if a court, after reviewing the record in camera and determining that there is reason to believe that the person knowingly made a false report, orders the disclosure.

~~[7-]~~ 4. Any person, except for:

(a) The subject of a report;

(b) A district attorney or other law enforcement officer initiating legal proceedings; or

(c) An employee of the Division of Parole and Probation of the Department of Public Safety making a presentence investigation and report to the district court pursuant to NRS 176.135 or making a general investigation and report pursuant to NRS 176.151,

↳ who is given access, pursuant to subsection 1 or 2, to information identifying the subjects of a report and who makes this information public is guilty of a misdemeanor.

~~[8-]~~ 5. The Division of Child and Family Services shall adopt regulations to carry out the provisions of this section.

Sec. 6. Chapter 218 of NRS is hereby amended by adding thereto the provisions set forth as sections 7 to 12, inclusive, of this act.

Sec. 7. *As used in sections 7 to 12, inclusive, of this act, unless the context otherwise requires, the words and terms defined in sections 8, 9 and 10 of this act have the meanings ascribed to them in those sections.*

Sec. 8. *“Abuse or neglect of a child” has the meaning ascribed to it in NRS 432B.020.*

Sec. 9. *“Agency which provides child welfare services” has the meaning ascribed to it in NRS 432B.030.*

Sec. 10. *“Near fatality” means an act that places a child in serious or critical condition as verified orally or in writing by a physician, a registered nurse or other licensed provider of health care. Such verification may be given in person or by telephone, mail, electronic mail or facsimile.*

Sec. 11. 1. *Any time that a child who has had contact with, or who has been in the custody of, an agency which provides child welfare services suffers a fatality or a near fatality, the agency which provides child welfare services shall notify the Legislative*



Auditor or his designee and shall forward to the Legislative Auditor or his designee as soon as possible any files, notes, information and records which the agency has concerning the child, the manner in which the case was handled, any services that were provided to the child or the family of the child and any other relevant information.

2. The Legislative Auditor or his designee shall review the information obtained pursuant to subsection 1 to determine whether the case was handled in a manner which is consistent with state and federal law and to determine whether any measures, procedures or protocols could have assisted in preventing the fatality or near fatality.

3. Each agency which provides child welfare services shall:

(a) Cooperate fully with the Legislative Auditor or his designee;

(b) Provide the Legislative Auditor or his designee with any data, reports or information concerning a report or investigation of the abuse or neglect of a child and the response by the agency; and

(c) Allow the Legislative Auditor to inspect, review and copy any records, reports and other documents relevant to his duties pursuant to this section.

Sec. 12. *1. Except as otherwise provided in subsections 2 and 3, upon request, the Legislative Auditor or his designee shall provide data and information obtained pursuant to section 11 of this act concerning a child who suffered a fatality or near fatality who had contact with or who was in the custody of an agency which provides child welfare services. The data or information which must be disclosed includes, without limitation:*

(a) A summary of the report of the abuse or neglect of the child and a factual description of the contents of the report;

(b) The date of birth and gender of the child;

(c) The date that the child suffered the fatality or near fatality;

(d) The cause of the fatality or near fatality, if such information has been determined;

(e) Whether the agency which provides child welfare services had any contact with the child or a member of the child's family or household before the fatality or near fatality and, if so:

(1) The frequency of any contact or communication with the child or a member of the child's family or household before the fatality or near fatality and the date on which the last contact or communication occurred before the fatality or near fatality;



(2) Whether the agency which provides child welfare services provided any child welfare services to the child or to a member of the child's family or household before or at the time of the fatality or near fatality;

(3) Whether the agency which provides child welfare services made any referrals for child welfare services for the child or for a member of the child's family or household before or at the time of the fatality or near fatality;

(4) Whether the agency which provides child welfare services took any other actions concerning the welfare of the child before or at the time of the fatality or near fatality; and

(5) A summary of the status of the child's case at the time of the fatality or near fatality, including, without limitation, whether the child's case was closed by the agency which provides child welfare services before the fatality or near fatality and, if so, the reasons that the case was closed; and

(f) Whether the agency which provides child welfare services, in response to the fatality or near fatality:

(1) Has provided or intends to provide child welfare services to the child or to a member of the child's family or household;

(2) Has made or intends to make a referral for child welfare services for the child or for a member of the child's family or household; and

(3) Has taken or intends to take any other action concerning the welfare and safety of the child or a member of the child's family or household.

2. The Legislative Auditor or his designee shall not disclose information pursuant to subsection 1 unless the person making the request has requested such information from the agency which provides child welfare services and has been denied access to such information or has not received the information in a timely manner.

3. The Legislative Auditor or his designee shall not disclose the following data or information pursuant to subsection 1:

(a) Except as otherwise provided in subsection 3 of NRS 432B.290, data or information concerning the identity of the person responsible for reporting the abuse or neglect of the child to a public agency;

(b) The name of the child who suffered a near fatality or the name of any member of the family or other person who lives in the household of the child who suffered the fatality or near fatality;



- (c) A privileged communication between an attorney and client; or*
- (d) Information that may undermine a criminal investigation or pending criminal prosecution.*

Sec. 13. This act becomes effective on July 1, 2007.

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